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Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Ecotourism to support sustainable development in Vietnam and the Philippines

Ecotourism place identity, place image and challenges to marketing management

The case of Peneda-Gerês National Park

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Unlocking the dichotomy of place identity/place image and its impact on place satisfaction for ecotourism destinations

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Melgaço – Peneda-Gerês National Park

- In Portugal, there are many places where one can enjoy ecotourism; such is the case of Peneda-Gerês National Park
- Melgaço council is an inhabited region with a small city (7,776 inhabitants in 238 Km²) that lives on its natural heritage.
- This region has many attractions like the possibility to do rafting, canyoning, guided tours, as well as fauna and flora observation (ICNF/NATURAL.PT, 2021). All these attractions play a critical role for the local economy and regional development, being an essential motive for the investment made by the municipality in place quality, promotion, marketing, and branding to increase the number of visitors.

Reserach questions

1. Does Melgaço's identity perceived by the policy decision-makers at the Town Hall and tourism entrepreneurs match its image perceived by its tourists and visitors?
2. From the point of view of Melgaço's visitors and tourists, what is the association level between place promotion, marketing, branding, and quality with the level of satisfaction with it?
3. Does the difference between Melgaço's image, perceived by visitors and tourists, and the identity of the place, perceived by decision-makers and tourism entrepreneurs, impact the satisfaction of the former?
4. Are psychological attraction, travelling, and visiting experience moderating variables of the relation between place image and place satisfaction? the

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- One can understand **place identity** and **place image** as concepts that integrate mental images, materiality, institutions, practices and representations (Kalandides, 2012).
- More, the identity of a place could be the strategic element to differentiate one place from other places influencing the visitors' selection process.
- There is also the concept of '**sense of place**' in this domain, which has received increasing attention from scholars and practitioners (Jarratt et al., 2019). This concept is related to the **emotional power attraction of a destination** (Morgan et al., 2011)

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- **Place marketing** is demand-driven, being an approach to the needs of selected target groups.
- **Place branding** is an approach that seeks to express the identity of the place through a set of chosen values and narratives.
- If we want to improve the attraction of a place, we need to create a perceived image of tourists and visitors that should be reinforced by **identity promotion activities** adjusted to the needs or requests of the target audience.
- One should **align local identity with visitors' place image**, which includes physical and natural characteristics (Shaw & Williams, 2004), products, services, and facilities (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020), and perceived attraction, travelling and visiting experience (Buhalis, 2000).

Place Satisfaction

- **Visitors will revisit an ecotourism destination** if they have a good and satisfactory experience (Allameh et al., 2015; Konuk, 2019; Lee et al., 2013).
- Moreover, satisfied tourists are more likely to **return to the same destination** and **share their positive travelling experiences** with their friends and relatives (Yoon & Uysal, 2005)

Methodology

- Exploratory case study
- Quantitative approach with a cross-section survey among internal and external stakeholders related to Melgaço tourism.
- Questionnaire with 20 items in a purposive sample of policy decision-makers at the Town Hall and tourism entrepreneurs to measure place identity.
- To measure place image and place satisfaction, we applied a questionnaire with 32 items into a representative sample of tourists and visitors of Melgaço.

Results

- The **tourists' perception of place image** does not match internal stakeholders' perception of Melgaço's place identity. This result indicates that internal stakeholders have a more positive view of the activities they develop to create an identity of the place, than tourists and visitors.
- **Quality** (0.640) and **Branding** (0.449) positively impact **Satisfaction**.
- However, the effect of **Promotion and Marketing** (-0.241) is **negative**. It means that the greater the promotion and marketing efforts perceived by the visitors and tourists, the less their satisfaction. Probably because what is promoted about Melgaço does not match the external stakeholders' expectations.

Results

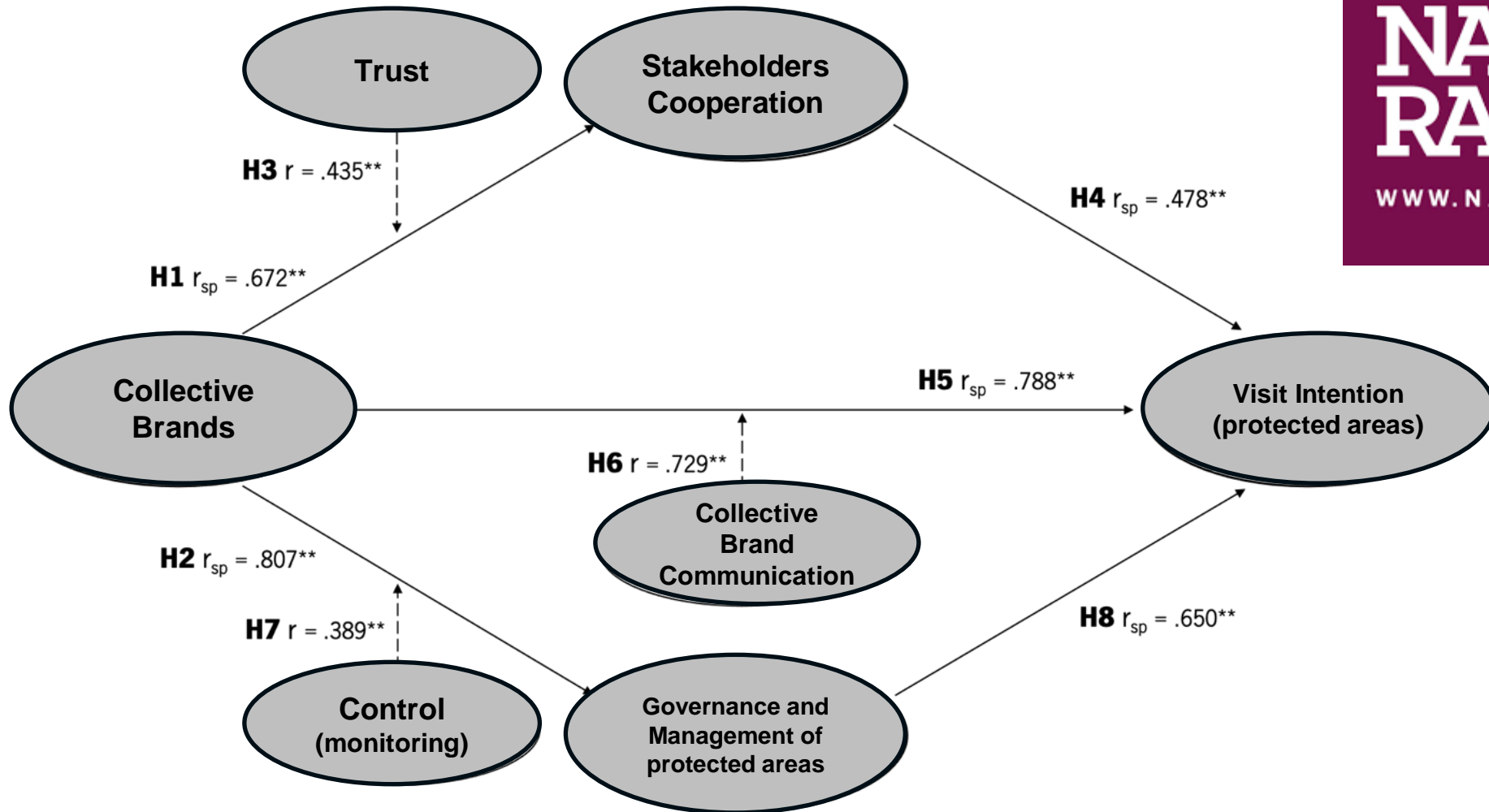
- There is a statistically significant **negative correlation** (Standardized Regression Weight) between **Place Identity and Image** differences Satisfaction (srw = -0.715; $p < 0.001$). It means that the greater this difference, the less is the satisfaction of tourists and visitors, showing the importance to study the gap between place identity and place image.
- Psychological attraction, travelling, and visiting experience are moderating variables of the relationship between place image and place satisfaction.

The importance of Collective Brands in Protected Areas management and promotion: Natural.PT, Portugal case study

- i) branding of collective brands;
- ii) stakeholder theory;
- iii) cooperation and governance



The importance of Collective Brands in Protected Areas management and promotion: Natural.PT, Portugal case study







Thank you!

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