

**Tourism Marketing:  
On Both Sides of the Counter**



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Edited by

Metin Kozak, Luisa Andreu, Juergen Gnoth,  
Sonja Sibila Lebe and Alan Fyall

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P U B L I S H I N G

Tourism Marketing: On Both Sides of the Counter,  
Edited by Metin Kozak, Luisa Andreu, Juergen Gnoth, Sonja Sibila Lebe and Alan Fyall

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# CONTENTS

Introduction ..... viii

## **Part 1: Destination Image and Branding**

Chapter One..... 2  
Images of Israel within a Cross-cultural Perspective  
Maria D. Álvarez and Sara Campo

Chapter Two ..... 20  
Content Analysis of Slogans for Tourist Destinations  
Gökçe Özdemir Bayrak and Metin Kozak

## **Part 2: Tourist Satisfaction and Experience**

Chapter Three ..... 42  
Low-season Tourist Satisfaction at Traditional Mediterranean Resorts  
Joan B. Garau and Sara Campo

Chapter Four ..... 57  
Determinants of the Co-created Destination Experience  
Tatiana Chekalina, Matthias Fuchs and Maria Lexhagen

## **Part 3: Social and Environmental Consumption in Tourism**

Chapter Five ..... 80  
Tourists' Perceptions of Tourism Development in Nature Areas  
Carla Silva, Elisabeth Kastenholz and José Luís Abrantes

Chapter Six ..... 98  
Responsibility in Festivals and Events: A Competitive Advantage  
Henri Kuokkanen

Chapter Seven.....	115
Hey Look, I'm a Green Consumer: Online Social Visibility and the Willingness to Pay for Carbon Offsetting Schemes François J. Dessart, Luisa Andreu, Enrique Bigné and Alain Decrop	

#### **Part 4: Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism**

Chapter Eight.....	138
Improving the Tourism Experience by Empowering Visitors João V. Estêvão, Maria João Carneiro and Leonor Teixeira	

Chapter Nine.....	156
Modeling Information Asymmetries in Tourism Rodolfo Baggio and Jacopo A. Baggio	

Chapter Ten .....	175
Maintaining the Reputation of Review Sites in Travel and Tourism Brita Schemmann and Eric Horster	

#### **Part 5: Innovation and Competitiveness**

Chapter Eleven .....	188
Innovation Orientation and Performance in Spanish Hotels Sara Campo, Ana M. Díaz Martín and María J. Yagüe Guillen	

Chapter Twelve .....	203
Innovation: A Primary Competitive Tool to Success at Tourism Destinations Marica Mazurek	

Chapter Thirteen.....	222
New Product Development in Alpine Destinations Ruggero Sainaghi	

Chapter Fourteen .....	241
Creativity and Innovation in Tourism: The Role of Events Tonino Pencarelli, Mirella Migliaccio, Simone Splendiani and Francesca Rivetti	

Chapter Fifteen .....	261
How Hotels can Learn from Failures: An Integrated Service Recovery System	
Ana M. Díaz Martín, María Leticia Santos Vijande, Leticia Suárez Álvarez and Ana B. del Río Lanza	
Subject Index .....	279

# INTRODUCTION

The initial idea for this book originated from papers submitted for presentation at the 4th Advances in Tourism Marketing Conference (ATMC 2011) held in Maribor, Slovenia, 6-9 September 2011. Under the conference theme of “Transforming Experiences: Tourism Marketing from both Sides of the Counter”, the conference set out to build on the success of the three previous Advances in Tourism Marketing conferences; the first hosted in 2005 by Mugla University in Akyaka (Turkey), the second hosted in 2007 by the Universitat de València (Spain), and the third hosted in 2009 by Bournemouth University (United Kingdom).

As a direct result of the first conference held in Turkey, Kozak and Andreu (2006) published the book *Progress in Tourism Marketing*; in 2009, Kozak, Gnoth and Andreu published the book *Advances in Destination Marketing* which came about in direct response to papers presented at the Valencia Conference in 2007; and in 2009, Fyall, Kozak, Andreu, Gnoth and Lebe published the book *Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations* with papers presented at the Bournemouth Conference in 2009.

As with the previous three books, the editors of this book, with the assistance of many colleagues who willingly gave their time to serve as reviewers for papers submitted to the ATMC 2011, selected those papers for the chapters in this book. The editors would like to acknowledge the contribution of the authors who submitted a chapter after discussing their papers in Maribor. The themes of the papers of this book fell within five topic areas: destination image and branding; tourist satisfaction and experiences; social and environmental consumption; information and communication technologies; and innovation and competitiveness in tourism.

## **Part 1: Destination Image and Branding**

As is the case of Israel, presented in Chapter 1, and even when the initial image is negative, **Alvarez and Campo** argue that information used to promote the destination may improve the image of both the tourism destination and the country. The authors reveal that tourism marketing and communication efforts can be used as a vehicle for building international

relations and can help overcome negative perceptions and stereotypes that affect a country's image.

Destination branding can enhance the strategic positioning of the destination. In Chapter 2, **Bayrak and Kozak** argue that branding a destination starts with understanding its uniqueness. This forms the basis of the brand, followed by emphasizing its values as expressed in a suitable logo and slogan so as to make it more recognizable and attractive to potential tourists. A content analysis of 812 destination marketing organizations, makes the authors emphasize that, as effective communication tools for branding destinations, slogans are likely to strengthen brand images and create distinctiveness among other destinations.

## **Part 2: Tourist Satisfaction and Experience**

As **Garau and Campo** mention in Chapter 3, tourist destinations have a strong need to gather reliable indicators of competitiveness such as consumer satisfaction. Taking this into account, Chapter 3 provides a multi-dimensional scale for measuring tourist satisfaction during the low season. Research findings indicate that three main variables exert a strong influence on overall tourist satisfaction: accommodation; natural, cultural and urban setting; and restaurants at the destination.

Following the recent contributions of the Service Dominant Logic in service research, Chapter 4 emphasizes the role of customer experiences in tourism destinations. **Chekalina, Fuchs and Lexhagen** propose a destination experience model integrating destination resources, value-in-use and destination loyalty. In order to validate the model, they conduct empirical research with international guests at a Swedish ski destination. Research findings suggest that that value-in-use mediates the relationship between customers' perceptions of destination attributes and future behavioral intentions.

## **Part 3: Social and Environmental Consumption in Tourism**

Environmental sustainability and social responsibility in tourism are research topics of high relevance in tourism marketing. This book contains three chapters related to this topic. Chapter 5 analyzes the social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism development in nature areas. After conducting a literature review on the impacts of tourism, **Silva, Kastenholz and Abrantes** develop a tourism impact measurement scale for assessing a wide set of tourism impact parameters. Using a quantitative study of 315 tourists in European nature destinations, the

authors validate a scale with three dimensions: positive socio-cultural impacts, positive economic impacts and negative social impacts.

In Chapter 6, **Kuokkanen** deals with festival organizers when planning socially responsible and sustainable actions. Specifically, this chapter both explores the level of communication of responsible actions by festival organizers in Finland and, investigates whether any link between responsibility and visitor numbers can be established. The author concludes that use of responsibility in communication is not well adopted by most Finnish festivals and there is a call for further research on customer expectations of responsibility in this domain.

The growth of the environmentally oriented segments of tourism suggests the necessity to uncover their drivers. Chapter 7 explains the factors that influence the consumption of a pro-environmental tourist service, namely carbon offsetting schemes. Specifically, **Dessart, Andreu, Bigné and Decrop** analyze the role of visibility of consumption as well as other traditional determinants of pro-environmental consumption. Using a hypothetical scenario to build an experimental approach, results suggest that online social visibility raises the willingness to pay for green products. Moreover, general environmental concern is a good predictor of the willingness to pay for carbon offsetting schemes.

## **Part 4: Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism**

The competitiveness of destinations is highly determined by their capacity to satisfy information needs of local actors and visitors through information communication technology applications. Focusing on destination management systems (DMSs), in Chapter 8, **Estêvão, Carneiro and Teixeira** analyze how advanced DMSs are enabling visitors to play a more active role in building their experiences through the implementation of Web 2.0 functionalities. By means of a content analysis, this chapter analyzes how selected DMSs use a variety of Web 2.0 tools, i.e., blogs, photo sharing, rating of tourism products, website rating, reviews and video sharing.

Traditionally, tourism has been characterized as an information asymmetric market in which tourists have lower level of information than their suppliers. However, as **Baggio and Baggio** recognize in Chapter 9, Web 2.0 environments have reversed the asymmetry and a traveler is now often able to fully evaluate the products on offer even more so than the supplier. The authors present an agent-based model for examining the two possible asymmetric conditions. Results are discussed with respect to

possible strategies to be adopted by both buyers and sellers in order to rebalance satisfaction and earnings. When consumers have a strong source of information about all aspects and services offered, there is a risk for suppliers to lose a percentage of revenues due to their inability to fully understand the market value of what they offer.

The impact of consumer-generated reviews in tourism marketing has been widely assessed in the last few years, but reputation management and different forms of control used by these review platforms have not received much attention. As discussed in Chapter 10, tourism-related review sites should implement a sustainable and effective control system to generate trustworthy reviews and therefore maintain the reputation of the site. **Schemmann and Horster** describe three different control mechanisms focusing on registered users, actual customers, or verifying the credibility before the reviews are published.

## Part 5: Innovation and Competitiveness

In the tourism industry, empirical knowledge about the effects of innovation in tourism enterprises and tourism destinations is needed. Innovation has become a critical factor for firms to keep growing and fight against increasing competition and environmental uncertainty. In Chapter 11, **Campo, Díaz Martín and Yagüe Guillen** analyze the impact of innovation orientation in the Spanish hotel sector on different types of business performance. Among their findings, the importance of investing in innovation to improve the hotel services in the medium and long term is demonstrated.

Chapter 12 focuses on tourism destinations. With two specific case studies from Slovakia and Austria, **Mazurek** analyzes how innovation is a competitive tool for enhancing the competitive advantage of tourism destinations.

Collaboration between tourism destinations and local firms is also a key factor to enhance the competitive positioning of destinations. Chapter 13 explores some critical conditions that destination management organizations must manage in order to become a focal organization for local firms. Using a case study in an Alpine destination, **Sainaghi** shows that, in the presence of rigid cost structures and high demand elasticity, it is possible to modify competitive results, by working on collaborative strategies.

Positioning events as creative and innovative tourism products, in Chapter 14, **Pencarelli, Migliaccio, Splendiani and Rivetti** analyze the conceptual links between creativity, innovation, and tourist areas. Focusing

on the two perspectives of destination and organization level, this chapter also uses cases of Italian events as examples, highlighting underlying creative and innovative processes.

Information systems designing and monitoring procedures of recovering from service failures are considered as an invaluable way of learning. In Chapter 15, **Díaz Martín, Santos, Suárez** and **del Río** identify the dimensions of an Integrated Service Recovery System. One of the dimensions, response to failures, is comprised of a learning-innovation initiative. The authors highlight that failure management is a continuing process, and based on the systematic detection and analysis of all failure-related information which provides a valuable source of learning for improving future provision of services.

Co-editors:  
Metin Kozak, Luisa Andreu, Juergen Gnoth,  
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# **PART 1:**

## **DESTINATION IMAGE AND BRANDING**

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGES OF ISRAEL  
WITHIN A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

MARIA D. ALVAREZ AND SARA CAMPO

**Abstract**

A cultural approach to image studies suggests that for places, multi-layered images may exist and countries may be viewed differently from a political and economic point of view or from a tourist destination perspective. This study seeks to determine the effect of tourism promotional brochures on the country and destination image of Israel, as two different constructs. The research follows a quasi-experimental research design and analyzes the effect of printed brochures on the opinions regarding Israel. Additionally, the study compares this influence for samples from two different countries whose people are expected to have varied views regarding Israel. The focus of the paper is on the extent to which efforts geared at creating a positive destination image may also be effective in changing other aspects of the image of a country. **Keywords:** country image, destination image, image construction, marketing communication, information sources.

**1. Introduction**

Recent theoretical developments in the field of marketing that stress the blurring of the roles of marketers and consumers have determined that destinations are not fixed, but created through a process in which tourists also participate (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011). Thus, socio-cultural processes are at the heart of tourism, as culture and history influence the construction of imagery about people and places (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Image is formed through the “construction of a mental representation of a destination on the basis of information cues delivered by the image formation agents and selected by a person” (Tasci & Gartner,

2007, p. 414). A cultural approach suggests that places receive their meaning and identity through socio-cultural dynamics and there may be co-existing multilayered images (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011). At the same time, individuals may rely on varied sources and perspectives when evaluating a place from a cultural, political and economic perspective, or from a tourism point of view.

In accordance with this line of thought, the tourism-related literature has recently begun to differentiate the image of a country from a social, economic and political perspective, and that of the place as a tourist destination. In general, a positive relationship between country and destination image could be expected, since the country image influences the image of products that are made in there, including tourism products (Martin & Eroglu, 1993; Nadeu *et al.*, 2008). However, studies carried on Nepal (Nadeau *et al.*, 2008), Rusia (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008) and Turkey (Campo & Alvarez, 2010) have determined that certain countries may be perceived as attractive destinations, while they may also be viewed as economically underdeveloped or politically undesirable. Therefore, a comprehensive management of the country brand requires an understanding of whether “these two images [country and destination] can be separated in the minds of potential travelers” (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008, p. 559) and of how they are managed so that they remain distinct from each other.

While for some countries such as Turkey, individuals seem to be able to differentiate between a negative country image and a positive destination image (Campo & Alvarez, 2010), this may not always be the case. Avraham (2009) points out that the problematic public image of Israel creates a difficult challenge for both the Government and the Ministry of Tourism. From a political point of view, Israel’s image is based on its position of power and control with regards to the Palestinians (Avraham, 2009). Furthermore, the international media often portrays Israel as a war zone and a place of conflict (Beirman, 2003), which influences the perceptions regarding the security for tourists. Therefore, for a country such as Israel, faced with continuous image crises, marketing and media strategies become even more important.

The objective of this chapter is to understand the difference between country and destination image in Israel, as a country subject to continuous crises, and to determine how tourism-related promotional strategies may have an effect on modifying both the country and the destination image. In particular, the impact of printed tourist brochures on the creation of Israel’s distinct images is determined through the use of experimental methodology. The focus of this paper is on the extent to which efforts

geared at creating a positive destination image may also be effective in changing other aspects of the country's image, with potential benefits in terms of international relations, attracting investment and trade. Thus, tourism may act as a valuable context to comprehend broader societal and political issues (Saraniem & Kylänen, 2010).

Additionally, the chapter aims at providing a cross-cultural comparison of the images of Israel among individuals of two different countries, namely Turkey and Spain, to determine to what extent cultural differences may influence the degree to which people are receptive to additional information regarding a given place, and change their perceptions accordingly. Therefore, the research follows an interpretative perspective that analyzes how individuals respond to promotional messages and information transmitted by marketers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In this sense, the study compares the perceptions that the Turkish and Spanish nationals have regarding Israel, and who differ from each other in terms of culture, religion and political interaction with Israelites.

## 2. Literature Review

Kotler and Gertner (2002, p. 251) define the image of an area as “the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place.” This conceptualization has been followed by researchers both in connection to country as well as destination image. In this sense, the literature agrees that image is formed by a cognitive component, including the opinions and beliefs that the individual holds regarding a country or a destination, and an affective dimension, based on the emotions and feelings they arouse in the individual (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hosany *et al.*, 2007; Laroche *et al.*, 2005; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Uysal *et al.*, 2000; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Both components form the overall image (Lin *et al.*, 2007; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). However, image is not universal and may not be perceived in the same manner as individuals with varied motives and cultural values may view the same place differently (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). Furthermore, a socio-cultural perspective states that the meaning of the destination is determined by tourists as producers, who create the sense of the place through their practices and discourses (Saraniem & Kylänen, 2011). Thus, destinations are constructed through a combination of

cultural, political, social and economic relationships (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011).

Research on destination image has significantly increased in recent years (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2009) although these studies have mainly examined the concept of image, its dimensionality and its relationship to other behavioral variables such as satisfaction and loyalty. However, research that centers on determining how to change the negative image of a country or a destination are far less common. For example, Qu *et al.* (2011) stress the importance of measuring the image of places such as Oklahoma that are viewed as “flat, dusty and windblown” (p. 466). These authors apply a conceptual model of image to measure the perceptions regarding the place, and provide recommendations for the positioning and differentiation of the destination, but they do not mention how the initial image could be changed.

On the other hand, Stepchenkova and Morrison (2008) determine that although American tourists know very little about Russia as a tourist destination, their perceptions are mainly negative. These authors conclude that image is a dynamic concept that changes when the tourists visit the destination. In their study, they find a significant difference regarding Russia’s image between those who have previously visited the country, and those who have not, and who usually have a stereotyped perception. Similarly, other research also concludes that visiting the destination may change the initial perceptions regarding the place (Alvarez *et al.*, 2009). However, the question of how to encourage individuals to visit the destination when the initial perception is negative is still in need of investigation. Thus, the influence of information sources and tourism promotional tools on the image of the country and destination, and their ability to change a negative opinion about the place is an interesting area of research.

Gunn’s (1972) pioneer research determines that the image of a place is created internally through experience and visitation, or externally, through exposure to various information sources. Following Gunn, more recent research (for example Baloglu, 2001) determines that familiarity and knowledge play an important role in the formation of destination image. Familiarity is not only based on previous experience at the destination, but it may also be obtained through the knowledge that these individuals may have about the place, even though they may not have visited it (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). Some studies (Chon, 1991; Dann, 1996; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986) suggest that tourists’ perceptions of the destination positively change when the individual receives additional information or visits the place. However, different conclusions are

obtained in research on destinations that have an unclear image, such as the former Soviet Union (Pizam *et al.*, 1991). Stepchenkova and Morrison (2008) explain this divergence by differentiating between the first journey to the place, which brings about the major image modification, and the subsequent visits, during which the perceptual change may be lower. Furthermore, the initial perceptions and stereotyped prejudices may also be reinforced after the visit, due to the individual's selective attention and retrieval of information that is consistent to prior beliefs (Fisher & Price, 1991).

In addition to previous experience, external information sources may influence or change the image of the destination, and that of the country. Gartner (1993) determines that tourist information sources may be classified into eight categories, depending on their degree of autonomy and control by the marketer. Thus, least autonomous sources are paid sources, such as TV and printed advertisements, whereas news and information received through word of mouth are at the other end in the spectrum, being less dependent on the marketer. Some studies have stated that the more neutral sources of information may have a greater effect on the formation of destination image, due to their increased credibility (Butler, 1990; Kim & Richardson, 2003). These include movies and news, which are also important because of their accessibility to a wider audience (Kim & Richardson, 2003) and their ability to not only transmit but also interpret the information (Hall, 2002). In contrast, in Alvarez and Campo's (2011) study, the marketer-controlled promotional source was found to have a greater influence than the more autonomous news item on the image of Turkey. As tourism organizations strive to affect the perceptions regarding the destination and increase visitation, a communication mix that includes advertisements in broadcast and printed media, the Internet, books, movies and travel programs may all be used to manage the image of a place (McCartney *et al.*, 2008).

In particular, visual information concerning the destination is considered to be especially effective, as it provides the opportunity for a vicarious experience of tourist services. Therefore, promotional material that includes visual cues may communicate the various aspects of the destination to people who have not visited it before (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). According to a recent study (Alvarez & Campo, 2011), the audio-visual promotional information positively influences both the image of the country and that of the tourist destination for developing nations that have a negative country image. Past research also determines the importance of photographs in tourism promotional material and travel literature, as it allows for comparison between different destinations (MacKay &

Fesenmaier, 1997). Furthermore, visual content may also influence perceptions regarding the experiences to be obtained at the destination, as associations between pictures and certain experiences may be created (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Molina *et al.* (2010) also stress the significance of tourist brochures as effective in conveying the image of a given destination.

In line with this literature, the current study analyzes the effect that the promotional tourist information in the form of brochures may have on Israel's country and destination image. Moreover, the influence of cultural factors that may cause individuals from dissimilar countries to respond differently to new and additional information is taken into consideration. Therefore, the next section examines existing studies regarding Israel, and the implications that successive crises have had on its image and competitiveness in tourism.

Since the formation of Israel as a nation state, it has been subject to both conflicts and terrorist attacks that have undermined its tourism industry, since the media often depicts the country as a "'war zone' or a 'hot spot'" (Beirman, 2003, p. 95). Israel has been a site for pilgrimage and tourism for 3,000 years, and it offers a rich variety of historical and archeological resources, as well as a wealth of natural beauties and attractive shores (Beirman, 2003). Despite the potential for varied and alternative tourism, including religious, cultural and diving tourism, the industry in Israel has been characterized by cycles of crisis and recovery (Mansfeld, 1999). Political conflicts and violent incidents that have occurred periodically in Israel have been the cause of a decrease in tourist arrivals and revenues, even though very few fatalities have occurred, so that the actual risk for individuals traveling to Israel is small (Fielding & Shortland, 2005). In this regard, a study of news reporting Israeli conflicts via television determined that individuals are more likely to react to reports about violent events in the media, than to actual increases in conflict intensity in the country (Fielding & Shortland, 2009).

The political conflicts and the perceptions of power in Israeli policies have also resulted in a negative public image of the country. This has led Israel to be ranked last among 35 countries, according to the Anholt Nations Brand Index in 2006 (Anholt, 2006, cited in Appel *et al.*, 2008). In this study, Israel's evaluation was especially low in relation to its people, who were defined as unwelcoming, and in terms of its activities regarding international peace and security (Anholt, 2006, cited in Appel *et al.*, 2008). In addition, the individuals surveyed expressed a much lower willingness to visit Israel than some of the other countries included in the research (Anholt, 2006, cited in Appel *et al.*, 2008). Although Israel has

worked to overcome its perceptions of being an unsafe and dangerous destination through specific campaigns and focus on religious tourism (Beirman, 2000), it continues to be influenced by incessant crises and negative media coverage.

A developing country with attractive tourist resources such as Turkey in Europe, Jordan and Syria in Africa or Cuba in America, may not be able to modify its macro-economic situation in the short term, but may manage to separate its country and destination image. Thus, these nations may focus on their image as tourist destinations to increase their demand for tourist services, which may in turn bring not only economic benefits but also help to improve their country image through improved knowledge and information. Similarly, Israel has many attractions and resources that include a wealth of natural resources, its history and diverse culture, and its ties to Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions (Avraham, 2009). Providing individuals in target countries with better and more detailed information regarding these aspects may not only increase interest in the place and the probability of a visit in relation to other competing alternatives (Bigné *et al.*, 2001), but it may also benefit the more general country image. In this line, Avraham (2009) determines that one of Israel's media strategies has been to expand the country's image through the promotion of Israel's achievements in different fields that include science, technology and culture. The current research may add to the knowledge on this topic by determining the extent to which efforts to promote the destination at the international level may also influence other aspects of the country's image.

### 3. Methodology

In accordance to the above literature, the objective of this research is to assess the effect of printed tourist promotional brochures on the country and destination image of Israel, as a nation faced with continuous image crises. With this objective in mind, a 2 x 2 quasi-experimental design was used. The data were collected through a survey administered to university students in two different countries, Turkey and Spain, where it is foreseen that the perceptions about Israel would be dissimilar. In this sense, Pizam *et al.* (2002) stress historical and current international relations between pairs of nations as influencing the attitude and perceptions of their citizens towards the other country.

Even though both countries where the research was conducted are secular, the Turks, as a predominantly Muslim nation, are expected to have more negative views regarding Israel than the mainly Catholic Spanish.

Furthermore, although in the past Turkey has been most supportive of Israel within the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern region, in the recent years, this relationship has become conflictive. The Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan has been much more critical and less sympathetic to Israel, and the media in the country has also gradually increased its criticism of Israel policies. In contrast, Spain has shown a more neutral approach to Israel, which may also be explained by the greater geographical distance between the two countries and the lower stake that Spain holds in the region.

The two universities in Turkey and Spain, where the research was carried out, are both public and located in the largest city of their respective country (Istanbul and Madrid). The researchers collected the data at several public access points of the two universities, sequentially assigning the students passing by to the experimental or the control group. Using a questionnaire, respondents were required to evaluate Israel, both as a country and as a tourist destination. The subjects in the experimental group were asked to examine printed brochures on Israel's tourist attractions before filling in the survey. In contrast, the individuals in the control group received no information prior to completing the questionnaire.

The brochures employed as stimulus in the research were obtained from the Israeli consulate in Istanbul. These materials were in English, although they included little written text and were dominated by pictures and photographs. Containing several pages, the brochures portrayed the various destinations and attractions throughout Israel. After pre-testing the leaflets obtained, one was selected as the research stimulus. The same brochure was used both in Turkey and Spain.

The perceptions regarding Israel as a country and as a destination were based on an overall evaluation of the respondents using a 7-point semantic differential scale (varying between totally negative and totally positive) by means of the following question: "What is your overall evaluation of Israel as a country (or as a tourist destination)? The intention of the respondents to visit Israel was assessed through the following three questions measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale: "I intend to visit Israel in the near future," "I would choose Israel as the destination for my next vacation," and "I would prefer to visit Israel as opposed to other similar destinations." Additionally, the level of knowledge regarding Israel in general and in its relation to historical, cultural, political, and economic aspects was determined through a 7-point Likert-type scale.

A total of 542 valid surveys were obtained (300 in Turkey and 242 in Spain). In the Turkish sample, 50% of the respondents were exposed to the

stimulus (printed brochure) before completing the questionnaire, whereas 50% only filled in the survey. Among the Spanish respondents, 49.6% of the sample was included in the experimental group, versus 50.4% who were in the control group. The age and gender distribution is similar for both samples, with a mean age of 22 and a slightly higher percentage of females (52.7% of the sample in Turkey and 59.3% of the sample in Spain were women).

## 4. Results

This study seeks to measure the effect of additional information, in the form of printed promotional brochures, on the country and destination image of Israel. Therefore, the respondents' level of information regarding various aspects of Israel prior to the provision of the stimulus was evaluated. For this purpose, those who had been exposed to added information through the promotional leaflet were excluded from this analysis. Table 1 provides a comparison between the Spanish and Turkish respondents. The findings indicate that the level of information regarding Israel prior to the administration of the stimulus is low for both samples; however, Spanish students report a significantly higher knowledge on all aspects of Israel except political and economic issues, than their Turkish counterparts.

**Table 1 - Perceived Knowledge of Israel for Two Samples**

	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup> Turkey</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup> Spain</b>	<b>Mean difference</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Historical aspects	3.15	3.61	0.46	0.01
Cultural aspects	3.12	3.70	0.57	0.00
Political aspects	4.29	3.60	0.69	0.00
Economic aspects	3.71	2.99	0.72	0.00
Tourism attractions	2.36	3.18	0.82	0.00
General knowledge	3.38	3.66	0.28	0.05

<sup>a</sup> 1= Totally uninformed; 7 = Totally informed.

The results of the quasi-experimental research determine the influence of the promotional stimulus on the image change of Israel, both as a country and as a destination, and on the preference for and intention to visit the place. Table 2 summarizes the differences obtained between the experimental

and control groups. It is interesting to note that the evaluations regarding Israel are low although the assessments regarding the country as a destination are relatively higher. However, for those individuals exposed to the printed brochure, the evaluations of Israel as a country and as a destination are more positive, while they also show a higher intention to visit the place. On the other hand, the exposure to the additional promotional information does not significantly change the preference for Israel versus other similar destinations.

**Table 2 - Mean Differences between Groups**

	<b>Control group</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>	<b>T</b>
My opinion about Israel as a country is	2.90 (std. dev. = 1.21)	3.19 (std. dev. = 1.13)	-2.86 (sig. 0.00)
My opinion about Israel as a tourist destination is	3.36 (std. dev. = 1.30)	4.06 (std. dev. = 1.24)	-6.34 (sig. 0.00)
I intend to visit Israel in the near future	2.70 (std. dev. = 1.79)	3.03 (std. dev. = 1.77)	-2.14 (sig. 0.03)
I would choose Israel as the destination for my next vacation	2.40 (std. dev. = 1.60)	2.89 (std. dev. = 1.68)	-3.45 (sig. 0.00)
I would prefer to visit Israel as opposed to other similar tourist destinations	2.63 (std. dev. = 1.70)	2.88 (std. dev. = 1.64)	-1.74 (sig. 0.08)

To evaluate the image changes and preferences in two countries, the means comparison is carried out by segments (Table 3). The findings indicate that the Turkish respondents have a more negative opinion regarding Israel, both as a country and destination, and a lower preference for and intention to visit the country than those individuals in the Spanish sample. However, although the administration of the promotional stimulus significantly increases the evaluations of Israel as a country and destination in both samples, it does not significantly change the intention to visit and the preference for the place among the Spanish respondents. In contrast, Turkish individuals' intention to visit the place and preference for Israel is enhanced after exposure to the printed brochure.

**Table 3 - Mean Differences between Groups for Each Country**

	TURKISH SAMPLE		SPANISH SAMPLE		t	
	Control Group	Experimental group	Control Group	Experimental group		
My opinion about Israel as a country is (1 = negative; 7 = positive)	2.51 (std. dev. = 1.24)	2.81 (std. dev. = 1.08)	3.39 (std. dev. = 0.98)	3.67 (std. dev. = 1.00)	-2.16 (sig. 0.03)	-2.14 (sig. 0.03)
My opinion about Israel as a tourist destination is (1 = negative; 7 = positive)	3.07 (std. dev. = 1.31)	3.90 (std. dev. = 1.36)	3.73 (std. dev. = 1.20)	4.26 (std. dev. = 1.03)	-5.37 (sig. 0.00)	-3.63 (sig. 0.00)
"I intend to visit Israel in the near future" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree)	2.35 (std. dev. = 1.76)	2.77 (std. dev. = 1.85)	3.13 (std. dev. = 1.74)	3.36 (std. dev. = 1.61)	-1.97 (sig. 0.04)	-1.03 (sig. 0.30)
"I would choose Israel as the destination for my next vacation" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree)	2.33 (std. dev. = 1.78)	3.03 (std. dev. = 1.88)	2.48 (std. dev. = 1.35)	2.71 (std. dev. = 1.38)	-3.27 (sig. 0.00)	-1.32 (sig. 0.18)
"I would prefer to visit Israel as opposed to other similar tourist destinations" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree)	2.35 (std. dev. = 1.77)	2.77 (std. dev. = 1.75)	2.97 (std. dev. = 1.54)	3.01 (std. dev. = 1.24)	-2.06 (sig. 0.04)	-0.21 (sig. 0.83)

**Table 4 - Mean Differences between Countries**

	CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		t	
	Turkey	Spain	T	Turkey		Spain
My opinion about Israel as a country is (1= negative; 7 = positive)	2.51 (std. dev. = 1.24)	3.39 (std. dev. = 0.98)	-6.26 (sig. 0.00)	2.81 (std. dev. = 1.08)	3.67 (std. dev. = 1.00)	-6.66 (sig. 0.00)
My opinion about Israel as a tourist destination is (1= negative; 7 = positive)	3.07 (std. dev. = 1.31)	3.73 (std. dev. = 1.20)	-4.26 (sig. 0.00)	3.90 (std. dev. = 1.36)	4.26 (std. dev. = 1.03)	-2.38 (sig. 0.01)
"I intend to visit Israel in the near future" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree)	2.35 (std. dev. = 1.76)	3.13 (std. dev. = 1.74)	-3.63 (sig. 0.00)	2.77 (std. dev. = 1.85)	3.36 (std. dev. = 1.61)	-2.75 (sig. 0.00)
"I would choose Israel as the destination for my next vacation" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree )	2.33 (std. dev. = 1.78)	2.48 (std. dev. = 1.35)	-0.72 (sig. 0.47)	3.03 (std. dev. = 1.88)	2.71 (std. dev. = 1.38)	1.54 (sig. 0.12)
"I would prefer to visit Israel as opposed to other similar tourist destinations" (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree )	2.35 (std. dev. = 1.77)	2.97 (std. dev. = 1.54)	-2.98 (sig. 0.00)	2.77 (std. dev. = 1.75)	3.01 (std. dev. = 1.24)	-1.16 (sig. 0.24)

Table 4 analyses the differences between the Turkish and Spanish students taking into consideration their membership in the control or experimental group. The findings determine that the change in the Turkish students' evaluation of the destination and their intention to visit the place is greater than that of the Spanish respondents. Nevertheless, the original assessment (prior to the provision of the stimulus) of the Turkish sample is significantly lower than that of the Spanish students. Therefore, the results determine that the initial negative opinion regarding Israel and the lower preference and intention to visit the destination on behalf of Turkish students is somehow offset by the access to additional printed information. However, this change is not enough to reach the results displayed by the Spanish sample.

## 5. Conclusion

Information used to promote the destination may improve the image of both the destination and the country, even when the initial image is negative, as is the case of Israel. The comparison of perceptions regarding Israel in two different countries with varied religious values and different international relations with Israel, such as Turkey and Spain, shows that these cultural and political differences influence the image of the country and the destination. Specifically, Israel's image is more positive in Spain than in Turkey. However, the relative influence of the destination's promotional tools is greater among the Turks, who hold a more negative initial image. Additionally, tourist promotional tools are unable to increase the choice of the place as the next vacation destination or its preference among other competing destinations among the Spanish sample. In contrast, the positive preference change is stronger among the Turks.

These findings indicate that the tourist promotional tools may positively affect a destination's image, but it may not be enough to attract tourists to that place. To appeal to potential tourists, the destination needs to be preferred to other competing places. As Qu *et al.* (2011) explain, "consumers are generally offered various destination choices that provide similar features such as quality accommodations, beautiful scenic view, and/or friendly people. Therefore, it is not enough for a destination to be included in the evoked set; instead, the destination needs to be unique and differential to be selected as a final decision" (p. 465). Thus, the reason as to why the promotional material increases the preference for the destination in the Turkish sample may be related to the selection of the specific promotional materials that may be more suited to the Turkish taste.

The tourist promotion chosen as stimulus in the research may not be so attractive for the Spanish people. Additionally, Spaniards may not consider Israel as a better alternative to other more popular destinations in Spain, such as countries that share the same language and culture (Latin America) or a recent history and proximity (Portugal, France and Italy). As Qu *et al.* (2011) state, the key lies in developing the country brand with a strong positioning in which consumers perceive a clear difference between competing products in the same category. A tourist destination included in the country's umbrella brand needs to be unique, distinctive and difficult to replace (Qu *et al.*, 2011).

In the case of Israel, it is necessary for this country to find its own positioning that reflects the key components of a destination brand, its rational (head) and emotional (heart) benefits and associations, together with its brand personality (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). This positioning strategy should start with the identification of the important elements that differentiate Israel from its competitors in each of its potential markets (Crompton *et al.*, 1992).

The study also adds knowledge to the ways in which tourism may be used as a vehicle to enhance a country's image, not just from the perspective of tourism, but in relation to a number of other aspects. This research supports the conclusion that tourism-related marketing and communication activities aimed at increasing the number of foreign visitors to the destination may have effect in other areas as well. Thus, in the case of Israel, tourist brochures are found to influence not only how the country is seen from a tourism-related perspective, but also from the economic, political and social point of view. Therefore, tourism may be used as a vehicle of international relations and could help overcome negative perceptions and stereotypes affecting a country's image (Alvarez *et al.*, 2009; Light, 2007). Further research needs to be carried out to understand the influence that the various tourist information sources have on a country's image, as well as on its destination image.

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