



# TOURISM BROCHURES

## Usefulness and Image

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**Abstract:** Tourist information has been shown to have an important influence on the choice of vacation destinations. This article studies brochures, their significance as image generators, and their influence on the selection of destinations. The study sought to discover which features in this medium are more relevant in image generation and destination choice using logistic regression analysis. The analysis is based on data collected from tourists in Madrid, Spain. The results establish a model of usefulness of brochures in order to propose recommendations for their design and content. Implications pertain to the development of theoretical understandings about the influence of the information sources on destination image, destination choice, and satisfying tourist needs. **Keywords:** behavior, destination choice, image, brochure. © 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

**Résumé:** Dépliants touristiques: utilité et image. L'importance de l'influence des renseignements touristiques sur le choix des destinations a été démontrée. L'article examine les dépliants, leur importance à la création des images et leur influence sur la sélection des destinations. Le but de l'étude était de découvrir, par une analyse de régression logistique, quels éléments de ce support publicitaire sont les plus pertinents à la création des images et aux choix de destinations. L'analyse est basée sur des données cueillies à Madrid, en Espagne. Les résultats établissent un modèle de l'utilité des dépliants afin de proposer des recommandations pour leur design et leur contenu. Les implications se rapportent au développement de la compréhension théorique de l'influence des sources d'information sur l'image des destinations, la sélection de destination et la satisfaction des besoins des touristes. **Mots-clés:** comportement, choix de destination, image, dépliant. © 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## INTRODUCTION

Information sources for tourism activities have changed greatly over the past ten years, mainly due to the impact of new technologies. The utility of commercial written media, such as guides and brochures, has been questioned. Nevertheless, public authorities in charge of tourism development are still assigning great quantities of money to posters, brochures and videos. Research has demonstrated that information is a valuable concept in understanding the destination choice process.

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Several studies have centered on the relationship between information sources and the actual selection (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Schmoll 1971, 1977; Um and Crompton 1990; Woodside and Lysonski 1989). A particular research stream has investigated the information sources for decisionmaking (Baloglu 2000; Bieger and Laesser 2000, 2004; Capella and Greco 1987; Getz and Sailor 1993; Gitelson and Crompton 1983; Goodall 1990; Goossens 1994; Gursoy and McCleary 2004; Santos 1998; Sirakaya and Woodside 2005; Wicks and Schuett 1991, 1993; Woodside, Crouch, Mazanec, Oppermann and Sakai 2000; Woodside and Dubelaar 2002). Some have examined the relationship between image and destination choice (Baloglu 2000; Sirakaya, Sönmez and Choi 2001; Sirgy and Su 2000; Sönmez and Sirakaya 2002; Um and Crompton 1999) or the influence of information sources on tourists' preferences and intentions (Court and Lupton 1997; Goodrich 1978; Mayo 1973; Milman and Pizam 1995).

Potential tourists frequently have limited knowledge about a destination not previously visited, often only from media or their social groups, and they formulate images of alternative locations, so that image emerges as a critical element in the destination choice process (Um and Crompton 1999). The above studies concerned with destination choice and image formation have focused upon identifying the dominant attributes of image and exploring their role in selection. On the other side, different desired experiences and obtained satisfaction are relevant in formulating preferences for recreation sites. This is consistent with the notion that information sources and varying attributes of destinations form the basis for different experience expectations, image, and level of satisfaction. Brochures should meet three main objectives to be considered effective tools for promotion: influence on image formation, destination choice, and satisfaction (Tian-Cole and Crompton 2003). For this reason, the aim is to demonstrate the usefulness of brochures so as to reveal a relation among these three influences upon tourists' needs for information.

This article intends to widen the current field of research and introduce an analysis of brochures for national destinations. There is a considerable debate surrounding the influence of promotion activities. For instance, it is argued that potential consumers compare brochures and, on that basis, make a decision on their preferred destination. Despite this contention little empirical evidence exists to explain the process in detail. For this reason, based on literature from several fields, this research considered whether information sources meet tourism demands; satisfy their needs; and have any influence on the process of destination selection. In addition, this work deals with the different aspects of tourist behavior and with the importance information sources have in image formation and destination choice.

## IMAGE AND DESTINATION CHOICE

The process of tourist behavior has five stages: information search, purchase, use, evaluation, and disposition of goods and services

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