

THE PIE METHOD APPLIED TO THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

Cities and metropolises compete with each other to attract tourists from other parts of the world. The image they project plays an important role in tourists' decision-making and in the development of effective competition strategies. There is a clear preponderance use of structured techniques on tourism destination image and very few studies use unstructured methods as the main technique. Some authors claim for more pluralistic approaches to improve the knowledge of tourism destination image. The aim of this study is to propose a new image research approach through the PIE Method exploring the image of six European capitals.

Key words: city tourism; cultural tourism; image measurement; PIE-method; urban tourism.

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El método EPI aplicado a la determinación de la imagen de las capitales europeas

RESUMEN

Las pequeñas y grandes ciudades compiten entre ellas para atraer a los turistas de otras partes del mundo. La imagen de las ciudades juega un importante papel en la decisión de los turistas y en el desarrollo de estrategias competitivas eficaces. En la investigación de los destinos turísticos existe un claro predominio de las técnicas de investigación estructuradas, mientras que son escasos los estudios que utilizan técnicas no estructuradas como técnica principal de investigación. Algunos autores señalan la conveniencia de emplear enfoques más amplios que permitan mejorar el conocimiento de la imagen de los destinos turísticos. Este estudio tiene por objetivo proponer una nueva técnica de investigación de la imagen a través del método EPI, aplicando la misma a un estudio exploratorio sobre la imagen de seis capitales europeas.

Palabras clave: Turismo de ciudad; turismo cultural; medida de la imagen; método EPI; turismo urbano.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of image in the tourism sector has been a subject of study for almost four decades (Gunn, 1972; Mayo 1973; Anderssen and Colberg, 1973; Matejka, 1973; Gearing, Swart and Var, 1974; Hunt, 1975; Riley and Palmer, 1975). In 2002, Pike compiled a review of 142 studies on tourism destination image published between 1973 and 2000, observing that image has become one of the preferred topics in tourism literature. This interest has continued throughout the present decade as shown by a proliferation of studies on the subject which need to be submitted to a rigorous review; however, this is not the purpose of the present study.

In the tourism sector, most research on image is concerned with destination image (Ibrahim and Gill, 2005; Li and Vogelsong, 2006; Koneenik and Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2009; Hankinson, 2010; Carballo et al. 2011) which is acknowledged as playing an important role in influencing the tourist's choice of destination (Tasci, 2006; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Mazurek, 2008, Stepchenkova and Eales, 2011; Stancioiu et al. 2011). Most of these studies has so far been centred mainly on countries or large areas that traditionally attract tourists, while the image of cities as tourism destinations has not been investigated to the same extent. Limited interest in the tourism image of cities is perhaps a consequence of the scant importance historically attached to tourism in big cities (Fainstein, Gordon and Harloe, 1992), although cities such as London, Paris and New York have always attracted tourists in substantial numbers. Law (1996) point out that academic studies on big cities have largely focused their interest on the part these play as starting points for flows of tourists travelling on to other holiday destinations. It wasn't until the eighties that policies designed to attract tourists to cities began to be adopted in the United States and Europe. These were basically intended as a means of helping to fund city finances, although, as Law suggests, «tourism was never perceived as a panacea for resolving urban problems

but as part of the solution.» (1996: 28). The parallel development of policies on city tourism gave rise to the great increase in the number of studies on urban or city tourism that has continued ever since. Studies on cities carried out to date include those on Bilbao (Eizaguirre, 1997), Toronto (Joppe, Martín and Waalen, 2001), London (Bull and Church, 2001), Seoul (Suh and Gartner, 2004), Barcelona (Smith, 2005), Madrid (Castaño, Moreno and Crego, 2006), Birmingham (Lee, 2006), Cambridge (Maitland, 2006), Liverpool (Connelly, 2007), Glasgow (Murphy and BOYLE, 2006), London (Roemer, 2009), Cape Town (Bickford-Smith, 2009), New York (Phillips and Jang, 2010), Hong Kong (Leung, Law, and Lee Hee, 2011) and Bilbao and Barcelona (González, 2011).

Cities are endowed with a variety of resources for attracting tourism. These have been classified by Jansen-Verbeke (1988) into primary, secondary and additional. Primary resources include cultural, sports and leisure facilities, places of interest and socio-cultural features; secondary resources comprise hotels, restaurants, markets and shopping facilities, while additional resources include ease of access, parking facilities and the provision of tourism information. According to Page (1995), the multitude of functions a city offers, which include elements related to history, culture, shopping, night life, etc., can be perceived from many different viewpoints. In an interesting study entitled *City Tourism & Culture. The European Experience* (ETC/WTO, 2005), places are classified, together with their tourism products, into villages, towns, cities and metropolises. According to this classification, large cities and metropolises have the most to offer in the way of cultural heritage, such as historical monuments and buildings, cultural manifestations, contemporary art and creative activities associated with fashion, design and modern architecture, etc.

Table 1
CLASSIFICATION OF PLACES AND THEIR CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS

Type of Place	Village	Town	City	Metropolis
Products				
Cultural heritage	Sector 1	Sector 2		
Cultural heritage Cultural manifestations and contemporary art		Sector 3	Sector 4	
Cultural heritage Cultural manifestations and contemporary art Creative activities			Sector 5	Sector 6

Source: ETC/WTO, 2005.

The aim of this study is to present the application of a new approach- PIE method- for image evaluation tourism research and to examine the image of six European capitals (Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid, Paris and Rome) as destinations for short-stay and

weekend tourism, based on the perceptions of a group of French tourists made up of senior citizens living in the Côte D'Azur region. The study also contributes to the recent rise of urban tourism and attempts to find out what it is that makes some European cities more popular and attractive than others (ETC/WTO, 2005; Mintel, 2003; Petric and Mikulic, 2009; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Sager, 2003; Smith, and Strand, 2011; Van der Ark and Richards, 2006; Wiesenhofer, 2002; Williams, 2010; Xiao GuiRong and Wall, 2009)

2. MEASURING DESTINATIONS IMAGE

In the context of tourism, the term image has been defined over the years by numerous authors (Crompton, 1979; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Gartner 1996; Hunt, 1975; Mackay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Mayo, 1973). The study of Li and Vogelsong (2006) point out that, with respect to tourism destinations, there are more than thirty definitions of image. For the purposes of this study, we shall use the term image as an adaptation of the definition given by Ortega (1981) in which a city's image as a tourism destination is considered to be *a mental representation of a set of ideas, beliefs and impressions, either real or psychological, that a person or group of persons holds about that particular city.*

According to O'Leary and Deegan (2005), evaluation of tourism destinations is conditioned by the concept of image itself, although different evaluation techniques can be broadly grouped into two main categories: quantitative and qualitative (Hui and Wan, 2003). Quantitative techniques correspond to the positivist focus of the research and have a structured character; they are applied to data obtained from different bivariate and multivariate statistical treatments. Qualitative techniques are associated with the phenomenological and interpretative aspects of the research, comprising in-depth interviews, group dynamics, projective techniques and protocol analysis, as well as a number of other methods.

There is a clear preponderance of the use of structured techniques in studies on tourism destination image. Riley and Love (2000) reviewed a series of studies published in four journals on tourism and concluded that in tourism research the quantitative focus is predominant. Pike's review (2002) of 142 studies on tourism destination image, published between 1973 and 2000, showed that quantitative techniques were used in the majority of these. Molina (2005) also analysed 47 studies on the same subject published in English and Spanish between 1975 and 2002 and found that only two of them used an unstructured technique, while six used both structured and unstructured techniques and the remaining 39 used structured techniques only.

In a critical appraisal of the use of structured techniques for evaluating destination image, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) show the possible shortfalls of using lists of the attributes of destinations as these do not incorporate the same functional aspects and psychological characteristics of destination image. For this reason, the authors propose the simultaneous use of both structured and unstructured methods. They particularly emphasise that any investigation involving image evaluation should begin with a series of open questions so that the holistic elements of the destination image and its functional and psychological dimensions can be identified. With this information, an appropriate relation of attributes can be obtained, which, when evaluated on a Lickert-type scale, will

enable the corresponding destination image to be assessed. On a similar line to that of the above authors, Jenkins (1997) considers it essential to carry out a preliminary qualitative investigation in order to determine the attributes to use at a later quantitative stage.

O'Leary and Deegan (2005) in a study on the image of Ireland as destination for French tourists identified the important attributes of image in a preliminary qualitative stage consisting of a review of existing literature, analysis of its contents and the free generation of attributes. The importance of the attributes and the extent to which they appeared in the destination image were subsequently evaluated by means of surveys carried out both before and after a visit to the destination. Finally, a comparison was made of the importance attached to the attributes before and after the visit, using the *Importance Performance Analysis* (IPA) proposed by Martilla and James (1977). The IPA technique has been applied in different fields, including that of tourism destination image (Joppe, Martin and Waalen, 2001; Zhang and Chow, 2004).

Hankinson (2004) suggests that problems arise from the use of structured methods for determining image as they do not show the criteria used by tourists to discriminate between different destinations. Hankinson therefore proposes using the technique known as *Repertory Grid Analysis* (RGA) to identify generic attributes relating to tourists' perception of destination image. This technique was developed by Kelly (1955) and was based on his Personal Construct Theory. Initially was employed in the field of psychology, and later spread to other spheres, including marketing and tourism (Ortega, 2007). The fundamentals and applications of this technique have been revised and updated by Fransella, Bell and Bannister (2004) and Jankowicz (2004).

In a paper on destination image research, Govers, Go and Kumar (2007) propose a new measurement approach to understand tourism destination image formation. These authors apply a phenomenographic approach (Marton, 1994) to qualitative data obtained in an online survey and content analysis of this data using artificial neural network software. «The results produce a vivid three-dimensional picture of the differences and commonalities among the images of selected destinations» (2007:977).

Our present study provides an alternative approach to image tourism research through the PIE-method exploring the perceived image of six European capitals.

3. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research is based on the PIE method, Periodic Image Evaluation, developed by one of its authors. The name was taken for the first and most common application of this technique. The PIE method is a highly flexible method that incorporates characteristics from both qualitative and quantitative techniques, making it a mixed method of research that is of great interest for evaluating tourism destination image.

The PIE method is applied in three stages. The first stage involves selecting the elements (six European capitals) which are going to be assessed for how they are perceived. In the second stage, attributes associated with the six capitals are identified by conducting personal interviews on a sample of people. To obtain the image attributes, the different combinations that could be formed with the capitals six European are presented in card form in triads, which gave a total of 20 triads. Three European capitals are presented

and each person is then asked to group together two of them for some important feature they had that was not present in the third capital. They are then asked to indicate all the common characteristics or attributes they perceive in the European two capitals selected and which of these they considerer to be the most significant. The process is repeated with the 20 triads until all the information is gathered from each person.

In the third stage, perceived characteristics or attributes of six European capitals that are either the same or comparable are grouped together. The data are then treated with a simple computer program to obtain the following: 1) the perceived attributes of the six capitals; 2) relative image of six European capitals; 3) individual image of each European capital; 4) global representation of the six European capitals.

3.1. Sample

The sample consisted of thirty French nationals, eighteen women and twelve men, living in the Côte D'Azur region whose ages ranged from 60 to 74. Interviews took place during the months of May and June, 2007. Taking into account the number of triads that can be formed from the six elements used, the total number of attributes obtained from the sample was 600 (30 people x 20 attributes). When these attributes were grouped according to similarity, the total number of different attributes perceived was 82.

4. STUDY RESULTS

The results shown correspond to perceptions of the six European capitals held by the people interviewed. These are influenced by personal experience in cases where they have already visited some or all of the cities in question, and by beliefs about them derived from other forms of communication, either general or personal. Differing information about the six capitals will therefore have reached them from a variety of sources. In addition, perceptions are also influenced by aspects that differ from person to person, such as expectations, motivation, interests and personality.

4.1. Perceived attributes

The six hundred attributes relating to the six European capitals as a whole are grouped by similarity into 82 different attributes. The first 15 attributes account for 66.7% of the total perception of the people interviewed. The rest, making up the 100%, correspond to 69 attributes that have not been analysed with the EPI method as the perception they account for is considerably less than that of the first 15. Table 2 shows the first 30 perceived attributes of the six European capitals as a whole. The sign to the right denotes whether the attribute is positive, negative or indifferent.

Of all the attributes generated, two are predominant in the global image of the European capitals: the importance of *monumental heritage* and the importance of *museums and cultural heritage*. Between them, these two attributes account for 21% of the global image of European capitals. The third attribute related to image, which accounts for 5.8% of the global image, corresponds to «*friendly, open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle.*» With regard to

Table 2
THE FIRST 30 PERCEIVED ATTRIBUTES OF THE SIX EUROPEAN CAPITALS

Perceived attributes	% accumulated	Perceived attributes	% accumulated	% accumulated
Important/rich/varied monumental heritage (+)	11.8	City visited by large numbers of tourists (+)	2.2	68.8
Important/extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	9.2	Different lifestyle from Mediterranean (+)	2.0	70.8
Friendly open atmosphere/ Mediterranean lifestyle/ (+)	5.8	Large city/diversity of urban functions (+)	1.8	72.7
Frequent cultural manifestations, festivals/concerts (+)	5.7	Important city for business/congresses/European-level decisions (+)	1.7	74.3
Unpleasant climate/rain/lack of sunshine (-)	5.0	Warmth of welcome (+)	1.5	75.8
Pleasant climate/dry/sunny/ (+)	4.8	Atmosphere/ambience/Nordic lifestyle (-)	1.3	77.2
Common language/ease of communicating (+)	4.5	Green spaces/parks/gardens (+)	1.3	78.5
Ease of access to the city (+)	2.8	Cultural proximity/common cultural roots (+)	1.3	79.8
Attractive city for tourism (+)	2.8	City emblematic of the European Union (+)	1.3	81.2
Good/international reputation for tourism (+)	2.5	Important artistic heritage (+)	1.2	82.3
Cosmopolitan/international city (+)	2.3	City associated with <i>haute couture</i> and fashion boutiques (+)	0.8	83.2
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	2.3	City with 21 st century dynamism (+)	0.8	84.0
Unusual/novel/exotic destination (+)	2.3	Insignificant monumental heritage and links to the past (-)	0.7	84.7
City associated with religious influences/traditions (+)	2.3	Modern/contemporary architecture (+)	0.7	85.3
Good food (+)	2.3	Diversity of architecture (+)	0.7	86.0

this last attribute, some authors associate its characteristics with so-called «creative» and «experience» tourism when referring to a city's general feel and «atmosphere» (Landry, 2000; Richards and Wilson, 2005; Selby, 2004). However, as Richards, Goedhart and Herrijgers (2001) points out, the majority of tourists find the significance of this attribute very difficult to define. In the present study, the attribute of *atmosphere* and *Mediterranean lifestyle* is associated with the friendly, open character of the people.

A fourth attribute, also related to the first two, has to do with the variety of cultural manifestations, such as festivals and concerts, and accounts for 5.7% of the global image. The great importance given to cultural attributes with respect to the image of the cities under study explains the distinction generally made between cultural tourism and city tourism (Bull and Church, 2001; ETC/WTO, 2005; Law, 1996; Murphy and Boyle, 2006; Paskaleva, Besson and Sutherland, 2009; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Smith and Strand, 2011). A fifth attribute of some significance is that of climate, with a differentiation between *pleasant, dry, sunny climates* and *unpleasant climates* associated with rain and lack of sunshine. This aspect of a city's image may exert considerable influence both on the choice of destination and the best time of year for visiting it.

4.2. Relative image of the European capitals

This image corresponds to the perception of each European capital in relation to the rest based on the first 15 perceived image attributes for the group as a whole. If each capital are perceived for each attribute by the same percentage of people, the image profile would be represented on a graph by a vertical line with a perception value of 16.7% (the result of dividing the total perception value of one hundred for all the capitals by the number of these). When the value of an attribute is greater than the average image value shown for a particular capital, the perception of this attribute for that capital is greater than the theoretical average and vice versa. In order to interpret correctly the perception value of each city for each attribute, the goodness of the attributes has to be taken into account. This is identified in each case by a positive, negative or indifferent sign.

Figures 1 to 6 show relative image profiles of the six European capitals under consideration. It can be seen in each figure that the average theoretical image, represented by the vertical dotted line on the perception value 16.7%, bears no relation to the real relative image profiles of each of the six capitals.

With respect to the relative image of Paris, the attribute of *reputation for tourism* for this city stands out positively over perception of the same attribute in the other capitals. Only in the case of Rome does *reputation for tourism* approach that of Paris. The attributes of *monumental heritage* and *museums and cultural heritage* are also prominent for Paris compared to the others, although the first of these attributes also stands out for Rome.

In the case of Madrid, it is the *friendly, open atmosphere and Mediterranean lifestyle* that stands out over all the other cities except Rome, where this attribute is given similar importance. Another outstanding feature of Madrid compared to the other cities, again with the exception of Rome, is that of *religious influences and traditions*

London stands out clearly over the other capitals for its *unpleasant climate*. At the same time, its attribute as a *cosmopolitan city* is very prominent.

Figure 1
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF PARIS

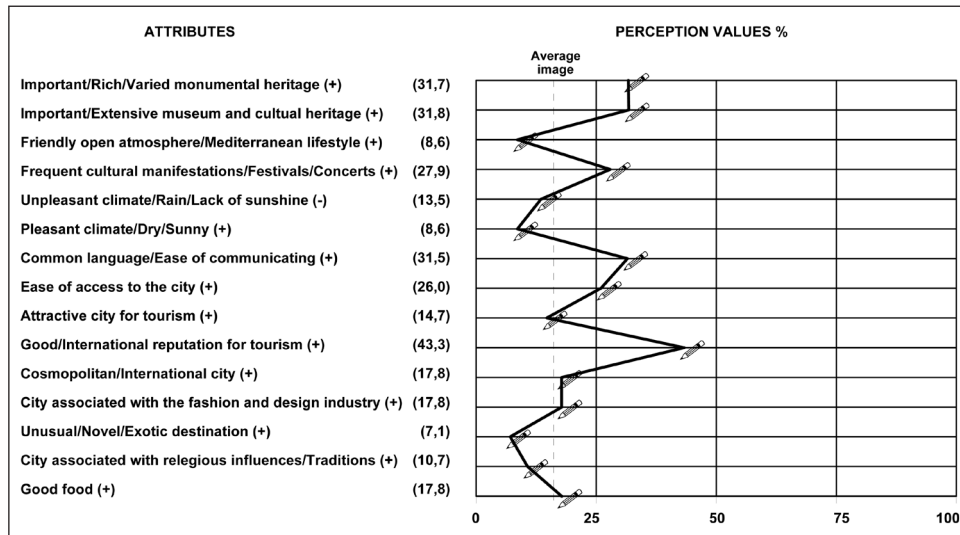


Figure 2
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF MADRID

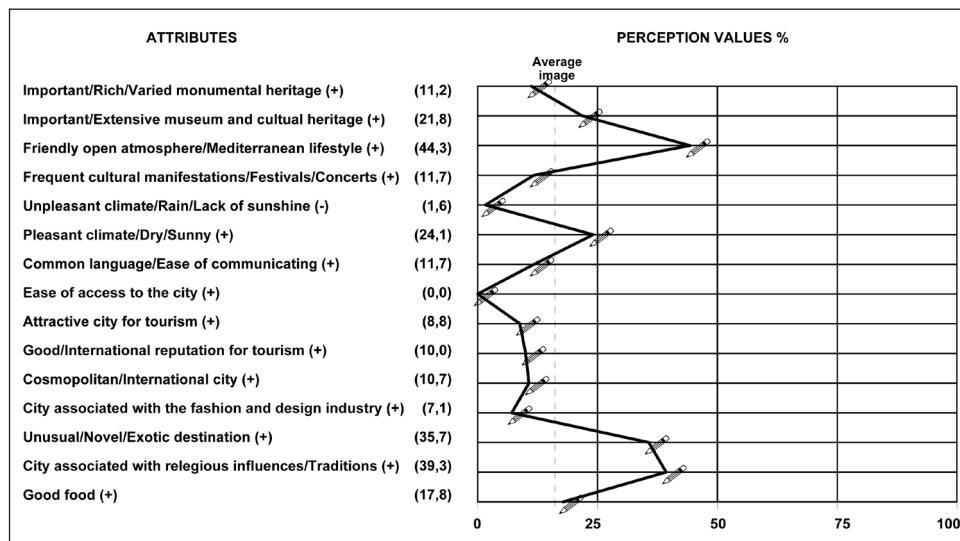


Figure 3
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF LONDON

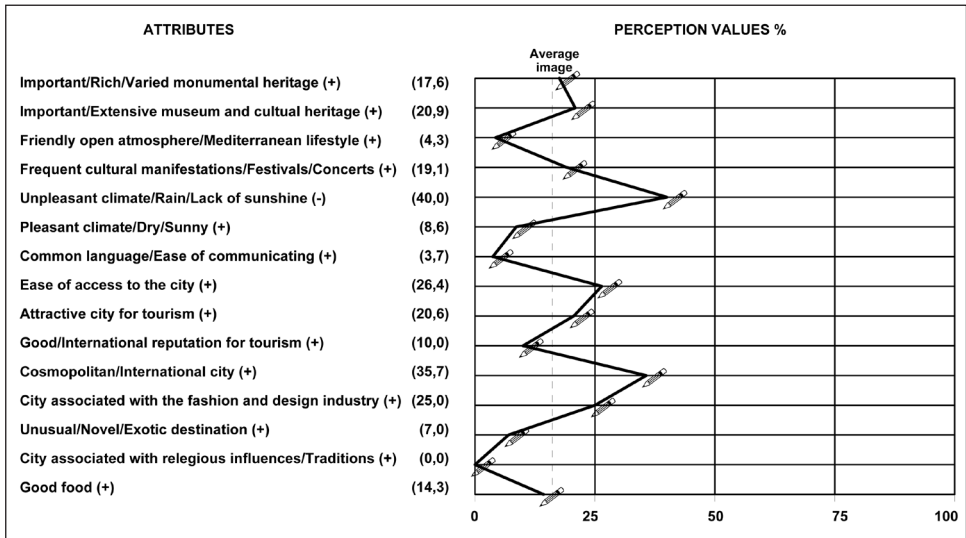


Figure 4
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF BRUSSELS

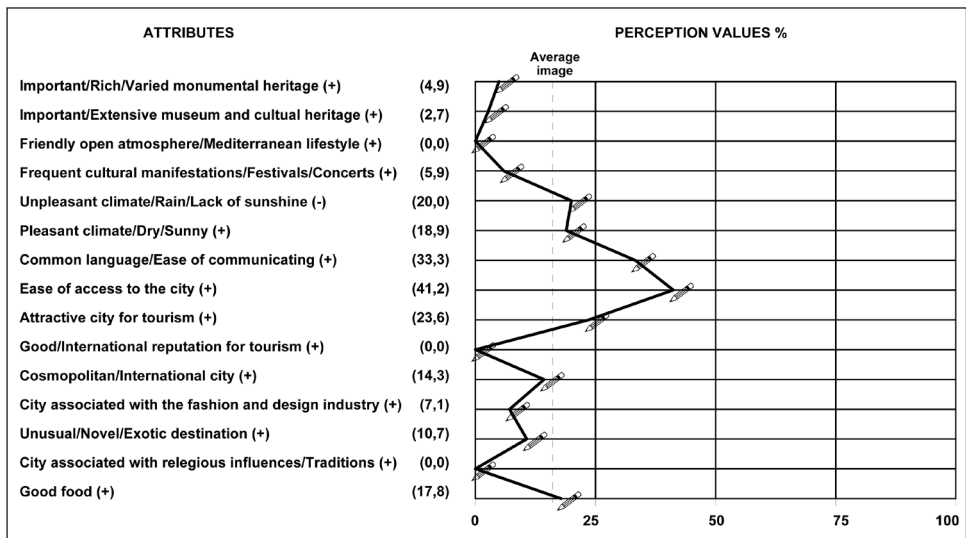


Figure 5
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF ROME

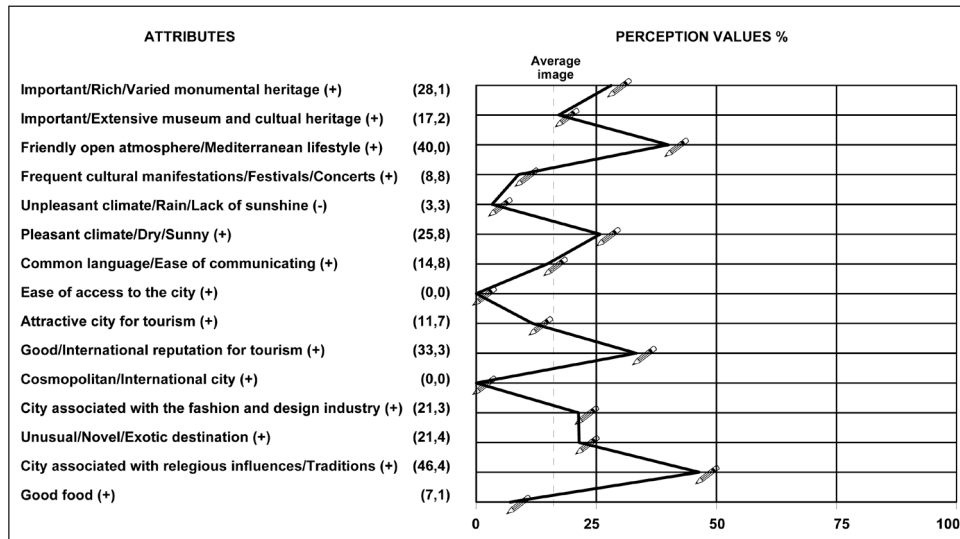
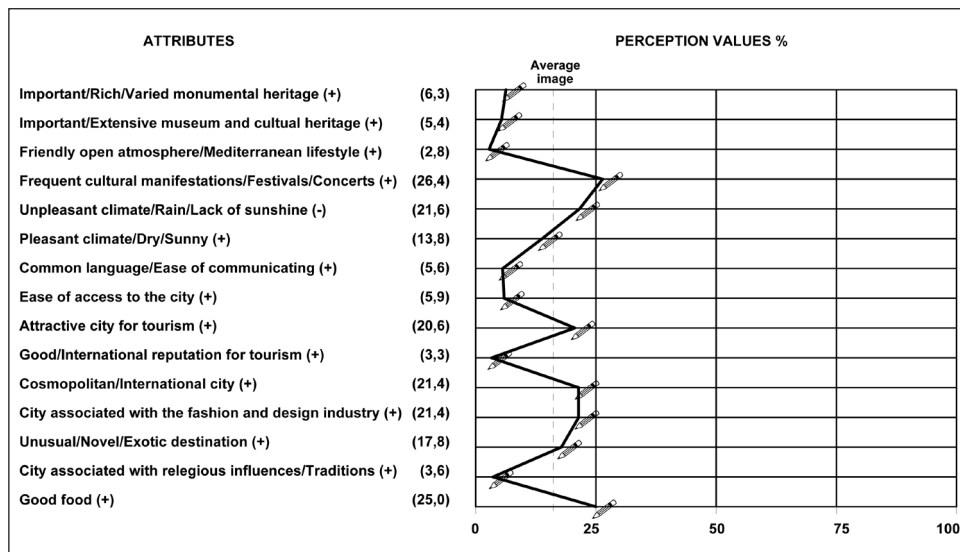


Figure 6
RELATIVE PERCEPTION OF BERLIN



The most important attribute of Brussels, in comparison with the other capitals, is its *ease of access*. This perception has a simple explanation, given the city's geographical situation with relation to the people interviewed, who all lived in France. On the negative side, the attribute of *reputation for tourism* is absent.

Rome stands out for its *friendly, open atmosphere and Mediterranean lifestyle* as well as for its *religious influences and traditions*; only Madrid is comparable for these two particular attributes. A third attribute that stands out in Rome is the importance of its *monumental heritage*, which can only be compared in this respect with the image of Paris.

Compared to the other capitals, Berlin has no one outstanding attribute. That of *good food* shows a slight predomination over the others, as does *frequent cultural manifestations*, exceeded only by Paris.

4.3. Individual image of each European capital

This image corresponds to the perception held of each of the six European capitals individually based on their perceived attributes and disregarding the perceptions of other capitals. The value of this perception is expressed as a percentage in such a way that the perception value of all the attributes is one hundred. It should be pointed out that there is no proportional ratio for each image attribute between the relative image and the individual image of each capital.

The results obtained show that the individual images of Rome, Madrid and Paris are more clearly defined within the first 15 attributes than the rest of the European capitals, in particular when compared with Brussels and Berlin.

Table 3
DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF EUROPEAN CAPITALS
ACCORDING TO ATTRIBUTES (%)

Cities	First 15 attributes	Rest of attributes
Paris	70.0	30.0
Madrid	75.0	25.0
London	62.3	37.7
Brussels	55.2	44.8
Rome	75.7	24.3
Berlin	57.3	42.7
General average	66.7	33.3

The individual image of Paris appears to be largely concentrated on two attributes: the importance of its *monumental heritage* and its *museum and cultural heritage*. Between them, these attributes account for 30.8% of perception. The remaining attributes making up the total of 15 account for 39.2% of perception.

Two attributes stand out for the individual image of Madrid. The first corresponds to its *friendly, open atmosphere and Mediterranean lifestyle*, which accounts for 17.1% of perception. The second is the importance of its *museum and cultural heritage*, accounting for 13.3%.

In the case of London, individual image is largely made up of three attributes: the importance of the *monumental heritage* of the city, the importance of the *museum and cultural heritage* and the city's *unpleasant climate*. These three attributes account for 32.8% of perception.

The two most prominent attributes for Brussels are the *common language* spoken by both its citizens and the people interviewed, representing 10.9% of perception, and the attribute related to the *ease of access* to the city, which accounts for 8.5% of perception.

The main attributes making up the individual image of Rome are the importance of the *monumental heritage* of the city, accounting for 19.0% of perception, and the *friendly open atmosphere and Mediterranean lifestyle*, representing 13.3%.

The most outstanding attribute for the individual image of Berlin is that of the *frequent cultural manifestations* on offer (festivals, concerts, etc.), which represent 11.0% of perception while the following attribute, the importance of the *monumental heritage* of the city, accounts for only 5.5%.

Figure 7
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF PARIS

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	17,3
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	13,5
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	2,3
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	7,3
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	3,1
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	1,9
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	6,5
Ease of access to the city (+)	3,5
Attractive city for tourism (+)	1,9
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	5,0
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	1,9
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	1,9
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	0,8
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	1,2
Good food (+)	1,9
Others attributes	30,0

Figure 8
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF MADRID

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	4,2
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	1,8
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	0,0
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	2,4
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	7,3
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	6,7
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	10,9
Ease of access to the city (+)	8,5
Attractive city for tourism (+)	4,8
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	0,0
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	2,4
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	1,2
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	1,8
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	0,0
Good food (+)	3,0
Others attributes	44,8

Figure 9
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF LONDON

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	19,0
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	9,0
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	13,3
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	2,9
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	1,0
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	7,1
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	3,8
Ease of access to the city (+)	0,0
Attractive city for tourism (+)	1,9
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	4,8
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	0,0
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	2,9
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	2,9
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	6,2
Good food (+)	1,0
Others attributes	24,3

Figure 10
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF BRUSSELS

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	8,8
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	13,3
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	17,1
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	4,4
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	0,6
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	7,7
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	3,3
Ease of access to the city (+)	0,0
Attractive city for tourism (+)	1,7
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	1,7
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	1,7
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	1,1
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	5,5
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	6,1
Good food (+)	2,8
Others attributes	24,3

Figure 11
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF ROME

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	11,4
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	10,5
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	1,4
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	5,9
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	10,9
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	2,3
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	0,9
Ease of access to the city (+)	4,1
Attractive city for tourism (+)	3,2
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	1,4
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	4,5
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	3,2
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	0,9
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	0,0
Good food (+)	1,8
Others attributes	37,7

Figure 12
INDIVIDUAL IMAGE OF BERLIN

ATTRIBUTES	VALUES %
Important/Rich/Varied monumental heritage (+)	5,5
Important/Extensive museum and cultural heritage (+)	3,7
Friendly open atmosphere/Mediterranean lifestyle (+)	1,2
Frequent cultural manifestations/Festivals/Concerts (+)	11,0
Unpleasant climate/Rain/Lack of sunshine (-)	7,9
Pleasant climate/Dry/Sunny (+)	4,9
Common language/Ease of communicating (+)	1,8
Ease of access to the city (+)	1,2
Attractive city for tourism (+)	4,3
Good/International reputation for tourism (+)	0,6
Cosmopolitan/International city (+)	3,7
City associated with the fashion and design industry (+)	3,7
Unusual/Novel/Exotic destination (+)	3,0
City associated with religious influences/Traditions (+)	0,6
Good food (+)	4,3
Others attributes	42,7

4.4. Global representation of the European capitals image

This comprises a graphic synthesis of the relative and individual images of each of the European capitals studied. The horizontal position for each capital is the result of adding the perception values of the 15 attributes under consideration, taking average image value as a reference. The vertical position of each capital on the graph is given by the total additive value of the 15 attributes.

The six European capitals are represented in Figure 13. It can be seen that, of all the capitals, Paris and Rome are the most prominent with respect to image, with Madrid not far behind. The first two are more or less on a par in sharing the attribute of image; both of them have an *important monumental heritage* and a *good international reputation for tourism*, although in this aspect Paris is slightly ahead of Rome. The remaining attributes are shared by the two cities, although at quite different levels. After taking all of them into consideration, however, the image of both cities is above the theoretical average for the six capitals in the group.

The global image of Madrid, which is also above the theoretical average, is close to that of Rome and rather less so to Paris. It shares with Rome three attributes at similar levels: a *friendly open atmosphere and Mediterranean lifestyle*, a *pleasant, dry, sunny climate* and *religious influences and traditions*.

The global images of Berlin and Brussels are near that of London and are not very prominent. As most of the attributes of these three capitals are below the theoretical image average, their global image also falls below it. The attribute of *cosmopolitan city* is very high for London compared to the other five cities and constitutes an important element that distinguishes this city from the other capitals.

Another element that differentiates London in relation to Brussels and Berlin is its *unpleasant climate*; in this respect, London has the highest level.

Figure 13
OVERALL IMAGES OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS



5. CONCLUSIONS

Cheaper airfares, which have mainly come about as a result of the expansion of low-cost airlines, have led to an increase in short-stay and weekend tourism to European cities. Cities compete with each other to attract tourists by attempting to create a positive image of themselves, at the same time as they put in place different strategies for defining themselves in a favourable light (Middleton, 2007; Paskaleva, Besson and Sutherland, 2009; Richards and Wilson, 2006; Roemer, 2009; Van der Ark and Richards, 2006).

In order to establish the best strategies for developing a city’s image, it is essential to be permanently aware of the image as seen from the perspective of different groups of people. In this respect, the EPI method used in this study represents a novel approach for evaluating the image of tourism destinations in general and cities in particular. The following conclusions can be drawn from its application to the present study.

First,

the system based on triads used to obtain information in the PIE- method allows all types of perceptions to be registered, whether they are derived from personal experience or from the many influences that interact with the individual aspects of each person.

Second,

with the PIE- method, data treatment and analysis is easy to understand and to interpret.

Third,

the image of each city studied can be assessed in relation to the rest, and evaluations can be obtained of the individual image of each city in relation to all the perceived attributes

Fourth,

the PIE-method can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative investigations. In both cases, perceived attributes and the relation between these and the stimuli used for image evaluation appear as quantified.

Fifth,

in addition to the use of the PIE- method as an end in itself, it can also be used as an auxiliary technique to generate attributes for use in surveys.

With respect to the results obtained on the image of the six European capitals, it should be pointed out that of the 15 attributes defining this image, all except one correspond to positive perceptions and in each case these are relatively high. The only negative attribute appearing in the image of the six capitals is that of *unpleasant climate* with which London (and to a lesser extent Berlin, Brussels and Paris) is principally identified. The great predominance of positive over negative attributes in the image of the six European capitals is in sharp contrast to the presence of a higher proportion of negative attributes in the image of other cities that have come under study (Selby, 2004). It is worth mentioning that, despite the fact that some attributes on the image of the six European capitals have a negative character, the frequency with which these appear puts them below the first 15 used in this research; in the minds of the people interviewed they are therefore of little relevance.

The two most important attributes of image correspond to the importance of *monumental heritage* and to *museum and cultural heritage*, aspects that represent an important cultural heritage that is impossible to imitate in those cities where it is not present (Law, 1996). This goes to prove that the building of new symbolic structures, the organisation of big events or the creation of themed attractions is no substitute in people's minds for cultural values that have historical links with the city's heritage, even though these are some of the strategies used by certain cities seeking to differentiate their own image from those of other cities (Richards and Wilson, 2005).

The main limitation of this study lies in the exploratory character of the research which was restricted to a small group of senior citizens, all with the same nationality and all living in the Côte D'Azur region. It is therefore not possible to make generalisations from the results obtained with regard to other age groups and nationalities. There is a need for more studies using the methodology described here in order to reach a better understanding of tourism and city image.

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