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**Destination atmospheric cues as key influencers of tourists' word-of-mouth
communication: tourist visitation at two Mediterranean capital cities**

Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro

Marketing, Operations and General Management Department, Instituto Universitário de
Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) and Business Research Unit (BRU/UNIDE), Portugal

Nikolaos Stylos (*)

Department of Management, School of Economics, Finance and Management, University of
Bristol, UK

Victoria Bellou

Department of Economics, University of Thessaly, Greece

(*): Corresponding Author

Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro

Director of PhD in Tourism Management & Head of Research in Marketing
Marketing, Operations and General Management Department
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) and Business Research Unit (BRU/UNIDE)
Av. Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal
Email: sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt

Nikolaos Stylos (*)

Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Postgraduate Research Director
Department of Management, School of Economics, Finance and Management
University of Bristol
Howard House, Queens Ave., Bristol, BS8 1SN, United Kingdom
Email: n.stylos@bristol.ac.uk

Victoria Bellou

Associate Professor of Management
Department of Economics
University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece
E-mail: ybellou@uth.gr

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Abstract

The impact of destination atmospheric cues – as representations of destination characteristics – on tourists' intention to engage in word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is examined, adopting a well-established retailing theoretical underpinning; the Stimuli-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. In doing so, this research incorporates both affective and cognitive states and processes as Organism. Evidence from 1025 tourists who visited Lisbon, Portugal and 1002 who visited Athens, Greece offers support to the S-O-R model and at the same time a) exemplifies the explanatory power of Organism in the relationship between destination atmospheric cues and WOM communication intention, b) recognizes the key role of negative affect for both destinations, as well as of the positive affect for Athens only, and c) highlights the procedural nature of the cognitive state of Organism. This research corroborates the value of examining tourists' behavior through the lens of S-O-R and how both affective and cognitive elements of Organism contribute to decision-making in a procedural manner. Managerial implications for tourism destination marketers are also discussed.

Keywords: atmospheric cues; WOM; mindfulness; perceived authenticity; affect; tourist visitation experience

Word Count: 8082

Introduction

Tourism is interdisciplinary research-wise, building upon several disciplines, such as economics, regional planning, environmental studies, geography, history, and sociology. As with any interdisciplinary domain, to the extent that researchers of different backgrounds go beyond their disciplinary boundaries, they bring new concepts, new theories and new methods within tourism management (Okumus, Niekerk, Koseoglu, & Bilgihan, 2018; Oviedo-Garcia, 2016). Along this line of thinking, combining knowledge from different academic areas of marketing can also be useful in gaining deeper understanding of tourists and their behavior.

Originally, atmospheric cues were introduced to reflect store characteristics in the retailing industry, in an attempt to design the buying environment that could increase purchase probability (Kotler, 1973). In the years that followed the content of atmospheric cues has widened to also include service characteristics (Brady & Cronin, 2001), web site elements (Ha & Im, 2012), and destination characteristics (Chung & Shin, 2004). Generally, atmospheric cues have been linked to several positive attitudes and behaviors, including satisfaction, trust, emotions (e.g., pleasure, arousal), buying intention and behavior, and word-of-mouth (WOM) (e.g., Booms & Bitner, 1982; Dann & Jacobsen, 2003; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes, & Cave, 2007; Lee, Balaji, & Wei, 2015). Despite the fact that atmospheric cues have mostly been employed in the retailing context (e.g., Roschk, Loureiro, & Breitsohl, 2017; Loureiro, 2014), we may argue that they can be of value to the tourism context too, as the destination landscape, attractions (monuments, museums, and palaces), beaches, architecture, hotels, events or even food and beverage constitute atmospheric stimuli. Besides, the investigation of atmospheric cues has moved from the store to buildings, to include not only interior and exterior characteristics, but

also the environment and the neighborhood (Pan, Su, & Chiang, 2008). Additionally, as Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung (2007) postulate, the esthetic dimension of a destination- including atmospheric cues inside a lodging and the landscape - reflects the environmental stimuli that may influence a tourist.

In the tourism scholarship, an increasing number of researchers has focused on delineating the explanatory mechanism behind tourists' attitudes and behavior, in order to successfully design and implement their marketing strategy (e.g., Heung & Cheng, 2000; Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2010). In the present study, however, we seek to test whether a well-established and widely adopted retailing theory can be applied and facilitate our understanding of individuals' attitudes and behavior within a tourism context. The Stimulus (S)-Organism(O)-Response(R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) suggests that the impact of stimuli on response is mediated by emotional and cognitive states and processes. Up until now, only a few studies (Bonn et al., 2007; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Lin, 2004; Loureiro, 2014; Loureiro, Almeida, & Rita, 2013; Wang et al., 2018; Yüksel, 2007) have successfully incorporated this model to shed light to tourists' experience, at very specific contexts, namely a hotel, a zoo, and a museum. The present research investigates the role of destination atmospheric cues (Stimulus) on intention for WOM communication (Response) via Organism within two European cities. The selection of the urban context is deemed to be appropriate for this investigation as the 'servicescape' concept and the associated atmospheric cues produce a combination of direct and indirect encounters, thus granting a very distinct meaning to the tourist experience (Ashworth, 2012; Wearing & Foley, 2017).

In terms of Organism – which represents the internalization of the stimuli – researchers usually incorporate pleasure, arousal, and dominance as its emotional (e.g., Eroglu et al., 2001,

2003; Ha & Lennon 2010; Kawaf & Tagg 2012; Mehrabian & Russel, 1974; Menon & Kahn, 2002). Yet, researchers have also suggested that Stimuli may also elicit cognitive responses (e.g., Eroglu et al., 2003; Ha & Im, 2011, 2012; Park et al., 2008). This study investigates both, adopting a procedural approach, that examines the emotional and cognitive antecedents of experience, as a measure of the flows of feelings and thoughts that emerge from a variety of surrounding influences (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). In terms of the emotional-related aspects, we investigate tourists' affect (positive affect -PA, and negative affect - NA). Affect refers to "shifts in current moods produced primarily by external events" (Baron, 2008, p. 328), with PA reflecting high energy and pleasurable engagement and NA representing unpleasant engagement (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). With regards to the cognitive aspect, both tourists' mindfulness and perceived authenticity of the destination are taken into consideration. Mindfulness is a state of mind that results from the way that individuals examine information and is sensitive to the context (Langer, 1993). Perceived authenticity of the destination refers to a subjective judgment made by tourists when comparing a destination to an absolute, considered as the reference object or the icon (Ram, Bjork, & Weidenfeld, 2016). The model under investigation appears in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

The main contributions of this study are four. First, it seeks to advance our understanding of tourists' decision making processes with respect to endorsing tourism destinations, by adopting the S-O-R framework from the field of environmental psychology – which has received only limited attention with respect to modelling tourists' planning and

future behavior in the tourism destination context (Min et al., 2020). Second, it aims at extending its conceptualization and test the organism part of the S-O-R model, by incorporating both affective and cognitive states and processes and their interrelationships; this would potentially contribute to overcoming criticism about its theoretical robustness (Bigné, Chatzipanagiotou, & Ruiz, 2020), and also respond to recent calls for further development of S-O-R in explaining tourist decision making (e.g., Loureiro, Guerreiro, & Ali, 2020). Third, it is anticipated to add to our understanding of the explanatory mechanism by which destination atmospheric cues of a destination will influence tourists' intention to speak in favor of the destination to others. Fourth, this study will improve our knowledge in terms of both destination atmospheric cues and mindfulness in the tourism scholarship, which is currently limited. From a practical viewpoint, this study may be useful to managers of DMOs in maximizing the likelihood of having tourists act as evangelists of relevant destinations.

Literature Review

The effect of destination atmospheric cues

Atmospherics or environmental cues are an amalgam of tangible and intangible attributes of the servicescape, comprising an interrelated system of, *first*, the physical location characteristics, and manmade structures, *second*, cultural elements, aesthetics and ambient traits, and, *third*, people, who may play the role of either service providers or customers (Bonn et al., 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Teng, 2011; Wang & Mattila, 2015). Destination atmospheric cues include multiple elements that comprise the overall context within which tourists make decisions, including – but not limited to- the landscape, historic monuments, hotels, and infrastructure (Sirgy & Su, 2000). Within the tourism destination literature,

destination atmospheric cues have mostly been investigated as an antecedent of images (e.g. Chung & Shin 2004; Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). In general, it has been shown that destination atmospheric cues influence tourists' attitudes and behaviors positively (e.g., Lin 2004; Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth 2005; Grappi & Montanari 2011), while a few studies have linked them specifically with WOM (Bonn et al., 2007; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Leri & Theodoridis, 2019; Loureiro, Almeida, & Rita, 2013). Accordingly, the anticipation of this study is that:

H1: Atmospheric cues have a positive direct effect on tourists' intention for WOM communication.

The Stimuli-Organize-Response model

Although the relationship between destination atmospheric cues and WOM has attracted some attention, it requires further investigation as it is distal. Towards this direction, the present study builds upon the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell 1974). As with atmospheric cues, developed for retailing, the S-O-R model postulates that the relationship between stimulation and behavior is mediated by psychological structures and processes (Massara, Liu, & Melara, 2010). S-O-R has been implemented in its generic or extended forms to explain individuals' behaviors across different disciplines, such as commercial marketing and retailing in particular (e.g., Grohmann et al., 2007), social responsibility and environmental management (e.g., Zhu et al., 2014), informatics and human behavior (e.g., Cao & Sun, 2018), fashion industry (e.g. Lee and Johnson, 2010), and hospitality (e.g., Choi & Kandampully, 2019). According to this model, Stimulus (S) can be any factor that influences and arouses individuals, is external to the individual (Bagozzi, 1986) and affects their internal emotional and cognitive states

(Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Organism (O) refers to those internal processes that intervene between the Stimulus and the Response. Finally, Response (R) is the final outcome, determined by the way that the individual handled the external motive. Examples of Stimuli may include natural environment characteristics, architectural landmark buildings and other manmade structures, outdoor decorations, events and cultural elements, surrounding atmosphere and aromas (e.g., Chen, King, & Suntikul, 2019; Su & Swanson, 2017; Yalinay et al., 2018). Then, the Organism has been seen as the vehicle for carrying the emotional and cognitive states created by stimuli, such as intrinsic states of perceptions of relationships with the destinations, perceived cohesion, perceived intimacy, consciousness of the tourism moment and emotional arousal (e.g., Lin & Kuo, 2016; Lin et al., 2019; Zhang & Xu, 2019). Finally, Response represents behavioral outputs such as tourist engagement and satisfaction with tourism experience (e.g., Lin et al., 2019), expression of liminal experience (e.g., Zhang & Xu, 2019), approach or avoidance intentions and behaviors during the visitation (Stylos & Bellou, 2019; Stylos et al. 2016; Stylos et al. 2017) – longer/shorter duration of visit or higher/lower value of purchases – (e.g. Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016; Lee, 2018), WOM referral intentions (e.g., Su, Swanson, & Chen, 2016), and tourist loyalty (Su, Hsu, & Boostrom Jr, 2020).

In the present study, in line with the S-O-R model, destination atmospheric cues act as environmental signals that form the context of the visit for tourists (Stimuli). Destination atmospheric cues reflect a cognitive representation of the destination, as they include the elements that comprise the overall context within which tourists make decisions and are external in nature (Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth 2005; Mazanec 1994; Yüksel 2007).

These Stimuli have an impact on WOM communication intention, which represents hence the Response of tourists towards the destination (a final outcome of their visitation). Individuals' intention to engage in WOM communication upon completion of the visitation is the most active response upon completion of a visitation and can be of great significance for the destination's tourism sector, especially if the tourist commenting involves a particularly influential WOM spread, as the consequent benefits or damages for the destination can be multiplied (Kozinets et al., 2010). Therefore, WOM communication intention is a final act, that can take either approaching or avoiding form, just as researchers have postulated for Response (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Sherman et al., 1997).

A limited number of studies in retailing has explicitly investigated WOM as a Response in a S-O-R context, both offline (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis 2001; Chang et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2016) and online (Fang, 2014; Lee, & Johnson, 2010; Loureiro & Ribeiro, 2014). Yet, within the tourism scholarship, to the best of our knowledge, there are only a handful of published research. Wang et al. (2018) adopt the S-O-R model to investigate consumers' word-of-mouth intention in the green hotel industry and examined satisfaction and trust – both emotional in nature - as Organism, in the relationship between green image and Bonn et al. (2007) use the same model to link atmospheric cues of heritage attractions (i.e., museums and key attractions of Florida) with WOM (along with attitude and intention to revisit), yet only directly, leaving therefore the Organism part of the model undefined. A third study has also been recently published utilizing S-O-R in explaining tourists' future intentions (Min et al., 2020), but this include WOM indirectly and only as a component of tourists' behavioral intentions and, therefore, it do not report on WOM intentions variance and explanatory of the proposed model on WOM intentions.

The mediating role of organism

As both the travel product and tourists' behavior are very complex (Miguéns & Mendes, 2008; Weaver, Weber, & McCleary, 2007), the present study intends to offer deeper understanding of this area through the S-O-R framework, with the effect of Stimulus on Response being transferred through Organism. In this regard, a key construct is tourists' visitation experience, which - just as the concept of Organism - is both emotional and cognitive in nature. As scholars (Chen and Rahman, 2018; Tan, 2017) posit, tourism is experience-based, with experiences consisting of physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional processes that encompass all aspects of tourism services. Tourist experiences are created with the provision of destination cues and consumed at site, thus increasing tourists' immersion-into-destination escapism (Oh et al., 2007). Moreover, Butler (2017) postulates that, tourists desire and expect enjoyable experiences when visiting a place, and the key for meeting such expectation is building on its unique attributes to form a high level of perceived authenticity of the tourism destination.

Consequently, tourist experience is incorporated in the proposed model as being influenced by PA and NA (in terms of tourists' affect) and mindfulness and perceived authenticity (in terms of tourists' cognition). Besides, in accordance with the S-O-R model, Organism may represent not only states but processes, too.

Affect as a mediator

To investigate the role of the emotional state of tourists in the relationship between atmospheric cues and WOM, this study focuses on positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). According to Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988, p. 1063), PA “reflects the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert” while NA “is a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness”. Individuals with high PA are likely to feel energetic, concentrated and engaged while those with low PA may be sad and lethargic. By the same token, individuals with high NA experience different feelings than those with low NA (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Yet, as researchers note, PA is not simply the opposite affective state of NA (Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999), since individuals may have at the same time both positive and negative emotions (Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001). In line with the appraisal theory (Smith & Lazarus, 1990), internal and external stimuli elicit emotions; positive and favorable stimuli are likely to trigger positive affective states while negative stimuli tend to lead to negative affective states. Therefore, in a tourism context, to the extent that destination atmospheric cues are attractive, positive, interesting, they may elicit positive affect to tourists and negative if they are perceived as of low quality or compatibility. In turn, tourists’ affect is likely to influence their visitation experience. Dawney (2013, p.641), built upon the work of Spinoza and Foucault to highlight the fundamental role of affect – via subjectivity- for experience. As she postulates, “Through its ability to make things that happen be felt, the affective register operates as a site of those relations of productive power that give rise to structures of experience”.

Therefore, in the present study we hypothesize that:

H2: Affect mediates the relationship between atmospheric cues and tourist visitation experience.

H2a: Positive affect positively mediates the relationship between atmospheric cues and tourist visitation experience.

H2b: Negative affect negatively mediates the relationship between atmospheric cues and tourist visitation experience.

Tourism has principally been concerned with the tourist experience of visiting, seeing, learning, enjoying, and living in a different mode of life (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). In this sense, everything tourists go through at a destination can be an experience, be it behavioral or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, or expressed or implied (Pizam, 2010; Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). As tourists look in general for pleasurable experiences that are linked to the nature of the destination itself while holidaying, the anticipated total experiences depend on the aesthetics and the character of the landscape and the overall setting of the tourism product in the particular place (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Pan et al., 2008). Furthermore, a clear linkage between destination atmospheric cues and tourists' experience has been made, with Yalinay and her colleagues (2018) supporting that authentic atmospherics positively influence tourists' social and shopping experience at landmark open attractions. More recently, scholars have indicated that the spirit of a place is of utmost importance for shaping touristic experience, while potential atmospheric interventions may further enhance and transform tourists' visitation experiences (Volgger, 2019). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H3: Atmospheric cues have a positive direct effect on tourist visitation experience.

Cognition as a mediator

Given that Organism may comprise of a process, the present study posits that cognition can be rendered through tourists' mindfulness and perceived authenticity, influencing the tourist visitation experience. Mindfulness is a key cognitive construct, since this has been defined as "a state of mind that results from drawing novel distinctions, examining information from new perspectives, and being sensitive to context... [recognition] that there is not a single optimal perspective, but many possible perspectives on the same situation" (Langer, 1993, p. 44). Mindful people are aware of their inner self and outer experiences, such as thoughts, emotions, sensations, actions, and surroundings (Loureiro, Stylos, & Miranda, 2019; Dutt et al., 2016). According to Kang and Gretzel (2012) mindfulness is conceptualized via four components: attention, present-focus, awareness and non-judgment. Specifically, attention signifies individual's state of concentrating on what they are doing in a given moment. Moreover, the present-focus component refers to the individual's intention to be focussed and open to the experience of the moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Clear awareness is an important mindful characteristic for visitors (Trinh & Ryan, 2016), and it denotes 'the background radar of consciousness, continually monitoring the inner and outer environment and attention as a process of focusing conscious awareness, providing heightened sensitivity to a limited range of experiences' (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 822). Finally, non-judgment, expresses individual's tendency to avoid making judgements about the experience. All four components need to be considered when conceptualizing and measuring mindfulness.

Therefore, in line with the S-O-R model, atmospheric cues (S) are likely to influence the extent to which a tourist seeks to gather information for the destination and its characteristics and makes distinctions in his/her mind about it. Thus, the expectation is that:

H4: Atmospheric cues of a destination have a positive direct effect on tourists' mindfulness.

Moreover, authenticity (e.g., through product styling, cultural artefacts and architecture, films or music) has been regarded as an important factor for tourists during the evaluation process of a destination (e.g., Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Kim & Youn, 2016; Lau, 2010; Newman & Dhar 2014; Pierson, 2003; Yi, Lin, Jin, & Luo, 2016). Researchers identify two aspects of authenticity, namely the objective and the subjective or symbolic, with the former being related to originality and genuineness (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010) and the latter to a “subjective, negotiable, and contextual” arrangement (Ram, Bjork, & Weidenfeld 2016, p. 111). According to Ramkissoo and Uysal (2011), tourists are currently more sophisticated in seeking for and wanting to have authentic experiences. Besides, as Spooner (1986, p. 200) has noted, ‘this has to do not only with genuineness and reliability, but with the interpretation of genuineness and our desire for it’. Thus, subjective authenticity is considered to be more significant than objective authenticity when evaluating a destination. Within the tourism context, subjective (perceived) authenticity has been studied in association with dining locations (Muñoz et al., 2006), tour experiences (Frew, 2008), cultural festivals (Wong et al., 2016) or cultural and religious celebrations (Novello & Fernandez, 2016). Concerning the relationship between mindfulness and perceived authenticity, as Moscardo (2009) postulates, mindful visitors of a destination are more likely to learn about a destination and gain greater understanding of a destination. Given that, perceived authenticity of a destination is highly subjective, tourists’ mindfulness is likely to increase tourists’ recognition of a destination as unique. Besides, as Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) posit, mindful visitors are more likely to

consider the destination as a source of new information, making them hence more open to its characteristics and the experience it can offer. Thus, the expectation is that:

H5: Tourists' mindfulness will increase the perceived authenticity of the destination

In essence, mindful tourists tend to focus on the during-trip lived experiences, as a result of their increased awareness and sensitivity, which can ultimately lead to an overall positive visitation experience based on novel distinctions for the given destination context (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). This is the main premise for introducing the concept of authenticity into tourists' behavioral modelling, as it may offer insights into how tourists experience their visits to a destination (Langer, 1992; McCannell, 1973). Besides, in the experience economy, extensive emphasis is being given both on tourists' search for new, memorable, and unique experiences and on organizations' effort to design and offer tourists experiences that will be perceived as such (Loureiro, 2014; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Kim et al., 2012). In fact, perceived authenticity functions as a motive for tourists to get involved with memorable events and come closer to tangible attributes of high value during their visit to a tourism destination (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Therefore, the distinguished elements of a destination may positively transform a visit, and unexpectedly boost the whole travel experience. Consequently, the expectation is that:

H6: Perceived authenticity of a destination will enhance tourist visitation experience

Evidence suggests that tourists who get highly involved with the destination, tend to receive and spread information enthusiastically (Jamrozy, Backman, & Backman, 1996; Prebensen, Woo, Chen, & Uysal, 2012). Tung and Ritchie (2011) posit that positive

memorable experiences enhance the spread of positive WOM. Actually, the same authors emphasize the importance of the ‘surprise factor’ for increasing the evaluation of memorable experiences that, consequently, elevates the travel experience as a whole, encouraging tourists to speak about it to their acquaintances. Similarly, the extensive usage of social media and blogging further support tourists’ perceptions and respective evaluations of various aspects of their visit (Tham, Mair, & Croy, 2019), allowing their contacts to benefit from sharing of travel experiences and the provision of any recommendations about a destination (Schuckert et al., 2015). Besides, when enjoyable experiences are absent from a visit, tourists will be unwilling not only to revisit the destination but also to recommend it to others (Bramwell, 1998). Taken together, it is expected that:

H7: Tourist visitation experience has a positive direct effect on their intention for WOM communication.

In order to test the wider generalizability of our proposed model and maximize implementation of our study design outputs, we have run two field research studies at selected Mediterranean urban destinations, i.e. Lisbon and Athens, thus suggesting location as control variable (see Figure 1).

Method

Measures

Atmospheric cues: This construct was measured with fifteen items. The proposed scale is the aggregated product of previously published validated scales. Particularly, we used eight items proposed by Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, and Kaplanidou (2015), corresponding to questionnaire items AC 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13 and 14; six items coming from De Nisco and

Warnaby (2013), i.e., AC 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12; and, finally an item (AC15) was based on Byrd et al. (2016) to include influences from the long wine tradition of both countries.

Respondents were asked to provide their opinions on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree”, including “0 = I cannot answer” as an extra point that may contribute to avoid false neutral responses (Weijters et al., 2010).

Mindfulness: The 14-item measurement scale provided in Kang and Gretzel (2012) was adopted. Participants responded using a 7-point Likert scale, anchored with “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree”, including “0 = I cannot answer”.

Affect: The 20-item PANAS scale was adopted from Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). Respondents were asked to inform how often they felt several different feelings, representing 10 positive and 10 negative ones, while visiting Lisbon. The scale utilized was a 5-point semantic differential, ranging between “1 = Never” and “5 = Always”.

Perceived Authenticity: This was measured with the 10-item scale proposed by Kolar and Zabkar (2010). Survey participants were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree”, including a “0 = I cannot answer” option to reduce measurement error (Shoemaker, Eichholz, & Skewes, 2002).

Tourist visitation experience: A 9-item measurement scale was adopted from Kang and Gretzel (2012) and a 7-point Likert scale with anchors of “1 = strongly disagree” and “7 = strongly agree”, including a “0 = I cannot answer”, was employed to measure tourists’ responses.

Intention for word-of-mouth communication: The construct was measured with four items, that were based on the work of Brüggen, Foubert, and Gremler (2011) and adapted to the tourism destinations context. A 7-point Likert scale was utilized, ranging from “1 = strongly disagree”

to “7 = strongly agree”, adding “0=I cannot answer”, for those respondents being unsure of what to reply.

Methodological Procedures

To safeguard and enhance the content validity and reliability of measurements of the proposed model constructs, certain research procedures took place towards mitigating the disadvantages of potential response bias, i.e. response set or response style, before and during data collection. Initially, the authors scrambled the order of questions for more than half of the survey questionnaires (Ruble & Stout, 1990), and then reversed the scales of questionnaire items which resulted to high scale values reflecting a low actual value in the measured element and vice versa (Linacre, 2002). Moreover, the survey was designed in such a way as to reduce the situational pressure to survey participants (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007), ensuring also that they all experienced the same data collection conditions.

Based on rules of thumb and executing power analysis (Faul et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2010), a conservative target for sample size was adopted, which suggested a minimum of 900 survey responses per population (effect size=0.5; size=0.5; $\alpha=0.05$; power=0.95; $df=2118$; critical $\chi^2=2226.179$) to avoid detrimental effects in our statistical estimations.

Additionally, to avoid or minimize non-response errors, i.e., coverage, sampling, non-response and measurement errors (Hansen et al., 1951; Sjöström et al., 1999) several actions have been taken. The coverage error has been prevented by targeting the data collection only to tourists who were departing from either airport of the two selected Mediterranean capital cities, i.e. Lisbon and Athens. Every participant that was not part of the targeted population was excluded from either sampling or data analysis. In line with Moutinho and Chien ‘s

(2007) suggestions, we aimed at collecting a large sample, which greatly contributes to the avoidance of the random sampling error. As the final size of the usable questionnaires are 1025 for the Lisbon study and 1002 for the Athens one, the maximum sampling error of 3.2% for either studies. The field researchers team received proper training prior to running data collection to avoid systematic biases (Dolnicar, Laesser, & Matus, 2009), informing potential participants about the research in a standardized manner prior to responding (Converse & Presser, 1986). Finally, the questionnaire utilized in both Lisbon and Athens was the same and was provided in English, to ensure high response compatibility between the two field studies. Specifically, the usage of ambiguous wording was consistently avoided in both Likert and semantic differential scales to control for acquiescence response bias (Schriesheim & Hill, 1981) and we also included an extra point of response, namely “0 = I cannot answer” to minimize the effect of midpoint responding (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2006).

Sampling procedure and data collections

Two field research studies were conducted at Humberto Delgado Lisbon (LIS) and Eleftherios Venizelos Athens (ATH) international airports, both in July 2019; the first one, during July 2-15 concentrating on tourists boarding international charter flights; the second field study took place between July 16 and 29, also focusing on tourists departing via charter flights to return to their permanent place of residence. [The field research study was conducted in July as during this month tourist arrivals peak in both Lisbon and Athens and, therefore, the objectives of this investigation would better be served by enhanced sample sizes \(INE, 2019; Trading Economics, 2019\).](#) These two cities were selected as study fields because they both are internationally renowned Mediterranean urban destinations, covering widely the four

experience realms (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003) of education, aesthetics, escapism, and entertainment. A team of two research assistants and six undergraduate business school students ran the data collection process per site, by handing out copies of the self-administered questionnaire daily between 08:30 and 21:30 hours.

Only departing non-resident passengers were asked to participate in the survey via implementation of a systematic sampling procedure to the three queues created in front of passport control booths, which are located in the transit areas of both Lisbon and Athens airports. Every third passenger queueing was invited to participate in the field research studies, right after passing through passport controls. Respondents were asked to fully complete the questionnaire after it was made clear in writing and orally that the survey complies with the essential marketing research guidelines of anonymity, confidentiality and voluntariness. Completing the questionnaire typically took passengers approximately fifteen minutes on average for passengers waiting to fly out from either airports. In the first survey, 1372 passengers were initially approached, and 1114 agreed to participate in the field research study, during the two-week-research period, yielding an 81.20% response rate. Overall, this process produced 1025 usable questionnaires resulting in an overall final response rate of 74.70%. In the second survey, 1338 travelers were invited to participate in the field research study, and 1098 agreed, yielding an 82.06% response rate. Overall, this process produced 1002 usable questionnaires resulting in an overall final response rate of 74.88%. Demographic characteristics of the respondents coming from these two populations are provided in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

A missing values analysis (MVA) was conducted for each dataset, before proceeding with structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2010). Our results clearly suggest that all missing values have a completely random pattern, i.e. $\chi^2 = 3823.29$, $df = 3774$, $Sig_1 = 0.283$ and $\chi^2 = 3798.25$, $df = 3774$, $Sig_2 = 0.387$ for the Lisbon and Athens datasets, respectively (Little, 1988). The univariate normality values of the data were supported, as both skewness and kurtosis were found within proposed limits for all indicators (Mertler & Vannatta, 2004), ranging from -0.892 to 0.957 and -0.969 to 0.953 for Lisbon and, -0.965 to 0.917 and -0.905 to 0.984 for the Athens sample, respectively (see Appendix C). Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all factors and corresponding dimensions fell between 0.744 and 0.933 for the Lisbon dataset, and between 0.751 and 0.941 for the Athens one, exceeding the minimum standard for reliability of 0.70 for every construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Principal component analysis (PCA) with promax rotation and Kaiser normalization followed for atmospheric cues, affect, and intention for WOM communication constructs; this was to examine the applicability of the proposed atmospheric cues aggregated scale from different sources, the suitability of employing the adapted intention for WOM communication scale in tourism destinations research, and the dimensionality of affect. Results showed that the measurement scales for the first two constructs should keep all indicators, since all communalities were above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). However, PCA analysis on each dataset indicated that PANAS17 (*attentive*), and PANAS 12 (*alert*) items of affect scale should be excluded due to low communality (<0.50) and contrasting positive and negative values in the pattern matrix, respectively. Moreover, this analysis also revealed that atmospheric cues construct has three and affect has two underlying dimensions (positive and negative), respectively. Then,

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was executed as first part of structural equation modelling to verify the measurement scales of S-O-R model.

Results

S-O-R Measurement model formulation and testing

CFA revealed that some items in both datasets need to be omitted due to standardized factor loadings that were less than 0.50 (Janssens et al., 2008). Specifically, item MFF3 (*Part of my mind was occupied with other topics such as what I will be doing later, or things I'd rather be doing*)— of the mindfulness construct, and items PANAS1 (*interested*) and PANAS2 (*distressed*) of affect have been excluded. The rest of indicators across all scales were maintained to contribute to the structural analysis. Appendix B includes descriptive characteristics for the final list of observed variables for both Lisbon and Athens samples. Moreover, standardized factor loadings, standard errors and t-statistics between variables and latent constructs are also presented, which were all found significant at 99.9% confidence level.

The multivariate normality values of the datasets were also estimated, as univariate one alone is not adequate in structural modelling (Byrne, 2016). The calculation of Mahalanobis distance provided by AMOS was 247.661 and 178.142 for Lisbon and Athens, respectively. Then, we compared it with the corresponding chi-square critical value (2212.850, $df = 2105$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Since the distance value is smaller than the critical one for both cases, there were no observable multivariate outliers in either datasets (Pallant, 2013). Furthermore, multivariate kurtosis was estimated (Mardia's coefficient; Mardia, 1970), yielding m.k. = 1116.721 with a critical ratio of 155.488 for the Lisbon sample and m.k. = 783.288 with a critical ratio of

81.460 for the Athens one. These are smaller than the cut-off point value 5328 derived from the number of observed variables ($p = 72$), through the $p(p+2)$ formula (Bollen, 1998). Consequently, the multivariate normality assumption of the sample data distribution has been supported in both cases and analysis continued with checking the factor structure of the measurement model.

The square root of average variance extracted for each construct was found in all cases to be greater than the estimated correlations between the different pairs of factors; thus, discriminant validity of the proposed latent factors can be safely assumed (Table 1). Goodness-of-fit indices were examined for both S-O-R measurement and structural models, and separately for the SR direct relationship (i.e. excluding the constructs that come under Organism). It was derived that absolute, incremental and parsimony values of fit indices satisfy the criteria proposed for large samples (Hair et al., 2010) in both cases; thus, the S-O-R models fit the data very well, as shown on Table 2. [On the contrary, model fit tests for the alternative SR direct relationship revealed non-satisfactory fits to the datasets, as both \$\chi^2/df\$ and SRMR values exceed the specified criteria set in the literature \(e.g. Hair et al., 2010\). This shows the importance of carrying on with our investigation based on the S-O-R framework.](#)

[Insert Table 1 about here]

[Insert Table 2 about here]

S-O-R structural model results

Although there is not good fit of the proposed SR relationship to the data, the direct effects of atmospheric cues on intention for WOM communication were examined and found to be positive and significant for both Lisbon and Athens samples, offering support to hypotheses H₁ (see Figures 2 and 3). In accordance with the scope of this paper and to shed further light to this relationship by adopting the S-O-R model, we then tested the indirect relationship between atmospheric cues on intention for WOM communication, via organism.

In doing so for the Lisbon study, we found that the effects between atmospheric cues, positive affect and intention for WOM communication are non-significant. Yet, we also found that the effects between atmospheric cues, negative affect and intention for WOM communication are negative and significant; therefore, H_{2a} is rejected, but H_{2b} cannot be rejected, providing partial support to H₂. For the study conducted in Athens, hypothesis H₂ is fully supported as both mediating effects through PA and NA are significant and neither H_{2a} nor H_{2b} can be rejected. Following from the findings on H₂ and as the effect of atmospheric cues on tourist visitation experience is positive and significant in both studies, H₃ cannot be rejected; thus, NA ultimately partially mediates the relationships of atmospheric cues with tourist visitation experience in both samples, and also PA partially mediates the same relationship for the Athens sample only. Regarding, the effect of atmospheric cues on mindfulness, this is significant and positive, thus H₄ cannot be rejected for either Lisbon or Athens studies. Then, results from both studies show that mindfulness exerts a strongly positive and significant effect on perceived authenticity, providing support to H₅. There are similar findings for both samples regarding the effects of perceived authenticity on tourist visitation experience, and tourist visitation experience on intention in WOM, meaning that neither H₆ nor H₇ can be rejected. Overall, data analysis showcases the mediating roles of PA,

NA, mindfulness, perceived authenticity and tourist visitation experiences in transmitting the cognitive influence from atmospheric cues to tourists' intention to share these experiences via WOM communication. All results of hypotheses testing are presented in detail in Figures 2, 3 and Table 3.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

[Insert Table 3 about here]

The explanatory value of the S-O-R structural model is apparent, since the estimated squared multiple correlation R^2 for the response variable was found equal to 0.70 and 0.63 for Lisbon and Athens samples respectively, while the corresponding value in the SR direct relationships were only 0.31 and 0.44, as shown on Table 4. R^2 values of tourist visitation experience are also rather high, explaining most of the variance in this construct. This is another measure indicating the importance to include the Organism constructs in the conceptualization, in addition to the improvement in the model fit.

Finally, an investigation of the differences in the critical ratios of the relationships tested between the two samples showed that there are some significant differences due to the magnitude of some effects, as shown on Table 5. Overall, the proposed model has

demonstrated a very high degree of applicability with respect to both samples, thus exemplifying its wide usefulness across different destinations.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Discussion

Up until now, stimuli have received attention by numerous researchers in the retailing scholarship, agreeing upon their significant influence over customer attitudes and behaviors (Helmefalk & Hultén, 2017; Robert & John, 1982; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997). The present study investigated the relationship between destination atmospheric cues and tourists' intention for WOM communication. Although the relationship between store stimuli and consumers' WOM intentions is quite straightforward in the case of retailing (e.g., Klein et al., 2016), its analogy remains rather new and underexplored in the tourism destination literature. In this regard, the proposed model was tested among tourists visiting two major urban Mediterranean destinations in Europe, namely Athens and Lisbon.

Initially, this research investigated first the direct relationship between destination atmospheric cues and tourists' intention for WOM communication, to reveal that for both destinations atmospheric cues did enhance visitors' intention to be active in talking about them. This finding not only verifies the fundamental role of the destination and its components (e.g., place, attractions, local lifestyle) for the information to be spread by visitors, but also seems to offer some support to the hypothesized role of destination atmospheric cues as a Stimuli for visitors (as it is external factor that does influence and arouse individuals) and

intention for WOM communication as their Response, that is the behavioral outcome of the overall visitation.

Given the support of this relationship, this study built upon the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), and also examined the indirect relationship between destination atmospheric cues (*S*) and tourists' intention for WOM communication (*R*), incorporating a procedural approach of Organism (*O*). In doing so, we posit that the stimuli based on destination atmospheric cues are also interiorized by tourists and are processed in both an affective and a cognitive way, generating an indirect to its direct effect on intention to WOM communication. Based on this procedural approach, the current study investigated how tourists' affect (emotional) and mindfulness and perceived authenticity (cognitive) influence tourists' visitation experience. The findings are largely the same for both destinations, supporting Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) argument that Organism may comprise of a process, that is both emotional and cognitive in nature. Evidently, in both studies atmospheric cues have a significant effect on tourist visitation experience via two paths, negative affect as emotional and mindfulness and perceived authenticity as cognitive. In fact, the predictive power of this model with respect to tourist experience is notably high for both destinations, ranging from 83 to 96 percent. Regarding the effect of visitation experience, in line with prior works, the natural consequence of a favorable visitation experience is tourists' enthusiasm and eagerness to share related information with family, friends and peers and promote the destination to others via WOM (Jamrozy, Backman, & Backman, 1996; Prebensen et al., 2012; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). The predictive power of the hypothesized model in both studies is also high – albeit lower – ranging between 63 and 70 percent, offering support to the applicability of this

theoretical model in tourism destination studies and highlighting the need to dive further into it.

An interesting finding that emerged in the study that took place in Lisbon was that – unlike negative affect - positive affect was neither influenced by atmospheric cues nor did it influence the tourist experience. So, although the negative view of the components of a destination generate negative affect on tourists' mind, diminishing the visitation experience, and leading them to share their negative experience with others, positive affect is insignificant in one study. Odd as it may seem, Kahneman and Tversky (1984) have argued that negative affective states tend to produce harsher and longer lasting consequences for individuals compared to the positive ones. As Baumeister et al. (2001, p. 323) postulated, “When equal measures of good and bad are present, (however), the psychological effects of bad ones outweigh those of good ones”. This is revealed in the results from the field study in Athens, where negative and positive effects are both actively contributing to the Organism model component. Nevertheless, this finding also offers support to previous studies postulating that positive and negative affective state are not the opposite of each other (e.g. Tellegen, Watson, & Clark 1999; Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo 2001).

Concerning the cognitive aspect of Organism, in both studies the findings showed that destination atmospheric cues increase the likelihood of tourists' being mindful - hence more awake to realize the components of the destination – and in turn more open to recognize the uniqueness and originality of the destination. To the extent that a tourist's mindfulness is enhanced, one is more likely to be more alert and even proactive in collecting information about the destination, enhancing in turn the extent to which they consider the destination as authentic. Along this line of thinking, perceived authenticity of a destination appears to

ameliorate tourist visiting experiences, as a significant reason for travelling is coming across new experiences (McIntosh, 2004) or engaging in experience that enhance their identity and reach self-actualization (Wearing & Neil 2000; Frauman, & Norman 2004; Oh et al., 2007).

Taken together, the findings of the current study reveal that the destination atmospheric cues (S) of a destination are interiorized via both affective and cognitive elements (O) in a procedural manner, exerting an indirect effect in addition to the direct effect that they have on tourists' intention to actively communicate with others about the destination.

Therefore, the findings of this study fully support and S-O-R model in the tourism context.

Even more, they extent the S-O-R model, as it reveals the simultaneous significant role of both affective and cognitive elements of Organism, as well as the complexity of Organism.

Particularly, we conceptualize positive and negative affect as affective states of Organism, and tourists' mindfulness and perceived authenticity as cognitive ones. Then, tourist visitation experience aggregates both cognitive and affective components of tourist behavior, which finally leads to the output/response variable of intention to WOM communication.

Managerial Implications

The findings and theoretical implications of this study may help destination management organizations and local authorities improve their destination positioning, marketing strategy and integrated marketing communications mix. First, particular efforts should be exercised to mitigate the potential consequences from mismanagement of key destination attributes, such as infrastructure, accessibility, utilities, transport services and safety. This would reduce the development of negative feelings among tourists during the visitation while it would also enhance their likelihood to gather and process information related to the destinations. In

addition, each destination should invest in creating a distinct value proposition, such that it would highlight its unique identity. This can occur by formulating a destination brand identity that is based on the authentic features of it and the already perceived image of the place (Bruwer & Joy, 2017), and by utilizing a communications mix that fits well communication preferences of the tourist groups targeted.

In the case of Lisbon, this would mean to capitalize on its traditional streets with the famous yellow trams, amazing street art, the friendly locals, the delicious cuisine and pastries, its long history as a departure point for many of the world's biggest discoveries, and a convenient and well-connected international airport. If these uncontested attributes would be properly communicated as part of a well-structured branding umbrella mainly via: a) travel trade organizations for the elderly, b) new media platforms for the youngsters, and c) a mix of online and offline media (e.g., printed, TV and billboards) for the 35-54 band of tourists – who currently comprise the largest demographic group visiting Lisbon – (Statistics Portugal, 2019), then Lisbon may see its tourism arrivals from specified target groups soar rapidly.

Similarly, in the case of Athens, other than the great weather and nice beaches of the Athens Riviera, it would be beneficial to invest on the expansion of walking routes at the ancient historic city center to enhance the visiting experience at some of the most world-known monuments (such as the Acropolis) and nearby museums (the Museum of the Acropolis and the ancient Hellenic museum), the promotion of its tradition and unique Hellenic gastronomic character, its bustling modern nightlife along with numerous artistic events taking place throughout the year.

To further improve the visitation experience, managers of city DMOs could focus on facilitating the visitation with means such as new technologies (e.g., to avoid queuing outside

major monuments and museums, to learn more about the destination by sharing locals' advice and insights, and timely information on the city's daily operation) and interactive communication platforms, where both locals and visitors could share their secrets.

In addition to enhancing the perceived authenticity of the tourist destinations, DMOs of both Lisbon and Athens (Turismo de Lisboa, 2020; ACVB, 2020) could also focus on increasing the perceived visitation evaluation of tourists. This could include offering easy access to information and knowledge about the cities, not only in the form of online travel guides but also via virtual reality tourism applications and rich on-site tourism experiences (Vishwakarma, Mukherjee, & Datta, 2020). In fact, in terms of on-site information, this could be broader in scope and refer not only to a museum actually visited but also to other alternatives offered to tourists, depending on their demographics and particular interests. In doing so, those tourists that have already visited the two cities would keep it vivid in their mind, by combining their museum and monuments visits, with attending cultural events and upgrading their understanding of Lisbon and becoming more involved. Such information and enhancement of visitation experience could increase their eagerness to learn more about the destinations and offer advice to their peers to further increase their enjoyment during their visit. This would help both capital cities establish their positions in the global tourism destinations markets.

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Appendix A

Survey participant profile

Tourist Characteristics	%	%
Gender	Lisbon	Athens
Male	48.3	46.1
Female	51.7	53.9
Age group		
<19	11.3	12.3
20-29	20.1	26.4
30-39	21.3	29.1
40-49	21.4	19.7
50-59	16.1	9.1
> 60	8.8	3.4
Annual Household income		
(€)		
< 10 k	3.5	4.4
10 k – 30 k	15.8	19.3
30 k – 50 k	27.9	30.9
50 k – 70 k	19.9	23.9
70 k – 100 k	15.2	10.2
100 k – 200 k	10.7	6.2
≥ 200 k	7.0	5.1
Education		
Less than High School	3.1	1.9
High School	12.2	8.2
Post-Secondary	17.2	10.5
College, not graduated	13.6	10.4
College, completed	28.5	54.6
Technical Training	5.0	3.0
Post-graduate	20.4	11.4
Employment Status		
FTE	45.2	38.5
PTE	14.3	12.3
FLB	11.3	19.7
Household	2.3	4.6
Student	14.1	16.0
Pensioner	11.3	8.1
Unemployed	1.3	0.3
Other	0.2	0.5

Note: FTE: Full-Time Employee, PTE: Part -Time Employee, FLB: Freelance professional / Businessman.

Appendix B

Final scales, means, standard deviations, standardized factor loadings, errors and critical ratios of the constructs used in the measurement models for Lisbon and Athens.

Construct	Item	Code	City	Mean (SD)	St. Loading	Std. error	t-statistic	
1. Atmospheric Cues								
Urban Physical design, space layout and functionality	Attractive design of public spaces and infrastructure	AC3	Lisbon	5.24 (1.28)	.699			
			Athens	6.79 (1.32)	.699			
	Well looking urban furniture	AC4	Lisbon	5.71 (1.38)	.687	.063	15.660	
			Athens	6.50 (1.30)	.686			
	Many parking facilities	AC9	Lisbon	5.35 (1.41)	.730	.063	15.536	
			Athens	5.93 (1.52)	.549	.080	9.823	
	Well maintained pedestrian streets	AC10	Lisbon	5.73 (1.32)	.625	.062	14.334	
			Athens	5.88 (1.44)	.644	.082	11.410	
	Clean and well-maintained city	AC11	Lisbon	5.86 (1.29)	.606	.062	13.941	
			Athens	5.96 (1.45)	.672	.083	11.868	
	Well organised streets' layout	AC12	Lisbon	5.20 (1.26)	.594	.062	13.679	
			Athens	5.72 (1.43)	.621	.082	11.048	
	Interesting built architecture	AC14	Lisbon	5.76 (1.28)	.714	.063	16.213	
			Athens	6.68 (1.31)	.710	.083	12.458	
Unique attractions, aesthetics and ambient traits	Beautiful scenery / natural attractions	AC2	Lisbon	5.76 (1.43)	.553	.058	12.641	
			Athens	6.56 (1.31)	.679			
	Unique atmosphere and lifestyle	AC5	Lisbon	5.59 (1.39)	.500	.058	11.294	
			Athens	6.14 (1.36)	.547	.081	9.811	
	Significant historical monuments	AC6	Lisbon	6.06 (1.26)	.768			
			Athens	5.87 (1.32)	.498	.084	8.696	
	Attractive stores' windows displays	AC7	Lisbon	6.25 (1.16)	.734	.060	15.829	
			Athens	6.73 (1.21)	.765	.082	13.308	
Activities and Events	Cultural activities and events	AC1	Lisbon	4.46 (2.48)	.676			
			Athens	5.57 (2.21)	.376	.080	6.861	
	Business activities and conferences	AC8	Lisbon	3.67 (2.11)	.765	.058	15.128	
			Athens	6.53 (1.35)	.647	.081	11.472	
	Leisure and sports activities	AC13	Lisbon	3.74 (2.28)	.633	.071	13.281	
			Athens	6.17 (1.72)	.669	.085	11.317	
	Wine-tourism activities	AC15	Lisbon	4.44 (2.39)	.741	.060	14.883	
			Athens	6.40 (1.67)	.663	.086	11.224	
2. Mindfulness								
Attention	I could pay attention to what I was doing	MFA1	Lisbon	5.40 (1.43)	.842	.046	23.443	
			Athens	5.64 (1.39)	.755	.067	14.472	
	It was easy for me to concentrate on what I was doing	MFA2	Lisbon	5.45 (1.39)	.908	.045	25.554	
			Athens	5.99 (1.10)	.830	.068	15.578	
	I was able to pay close attention to the environment	MFA3	Lisbon	5.64 (1.25)	.786			
			Athens	5.94 (1.18)	.780			
	Present-focus	I was open to the experience of the moment	MFF1	Lisbon	5.66 (1.28)	.861		
				Athens	6.08 (1.09)	.809		
I was able to focus on the moment		MFF2	Lisbon	5.54 (1.37)	.815	.038	24.687	
			Athens	5.96 (1.16)	.766	.065	14.589	
Awareness	I noticed my surroundings while touring	MFW1	Lisbon	5.41 (1.41)	.721	.042	17.256	
			Athens	6.18 (1.06)	.786	.073	13.819	
	I was aware of smells and sounds and feelings such as the wind blowing in my face	MFW2	Lisbon	5.36 (1.41)	.727	.042	17.395	
			Athens	6.19 (1.18)	.684	.071	12.212	
	I was attentive to my movements	MFW3	Lisbon	5.10 (1.53)	.807	.043	19.259	
			Athens	5.90 (1.21)	.723	.072	12.831	
	I was aware of other people	MFW4	Lisbon	5.16 (1.45)	.774	.042	18.513	
			Athens	6.19 (1.09)	.711	.072	12.641	

Non-judgment	I could describe how I felt and thought at the moment	MFW5	Lisbon	4.81 (1.63)	.720		
			Athens	6.13 (1.07)	.688		
	I tended to make judgments about whether my thoughts were good or bad	MNJ1	Lisbon	3.85 (1.51)	.798	.033	26.208
			Athens	5.70 (1.34)	.743	.073	12.908
	I made judgments about how worthwhile or worthless my experience was	MNJ2	Lisbon	3.93 (1.58)	.910	.032	31.564
			Athens	5.82 (1.36)	.702	.062	12.393
	I tended to evaluate whether my perceptions about it were right or wrong	MNJ3	Lisbon	3.99 (1.52)	.909		
			Athens	6.06 (1.30)	.784		
3. Perceived Authenticity							
Object-based authenticity	The overall architecture and impression of Lisbon (Athens) inspired me	OBA1	Lisbon	5.57 (1.10)	.740		
			Athens	6.04 (1.71)	.627		
	I liked the peculiarities about the interior and exterior design/ furnishings of iconic buildings	OBA2	Lisbon	5.72 (1.07)	.768	.040	19.283
			Athens	5.92 (1.92)	.663	.090	10.477
	I liked the way Lisbon (Athens) blends with the attractive landscape/scenery/ historical ensemble/town, which offers many other interesting places for sightseeing	OBA3	Lisbon	5.83 (1.11)	.887	.040	22.303
			Athens	6.21 (1.73)	.702	.093	10.922
	I liked the information about Lisbon (Athens) and found it interesting	OBA4	Lisbon	5.58 (1.07)	.714	.040	17.834
			Athens	5.95 (1.39)	.602	.089	9.727
Existential authenticity	I liked special arrangements, events, concerts, celebrations connected to Lisbon	EXA1	Lisbon	4.96 (1.26)	.500		
			Athens	5.95 (1.71)	.461		
	This visit in Lisbon provided a thorough insight into a unique historical era	EXA2	Lisbon	5.10 (1.34)	.655	.045	14.446
			Athens	5.86 (1.07)	.657	.089	9.952
	During the visit in Lisbon (Athens) I felt the related history, legends and historical personalities	EXA3	Lisbon	4.93 (1.39)	.612	.034	13.985
			Athens	5.69 (1.18)	.529	.655	9.379
	I enjoyed the unique experience of being in Lisbon (Athens)	EXA4	Lisbon	5.69 (1.23)	.828	.047	17.726
			Athens	6.46 (1.97)	.679	.093	8.068
	I liked the distinct and unique atmosphere during my visit in Lisbon	EXA5	Lisbon	5.72 (1.22)	.864	.043	19.877
			Athens	6.34 (1.02)	.704	.098	8.104
	I felt connected with human history and civilization	EXA6	Lisbon	5.07 (1.36)	.651	.045	14.523
			Athens	5.59 (1.07)	.581	.087	9.570
4. Tourist visitation experiences							
Learning	I expanded my understanding of Lisbon (Athens)	LE1	Lisbon	5.63 (1.24)	.764	.038	23.289
			Athens	6.13 (1.07)	.441	.052	16.077
	I gained information and knowledge about Lisbon (Ath)	LE2	Lisbon	5.92 (1.04)	.929	.035	30.545
			Athens	6.23 (1.06)	.594	.081	13.914
	I learned many different things about Lisbon (Athens)	LE3	Lisbon	5.92 (1.06)	.866		
			Athens	6.17 (1.10)	.527		
Escape	I felt like I was in another world	ES1	Lisbon	4.23 (1.58)	.716	.044	19.117
			Athens	5.52 (1.59)	.584	.083	16.318
	I got away from it all	ES2	Lisbon	4.57 (1.51)	.846	.045	22.054
			Athens	5.73 (1.39)	.571	.080	16.301
	I got so involved that I forgot everything else	ES3	Lisbon	4.39 (1.54)	.859		
			Athens	5.47 (1.53)	.567		
Enjoyment	I had fun	EN1	Lisbon	5.74 (1.16)	.738	.043	20.734
			Athens	6.52 (1.09)	.471	.074	16.619
	I enjoyed being in Lisbon (Ath)	EN2	Lisbon	6.05 (1.10)	.878	.041	26.189
			Athens	6.45 (1.10)	.564	.063	17.238

	I derived a lot of pleasure from Lisbon (Athens)	EN3	Lisbon Athens	5.73 (1.19) 6.32 (1.39)	.827 .756		
5. Positive Affect							
<i>During your</i>	Excited	PANAS3	Lisbon	3.61 (.87)	.530	.045	11.601
			Athens	4.09 (.81)	.671	.076	12.051
<i>current visit in</i>	Strong	PANAS5	Lisbon	3.17 (1.12)	.683	.047	14.429
			Athens	3.31 (1.07)	.537	.076	9.712
<i>Lisbon (Athens),</i>	Enthusiastic	PANAS9	Lisbon	3.74 (.92)	.683		
			Athens	4.13 (.80)	.730		
<i>how often</i>	Proud	PANAS10	Lisbon	3.27 (1.14)	.584	.046	12.641
<i>you felt...</i>			Athens	3.54 (1.07)	.547	.076	9.894
	Inspired	PANAS14	Lisbon	3.46 (.93)	.625	.047	13.409
			Athens	3.93 (.97)	.674	.076	12.100
	Determined	PANAS16	Lisbon	3.59 (1.03)	.585	.046	12.670
			Athens	3.41 (1.08)	.499	.076	9.031
	Active	PANAS19	Lisbon	3.84 (.97)	.618	.047	13.276
			Athens	4.10 (.85)	.652	.076	11.725
6. Negative Affect							
<i>During your</i>	Upset	PANAS4	Lisbon	1.93 (.93)	.589	.040	14.735
			Athens	1.80 (1.07)	.724	.054	16.197
<i>current visit in</i>	Guilty	PANAS6	Lisbon	1.60 (.88)	.661	.039	16.715
			Athens	1.70 (1.10)	.803	.052	18.742
<i>Lisbon (Athens),</i>	Hostile	PANAS7	Lisbon	1.67 (.88)	.744	.037	19.074
			Athens	1.68 (1.02)	.843	.051	20.187
<i>how often</i>	Irritable	PANAS8	Lisbon	1.63 (.94)	.733	.039	18.755
<i>you felt...</i>			Athens	1.69 (1.07)	.829	.051	19.672
	Ashamed	PANAS11	Lisbon	1.87 (.89)	.651	.039	16.424
			Athens	1.85 (1.04)	.769	.053	17.609
	Nervous	PANAS13	Lisbon	1.73 (.96)	.766		
			Athens	1.54 (.98)	.824		
	Jittery	PANAS15	Lisbon	2.13 (.96)	.671	.040	16.986
			Athens	1.95 (1.06)	.746	.054	16.867
	Nervous	PANAS18	Lisbon	2.19 (1.01)	.689	.039	17.487
			Athens	2.00 (1.10)	.742	.054	16.743
	Afraid	PANAS20	Lisbon	1.69 (.90)	.606	.040	15.186
			Athens	1.70 (1.07)	.797	.052	18.545
7. Intention for Word-of-Mouth Communication							
	I am likely to say positive things about Lisbon (Athens) as a tourism destination to other people	WOM1	Lisbon	6.12 (1.20)	.845		
			Athens	6.13 (1.22)	.903		
	I am likely to recommend visiting Lisbon (Athens) to a friend or colleague	WOM2	Lisbon	6.16 (1.18)	.950	.032	34.903
			Athens	6.19 (1.25)	.948	.032	32.643
	I am likely to say positive things about Lisbon (Athens) in general to other people	WOM3	Lisbon	6.16 (1.17)	.950	.032	34.908
			Athens	6.18 (1.19)	.925	.034	30.405
	I am likely to encourage friends and relatives to visit Lisbon (Athens)	WOM4	Lisbon	6.18 (1.14)	.955	.032	35.283
			Athens	6.14 (1.21)	.911	.035	29.176

Note: SD: Standard deviation. All t-statistics are significant with $p < 0.001$.

Appendix C

Univariate Normality (Lisbon)

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
AC1	1025	-.616	.096	-.424	.192
AC2	1025	-.758	.096	.683	.192
AC3	1025	-.876	.096	.687	.192
AC4	1025	-.652	.096	.879	.192
AC5	1025	-.766	.096	.953	.192
AC6	1025	-.957	.096	.899	.192
AC7	1025	-.892	.096	.939	.192
AC8	1025	-.021	.096	-.709	.192
AC9	1025	-.937	.096	.884	.192
AC10	1025	-.581	.096	.964	.192
AC11	1025	-.836	.096	.980	.192
AC12	1025	-.654	.096	.623	.192
AC13	1025	-.504	.096	-.969	.192
AC14	1025	-.708	.096	.715	.192
AC15	1025	-.797	.096	-.720	.192
MFA1	1025	-.628	.096	.600	.192
MFA2	1025	-.797	.096	.561	.192
MFA3	1025	-.828	.096	.884	.192
MFF1	1025	-.736	.096	.792	.192
MFF2	1025	-.896	.096	.854	.192
MFF3	1025	-.413	.096	-.897	.192
MFW1	1025	-.882	.096	.710	.192
MFW2	1025	-.727	.096	.777	.192
MFW3	1025	-.706	.096	.510	.192
MFW4	1025	-.699	.096	.534	.192
MFW5	1025	-.547	.096	.430	.192
MNJ1	1025	-.425	.096	-.979	.192
MNJ2	1025	-.350	.096	-.483	.192
MNJ3	1025	-.380	.096	-.464	.192
OBA1	1025	-.937	.096	.491	.192
OBA2	1025	-.848	.096	.737	.192

OBA3	1025	-.624	.096	.894	.192
OBA4	1025	-.987	.096	.444	.192
EXA1	1025	-.140	.096	-.457	.192
EXA2	1025	-.606	.096	.103	.192
EXA3	1025	-.559	.096	.073	.192
EXA4	1025	-.603	.096	.509	.192
EXA5	1025	-.561	.096	.401	.192
EXA6	1025	-.698	.096	.382	.192
LE1	1025	-.612	.096	.824	.192
LE2	1025	-.639	.096	.686	.192
LE3	1025	-.763	.096	.772	.192
ES1	1025	-.317	.096	-.605	.192
ES2	1025	-.520	.096	-.096	.192
ES3	1025	-.308	.096	-.851	.192
EN1	1025	-.950	.096	.747	.192
EN2	1025	-.667	.096	.640	.192
EN3	1025	-.673	.096	.685	.192
PANAS1	1025	-.749	.096	.681	.192
PANAS2	1025	.937	.096	-.048	.192
PANAS3	1025	-.341	.096	.166	.192
PANAS4	1025	.777	.096	.460	.192
PANAS5	1025	-.323	.096	-.483	.192
PANAS6	1025	.691	.096	.593	.192
PANAS7	1025	.873	.096	.621	.192
PANAS8	1025	.945	.096	.660	.192
PANAS9	1025	-.482	.096	.118	.192
PANAS10	1025	-.166	.096	-.653	.192
PANAS11	1025	.803	.096	.549	.192
PANAS12	1025	.195	.096	-.552	.192
PANAS13	1025	.871	.096	.791	.192
PANAS14	1025	-.364	.096	.217	.192
PANAS15	1025	.772	.096	.505	.192
PANAS16	1025	-.394	.096	-.319	.192
PANAS17	1025	-.815	.096	.681	.192
PANAS18	1025	.575	.096	-.123	.192
PANAS19	1025	-.878	.096	.663	.192
PANAS20	1025	.609	.096	.794	.192
WOM1	1025	-.702	.096	.842	.192

WOM2	1025	-.739	.096	.834	.192
WOM3	1025	-.755	.096	.886	.192
WOM4	1025	-.700	.096	.895	.192
Valid N (listwise)	1025				

Univariate Normality (Athens)

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
AC1	1002	-.738	.102	.709	.204
AC2	1002	-.544	.102	.766	.204
AC3	1002	-.487	.102	.710	.204
AC4	1002	-.767	.102	.572	.204
AC5	1002	-.495	.102	.875	.204
AC6	1002	-.599	.102	.695	.204
AC7	1002	-.884	.102	.984	.204
AC8	1002	-.262	.102	-.488	.204
AC9	1002	-.091	.102	-.574	.204
AC10	1002	-.975	.102	.457	.204
AC11	1002	-.460	.102	.980	.204
AC12	1002	-.865	.102	.433	.204
AC13	1002	-.700	.102	.581	.204
AC14	1002	-.463	.102	.527	.204
AC15	1002	-.924	.102	.901	.204
MFA1	1002	-.527	.102	.556	.204
MFA2	1002	-.608	.102	.897	.204
MFA3	1002	-.675	.102	.411	.204
MFF1	1002	-.662	.102	.888	.204
MFF2	1002	-.597	.102	.936	.204
MFF3	1002	-.682	.102	.112	.204
MFW1	1002	-.593	.102	.991	.204
MFW2	1002	-.558	.102	.927	.204
MFW3	1002	-.965	.102	.494	.204
MFW4	1002	-.605	.102	.972	.204

MFW5	1002	-.504	.102	.805	.204
MNJ1	1002	-.530	.102	.576	.204
MNJ2	1002	-.607	.102	.551	.204
MNJ3	1002	-.632	.102	.978	.204
OBA1	1002	.641	.102	.202	.204
OBA2	1002	.734	.102	.510	.204
OBA3	1002	.420	.102	.091	.204
OBA4	1002	.665	.102	.518	.204
EXA1	1002	.678	.102	-.402	.204
EXA2	1002	.778	.102	.186	.204
EXA3	1002	.802	.102	.073	.204
EXA4	1002	.622	.102	-.027	.204
EXA5	1002	.516	.102	.066	.204
EXA6	1002	.801	.102	.411	.204
LE1	1002	.471	.102	.030	.204
LE2	1002	.552	.102	-.082	.204
LE3	1002	.447	.102	-.065	.204
ES1	1002	.543	.102	-.519	.204
ES2	1002	.682	.102	-.242	.204
ES3	1002	.637	.102	-.333	.204
EN1	1002	.520	.102	-.024	.204
EN2	1002	.246	.102	.469	.204
EN3	1002	.448	.102	.135	.204
PANAS1	1002	-.441	.102	.728	.204
PANAS2	1002	.543	.102	-.501	.204
PANAS3	1002	-.633	.102	.416	.204
PANAS4	1002	.654	.102	.573	.204
PANAS5	1002	-.358	.102	-.329	.204
PANAS6	1002	.664	.102	.550	.204
PANAS7	1002	.669	.102	.811	.204
PANAS8	1002	.610	.102	.608	.204
PANAS9	1002	-.955	.102	.607	.204
PANAS10	1002	-.469	.102	-.315	.204
PANAS11	1002	.590	.102	.764	.204
PANAS12	1002	-.051	.102	-.905	.204
PANAS13	1002	.792	.102	.803	.204
PANAS14	1002	-.806	.102	.319	.204
PANAS15	1002	.917	.102	.165	.204

PANAS16	1002	-.554	.102	-.125	.204
PANAS17	1002	-.762	.102	.414	.204
PANAS18	1002	.735	.102	-.247	.204
PANAS19	1002	-.462	.102	.733	.204
PANAS20	1002	.568	.102	.722	.204
WOM1	1002	-.626	.102	.825	.204
WOM2	1002	-.866	.102	.887	.204
WOM3	1002	-.742	.102	.812	.204
WOM4	1002	-.705	.102	.949	.204
Valid N (listwise)	1002				

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity measures of the SOR measurement model.

	City	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Positive Affect	Lisbon	.813	.544	.057	.026	.737						
	Athens	.813	.535	.353	.168	.731						
2 Perceived Authenticity	Lisbon	.929	.868	.724	.361	.216	.932					
	Athens	.969	.941	.276	.149	.449	.970					
3 Tourist visitation experience	Lisbon	.788	.571	.524	.362	.153	.851	.755				
	Athens	.725	.651	.267	.089	.034	.244	.807				
4 Atmospheric Cues	Lisbon	.735	.509	.419	.225	.066	.647	.616	.713			
	Athens	.952	.869	.438	.238	.462	.353	.362	.932			
5 Mindfulness	Lisbon	.853	.627	.350	.168	.111	.544	.592	.339	.792		
	Athens	.877	.645	.432	.298	.594	.525	.517	.657	.803		
6 Negative Affect	Lisbon	.884	.561	.187	.082	.239	-.289	-.250	-.269	-.170	.749	
	Athens	.936	.620	.250	.081	-.063	-.205	-.120	-.299	-.293	.787	
7 Intention WOM communication	Lisbon	.959	.853	.634	.333	.120	.772	.696	.601	.456	-.293	.923
	Athens	.958	.852	.438	.259	.484	.440	.241	.662	.614	-.500	.923

Note: CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted, MSV: Maximum Shared Squared Variance, ASV: Average Shared Squared Variance

Table 2. Fit Indices for measurement and corresponding structural models, and SR direct.

Fit Indices	Measurement Model		Structural Model		SR direct		Criteria
	SOR		SOR				
	Lisbon	Athens	Lisbon	Athens	Lisbon	Athens	
χ^2/df	2.426 for p < .001	1.990 for p<.001	2.635 for p<.001	2.144 for p<.001	5.843 for p < .001	5.749 for p < .001	< 3 (or 5 for large samples)
CFI	.933	.936	.929	.932	.908	.847	>.90
TLI	.928	.924	.923	.921	.893	.824	>.90
RMSEA	.044	.042	.046	.043	.082	.109	<.07 (CFI>.90)
SRMR	.0478	.0416	.0556	.0528	.0771	.0847	<.08 (CFI>.92)

Note: χ^2/df : chi-square normed; CFI: Comparative fit index; TLI: Tucker Lewis index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR: Standardized root mean residual; SOR: Stimuli-Organism-Response; SR: Stimuli-Response direct relationship.

Table 3. Structural model results for Lisbon and Athens.

Regression paths			City	St.RW	S.E.	C.R.	p
Mindfulness	←	Atmospheric cues	Lisbon	.381	.03	4.872	<.001
			Athens	.709	.07	8.347	<.001
Negative affect	←	Atmospheric cues	Lisbon	-.262	.05	-5.490	<.001
			Athens	-.308	.07	-5.360	<.001
Positive affect	←	Atmospheric cues	Lisbon	.061	.05	1.316	.188
			Athens	.506	.08	7.571	<.001
Perceived authenticity	←	Mindfulness	Lisbon	.595	.06	5.745	<.001
			Athens	.527	.09	6.594	<.001
Tourist visitation experience	←	Perceived authenticity	Lisbon	.809	.05	16.094	<.001
			Athens	.200	.02	2.632	.008
Tourist visitation experience	←	Negative affect	Lisbon	-.113	.03	-3.948	<.001
			Athens	-.372	.02	-3.322	<.001
Tourist visitation experience	←	Positive affect	Lisbon	.019	.03	0.677	.499
			Athens	.153	.02	2.155	.031
Tourist visitation experience	←	Atmospheric cues	Lisbon	.227	.04	6.315	<.001
			Athens	.620	.05	3.372	<.001
Intention for WOM	←	Tourist visitation experience	Lisbon	.833	.05	16.895	<.001
			Athens	.794	.05	15.862	<.001
Intention for WOM	←	Atmospheric cues	Lisbon	.574*	.07	10.462	<.001
			Athens	.666*	.09	10.599	<.001

Note: * This value is for the SR direct relationships; WOM: Word-of-mouth; St. RW: Standardized regression weight; S.E.: Standard error; C.R.: Critical ratio; p: p-value.

Table 4. Squared multiple correlation values (R^2) of endogenous latent variables.

Endogenous Latent Variables	R^2 (SOR models)		R^2 (SR direct)	
	Lisbon	Athens	Lisbon	Athens
Mindfulness	.15	.50		
Positive affect	.00	.26		
Negative affect	.07	.10		
Perceived authenticity	.35	.28		
Tourist visitation experience	.83	.96		
Intention for WOM communication	.70	.63	.33	.44

Table 5. Critical Ratios Differences of regression weights per tourism destination.

	Lisbon		Athens		z-score
	Unstd. RW	p	Unstd. RW	p	
Mindfulness ← Atmospheric Cues	.133	.000	.590	.000	6.029**
Negative Affect ← Atmospheric Cues	-.302	.000	-.402	.000	-1.073
Positive Affect ← Atmospheric Cues	.065	.188	.575	.000	5.621**
Perceived Authenticity ← Mindfulness	.595	.000	.575	.000	.167
Touristic visitation experience ← Perceived Authenticity	.838	.000	.058	.008	-13.786**
Touristic visitation experience ← Negative Affect	-.105	.000	-.075	.000	.861
Touristic visitation experience ← Positive Affect	.019	.499	.036	.031	.505
Touristic visitation experience ← Atmospheric Cues	.244	.000	.163	.013	-1.303
Intention for WOM ← Touristic visitation experience	.764	.000	.690	.000	.619

Note: Unstd. RW: Unstandardized Regression Weight; p: p-value; ** p-value < 0.01; * p-value < 0.05

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. The conceptual model under investigation.

Figure 2. Structural model results of Lisbon sample.

Figure 3. Structural model results of Athens sample.