



Ambrósio, V., & Loureiro, S. (2015). Attitude and emotions of young Portuguese tourists toward international risk destinations. In Demetris Drontis, Yaakov Weber and Evangelos Tsoukatos (eds.). Conference book proceedings of 8<sup>th</sup> **EuroMed conference** of the Euromed academy of business research- Innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable value chain in a dynamic environment (pp.2234-2438). Verona, Italy: Euromed press (ISBN: 978-9963-711-37-6) (**ISI web knowledge**)

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## **ATTITUDE AND EMOTIONS OF YOUNG PORTUGUESE TOURISTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL RISK DESTINATIONS**

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### **Extended Abstract**

Track No: 49 Tourism

**Keywords:** young tourists, travel experience, attitudes, emotions, risk destinations and Portugal

### **Research Aims**

The main goals of this ongoing study are to learn about attitude of young Portuguese tourists about risk destinations and their emotions about traveling out of the country.

### **Theoretical Background**

The global economic crisis is impelling countries towards attempting to promote incoming tourism as one of their leading industries. The number of international tourists has exceeded one billion in the year 2012 and is anticipated to have reached well over 1.8 billion by the year 2030 (UNWTO 2013). Concurrently, the number of potential destinations increases

every year as more and more countries discover the economic potential of tourism. In order to understand the choice of a specific destination it is important to explain the destination selection process (Son & Pearce, 2005). Thus, many researchers focused on the concept of *destination image* (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007; Moura, Gnoth & Deans, 2014; Pike, 2002). The findings point out that the potential destination competes mainly on the basis of the image held by the tourists. Consequently, policy makers in a destination have to invest efforts in creating and projecting abroad a favorable image. In order to accomplish this marketing task, each destination needs a good understanding of its image in the eyes of potential tourists along with a grasp concerning the perceptions of rivalry destinations (Javalgi, Thomas & Rao, 1992).

Travelling experience may produce a more favorable image with regard to the destination and more tolerant attitudes of the experienced tourists in comparison to novices (Andreu, Bigne & Cooper, 2001; Beerli & Martin, 2004). Actually, positive emotions lead to a favorable evaluation of a place (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997) or even rural tourism lodging (Loureiro, 2010) and enhance the probability to return or tend to reduce the risk perception.

## **Hypothesis**

H1: Young Portuguese tourists with positive emotions about traveling out of the country will tend to be less risk destination avoidance.

## **Methodology**

The study is conducted in Portugal considering academic institutions and attempts to recruit matched sample of about 200 students of various academic study areas (women and men), statistically sampling students through the lists of mandatory classes.

A functionally equivalent self-report structured questionnaire was administered in Portuguese, but the constructs were first written in English (based on previous studies published in English). A back translation was employed to ensure that the sentences expressed the same information in both languages.

## **Main Findings**

The preliminary results show that Young Portuguese tend to enjoy traveling out of the country (see table 1). Nevertheless, they do not seem to be interested in traveling to risk destinations

(see table 2). Particularly, Young Portuguese tourists tend to avoid traveling to destinations with health hazards (e.g. infections, disease). Therefore, H1 is not supported.

Table 1. Emotions towards travel aboard (1= completely disagree and 5 = completely agree.)

Emotions towards traveling out of the country	Traveling is stimulating	stressful	cause me real tension	make me feel content	boring	exciting	make me feel happy	make me feel energetic	make me feel Cheerful
Mean	4.8	2.2	1.9	4.6	1.3	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.6
SD	0.465	0.952	0.845	0.508	0.597	0.546	0.541	0.732	0.589

Table 2. Attitudes towards risk destination

Attitudes towards risk destination (%)	1 (Completely disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Completely agree)
Travel to destinations where there were terrorist incidents during the current year should be avoided.	3.0	9.5	24.0	39.0	24.5
Travel to destinations with health hazards (e.g. infections, disease) should be avoided.	2.5	18.0	16.0	40.5	23.0
Travel to destinations with unstable economic conditions should be avoided.	25.0	43.5	23.0	7.5	1.0
Travel to destinations with political unrest should be avoided.	5.5	23.5	26.0	38.0	7.0
Travel to destinations at risk of earthquakes and other natural disaster hazards should be avoided.	14.0	34.5	27.0	18.5	6.0

## Conclusions

This is an ongoing project research and this paper presents some of the preliminary findings from the Portuguese perspective. Young Portuguese tourists enjoy traveling abroad but they are very concerned about possible risks that may emerge during the trips. They tend to be risk avoiders.

In this vein, destination managers should be aware of such findings if they want to attract Portuguese to their destinations, that is, they must introduce changes in the way they communicate their destinations. In the near future more research and findings will be gathered in order to go further in understanding risk tourism destination and its implications.

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