

An Analysis of First Time and Repeat Visitor Destination Images through the Prism of the Three Factor Theory of Consumer Satisfaction

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Abstract

The study examines first time and repeat visitor primary destination images through the prism of the factor theory of consumer satisfaction to expose the positive-negative asymmetry of their relationship with overall visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation, and the differential impact of factor type on first time visitors and repeaters. It also subdivides repeat visitors on the basis of revisit frequency to reveal significant differences between repeater subgroups and between first time visitors and high frequency repeaters which have been overlooked in previous research. Combining this the factor theory with the examination of repeater heterogeneity has revealed the criticality of the destination's basic and performance factors; the former are potentially critical constraints on re-visitation for visitors, while many of the latter have a positive impact on satisfaction and visitor recommendation but their poor performance has a disproportionately greater negative impact. Recommendations are made for the management and marketing of the destination's image attributes in line with first time visitor and repeater requirements.

Keywords: first time visitors, repeat visitors, destination image, three factor theory of satisfaction, asymmetry

1. Introduction

Previous research has examined the importance of destination images on visitor decision making, satisfaction, behavioural intention and overall destination competitiveness (e.g. (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Kim & Chen, 2016; Nghiêm-Phú, 2014; Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2016). Moreover, many studies have also distinguished between destination visitor groups on the basis of prior experience in a range of different contexts (e.g. Meleddu, Paci & Pulina, 2015; Osti, Disegna & Brida, 2012; Shavanddasht & Allan, 2018; Wahid, Aliman, Hashim, & Harudin, 2016); first time visitors (FTVs) reflect the continuing attractiveness of a destination, while repeat visitors (RVs) act as indicators of destination quality, represent a stable income stream and can influence new visitors through positive word-of-mouth recommendation (Schofield and Fallon, 2012). Consequently, the identification and effective management of critical image factors which create value and influence first time visitor decisions and repeat visitor loyalty is critical for the competitiveness and sustainability of destinations (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Omerzel Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Vengesai, 2008).

This study builds on the extant literature, but is differentiated from previous research and addresses a gap in knowledge, by examining FTV and RV primary destination images and their influence on satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation through the prism of the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction (Kano, 1984; Kano, Seraku, Takahashi & Tsuji, 1984). It also examines repeaters as a heterogeneous group whereas most previous research on FTVs and RVs has made a binary distinction between the two segments (e.g. Kim, Lee & Kim, 2012; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Lee, Lee & Yoon, 2009; Lim, Kim & Lee, 2016).

Earlier studies have examined tourism destination attributes using the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction (e.g. Alegre & Garau, 2011; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003; Mikulic et al.,

2015), while others have examined FTV and RV differences in relation to particular aspects of tourism and leisure such as hospitality services (Davras & Caber, 2019; Lai & Hitchcock, 2017), festivals (Kim, Ahn & Wicks, 2014; Tontini, Branco, Brandt, Ronchi, de Oliveira & Zanchett, 2018), hiking (Oh, Kim, Choi & Pratt, 2019) and casinos (Back & Lee, 2015). However, to date, no previous research has focussed on a comparison of FTV and RV primary images in a mature tourism destination context from the perspective of the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction while subdividing repeaters into distinct sub-groups based on the frequency of re-visitation.

Empirical research has established that tourism product attributes fall into three independent hierarchical factor types: basic factors (BFs), excitement factors (EFs) and performance factors (PFs). The relationship between BFs and EFs and overall satisfaction is nonlinear and asymmetrical (Albayrak & Caber, 2013; Alegre & Garau, 2011). More specifically, BFs or 'dissatisfiers' are minimum requirements which are expected and their fulfilment is necessary, but not sufficient for satisfaction, but will cause dissatisfaction if not delivered. EFs or 'satisfiers', delight the consumer, and increase satisfaction if delivered but do not result in dissatisfaction if not delivered. PFs (hybrid factors) result in satisfaction if delivered and dissatisfaction if they are not delivered and therefore have a linear and symmetrical relationship with overall satisfaction (Matzler, Bailom, Hinterhuber, Renzl, & Pichler, 2004). Accordingly, given the differences in motivation, images and behaviour between FTVs and RVs (Barros & Assof, 2012; Campo-Martinez, Garau-Vadell & Martinez-Ruiz, 2010; Fuchs & Reichel, 2011), the impact of a destination's BFs, EFs and PFs on FTVs and RVs, particularly high frequency RVs, would be expected to vary given their different requirements. Moreover, previous research has shown that the factor types and their impact

change over time as visitors become more familiar with a destination's attractions, facilities and amenities (Füller & Matzler, 2008).

We used penalty-reward-contrast analysis (Mikulić & Prebežac, 2011) to categorise the images into the three hierarchical factor types to facilitate an examination of the differences between FTVs and RVs and undertake a more critical, in-depth and comparative analysis of visitor behaviour in these market segments by dividing repeaters into distinct sub-groups. As such, we provide new insights, an important theoretical contribution to the literature and recommendations for resource management and marketing in relation to these key behavioural segments.

The paper is structured as follows. First, the pertinent literature on destination images, first time visitors and repeaters, and the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction is reviewed. Second, we explain the methodology adopted for the primary research and the method used to classify the factors. Third, we discuss the findings and finally, we outline the contribution of this research to both theory and practice, address the study's limitations, and make recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Destination images and visitor decisions

There is general agreement in the literature about the complexity of destination images in relation to their conceptualisation, dimensions, classification and measurement (Gallarza, Gil & Calderón, 2002; Jani & Nguni, 2016; Tasci et al., 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Intuitively, a destination image is understood to be a visual representation of a place in the

mind of an individual (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996). Crompton (1979: 18) defines it as 'the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination'. As such, destination images are highly subjective and may change from one individual to another (Gallarza et al. 2002) and/or over time (Gartner & Hunt, 1987). Images may change in the short-term from a pre-visit (secondary) image, which may be induced through travel trade promotion and/or formed more organically from a wider range of stimuli, to a complex or modified (primary) image during or after the trip or over a longer period (Frias, Rodriguez & Castaneda, 2008; Jeong, 2012; Kim & Chen, 2016).

Destination images have been conceptualised as attitudinal constructs consisting of both cognitive and affective components (del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Tasci et al., 2007). Many studies have measured cognitive destination images i.e. those relating to the physical attributes of place such as infrastructure, attractions, and shopping facilities (e.g. Barroso, Armario & Ruiz, 2007; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sanz, 2009; Zhang et al., 2016) and the more abstract affective images, relating to visitor feelings and emotions and reflecting a psychological response to stimuli (e.g. Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Nghiê-m-Phú, 2014; San Martín & del Bosque, 2008; Zhang et al., 2016;). Cognitive and affective destination images have been found to vary on the basis of prospective visitor socio-demographics, together with visit motivation and exposure to stimuli relating to information sources, the extent of engagement with the travel trade through distribution channels, and previous experiences (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004; San Martín & del Bosque, 2008).

There is also a consensus in the literature that destination images have an important influence on visitors' travel decisions, visitors' evaluation of the visit experience, their satisfaction and future behavioural intentions (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sanz, 2009; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Prospective visitors may have limited knowledge of the destinations in their awareness set and the subsequent evoked set from which they make their choice of destination to visit (see Woodside & Lysons, 1989); as such, the image they hold plays an important role in the choice process (Huang & Gross, 2010). Moreover, prospective visitor choices, like other decisions, are biased by the adoption of availability and affect heuristics (Funicane et al, 2000; Schwartz et al, 1991). Therefore, it is more likely that destinations with strong, positive images will be included in their decision-making process. Destination images are also crucial for destination positioning (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) because their features facilitate differentiation from competitors (Li & Vogelsong, 2006). However, the congruence between the induced image projected by the destination and the organic image held by prospective visitors may vary substantially depending on the destination, previous experiences and the sources that have influenced visitor and prospective visitor perceptions, particularly the Internet (Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). Visitor and prospective visitor perceptions will also vary according to destination type; well-established destinations are more likely to have positive images compared with emerging destinations such as post-colonial, post-conflict or post-disaster destinations (Séraphin & Butcher, 2018; Seraphin, Korstanje & Gowreesunkar, 2019).

2.2 First-time visitors and repeat visitors

FTVs represent new consumers who have chosen a destination among available alternatives based on their secondary images, whereas RVs reflect the quality of a destination's primary

image and represent stability and ambassadorial potential (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Tan & Wu, 2016). Destination marketers must understand the characteristics of these distinct segments in order to satisfy their needs to ensure a balance of FTVs and RVs, and thereby secure the long term viability of the destination.

Gitelson and Crompton (1984), pioneers in FTV and RV research, found that first-timers were motivated to visit destinations by factors such as new cultural experiences, value for money and positive recommendations. By comparison, repeaters were motivated to return by contentment with a previous visit, a comfortable social environment, emotional attachment, to explore further, do different things, and to show the destination to others. Later studies have confirmed these differences (e.g. Meleddu et al., 2015; Osti, Disegna & Brida, 2012). Other research has identified differences between FTVs and RVs on a wide range of relevant variables, although they are often explained in terms of destination familiarity, a key element of which is experiential familiarity (Prentice, 2004; Tan, 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016). Destination familiarity has been found to influence visitors' destination images, destination choice, revisit intention and recommendation behaviour (Chen & Lin, 2012).

The majority of previous studies on FTVs and RVs found significant differences in ratings between the two segments, For example, Bruwer and Lesschaeve (2012) found that RVs have a significantly higher evaluation of the tangible aspects of destinations such as physical structures, product characteristics, layout or accessibility, while FTVs evaluate the ambient qualities such as beauty and atmosphere more highly. A number of studies have also found RVs to have more positive views about a destination than FTVs. Fakeye & Crompton (1991)

reported that social opportunities and attractions were perceived more positively by repeaters. McDowall (2010) found that RVs to a destination had more positive views about the hospitality of its residents, the quality of its services, and about the destination overall. Kozak and Rimmington (2000) reported that RVs perceived destination attributes such as value for money, quality of accommodation, feelings of safety and security, hospitality, cleanliness, and variety of attractions to be more satisfactory than did FTVs. Moreover, weather conditions seem to affect FTVs more than RVs (Hubner & Gosling, 2012; Seraphin, 2019). Overall visitor satisfaction has also been found to increase proportionally with increasing frequency of visitation to a destination (Chi & Qu, 2008), while RVs have been found to be more willing to recommend than FTVs (Chi, 2012).

While such studies show that repeaters are generally more positive about destinations, the findings from other research are more complex. For example, Kozak, Bigné and Andreu (2005) found that accommodation, the condition of roads, traffic flow and parking facilities were rated more favourably by repeaters, but no differences between FTVs and RVs were found for other destination characteristics such as restaurant facilities, personal safety and tourist information. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) and Tan (2017) found that multiple visits to a destination create little changes to destination image, and Wahid et al.(2016) found no differences between FTVs and RVs in relation to their overall visit satisfaction. Similarly, no significant differences were found between first-timer and repeater willingness to recommend Bangkok (McDowall, 2010), Ardebil (Shavanddasht & Allan, 2018) or Alanya (Aktaş, Çevirgen & Toker, 2010), although Chi (2012) found that overall satisfaction was more important for FTV loyalty than for RVs' continuing loyalty, suggesting that satisfaction is critical for securing initial repeat visitation but that other factors have a greater influence on

high frequency repeat visitation. These complex findings thus demand more in-depth analysis of FTVs and RVs.

2.3 The three factor theory of consumer satisfaction

The theory that consumer satisfaction is influenced in different ways by three independent hierarchical factors: BFs, EFs and PFs (Kano, 1984) has been verified by a range of studies (e.g. Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002; Matzler, Sauerwein & Heischmidt, 2003; Slevitch, Mathe, Karpova & Scott-Halsell, 2013; Ting and Chen, 2002) Theoretically, basic factors (BF) and excitement factors (EF) are asymmetrically related to visitor satisfaction; BFs are critical when destination performance on those factors is low, and their influence on dissatisfaction decreases when factor performance increases. Conversely, EFs become important determinants of satisfaction when destination performance on those factors is high, but do not cause dissatisfaction when factor performance is low (Albayrak & Caber, 2013; Alegre & Garau, 2011). By comparison, there is a linear and symmetrical relationship between performance factors (PF) and visitor satisfaction; they produce satisfaction when factor performance is high and dissatisfaction when performance is low (Fuller & Matzler, 2008). As such, if either important performance factors (IPF) or BFs are perceived to be underperforming, the negative impact on satisfaction is likely to be substantial, whereas underperformance on EFs or unimportant performance factors (UPF) is less critical.

Application of the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction, to identify nonlinearities and asymmetric relationships, can assist management decision-making by providing a better understanding of product and service quality priorities for development, facilitating more tailored approaches to achieving an optimal level of satisfaction for different market

segments, and creating possibilities for differentiation by delighting customers (Alegre & Garau, 2011). From the perspective of visitor destination choice, BFs represent essential requirements; once BFs are satisfied, alternative options are evaluated on the basis of their PFs and if competitive PFs are offered, it is the EFs which significantly improve perceived customer value over competitor offers (Fuchs, 2002; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). Within the tourism and hospitality literature, the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction has been applied in a range of contexts to assess the impacts of different service/product attributes on overall visitor satisfaction (e.g. Albayrak & Caber, 2013; Coghlan, 2012). However, despite acknowledgements of the need for the application of this theory in relation to market segmentation (Füller & Matzler, 2008; Mikulić & Prebežac, 2011), the examination of FTVs and RVs within a destination context, has been neglected, particularly in relation to high frequency repeat visitors.

2.4. Hypotheses

Most previous research examined repeat visitors as a homogeneous market without differentiating between low and high frequency repeaters. Yet, the complex findings from previous research highlight the need for more critical and in-depth analysis of the two market segments. Therefore, given the existing gap in knowledge about low and high frequency repeat visitor perceptions of destination image attribute performance, we hypothesised that:

H1. High frequency RVs (RV4+) rate cognitive image attribute performance higher than FTVs or lower frequency RVs, whereas FTVs rate affective image attribute performance higher than RVs.

Considering the positive effect of repetition on liking (Zajonc, 1968), the impact of factor types on satisfaction and behaviour would be expected to be different for FTVs and RVs.

BFs and PFs may impact differently on FTV and RV decision-making and recommendations, particularly those of high frequency repeaters considering their potentially different needs and expectations. Low performance of BFs should theoretically cause FTV dissatisfaction and therefore deter repeat visitation whereas RVs, having returned to the destination, are arguably less dissatisfied with the destination's BF performance. We therefore hypothesised that:

H2: BF performance is rated significantly higher by high frequency RVs (RV4+) than by FTVs or lower frequency RVs.

Earlier studies found that cognitive and affective destination images varied in relation to visitor characteristics including their previous experience (Pike & Ryan, 2004; San Martín & del Bosque, 2008). Moreover, research has also established the important influence which destination images have on visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sanz, 2009; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Therefore, given the importance of both FTV and RV segments for destination competitiveness and consequently the importance of identifying the image attributes which influence visitor satisfaction in both of these market segments, we hypothesised that:

H3. Both cognitive and affective image attributes are significant predictors of FTV and RV satisfaction.

However, given that Bruwer and Lesschaeve (2012) found that RVs evaluate the tangible aspects of destinations more highly than FTVs, to examine this relationship in relation to overall satisfaction, we also hypothesised that:

H4: Cognitive image attributes are better predictors of RV satisfaction than FTV satisfaction.

Moreover, given the characteristics of the different factor types (Albayrak & Caber, 2013; Alegre & Garau, 2011) and the change in their impact over time as visitors become more familiar with a destination's features (Füller & Matzler, 2008), their influence on visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation would be expected to be different for FTVs and RVs, particularly high frequency RVs, because of their potentially different needs and expectations. Therefore, low performance of the destination's BFs should theoretically cause FTV dissatisfaction and consequently constrain repeat visitation while those who return to the destination should be less dissatisfied with BF performance. As such, we hypothesised that:

H5. BF performance will positively influence RV satisfaction more than FTV satisfaction.

Additionally, in order to examine both RV heterogeneity and the behavioural drivers in FTV and RV segments in relation to both visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation (cf. Meleddu et al., 2015; Shavanddasht & Allan, 2018; Wahid et al., 2016), we also hypothesised that:

H6. BF performance will positively influence high frequency RV (RV4+) satisfaction more than FTV or lower frequency RV satisfaction.

H7. BF performance will positively influence RV word-of-mouth recommendation more than FTV recommendation.

H8. BF performance will positively influence high frequency RV (RV4+) word-of-mouth recommendation more than FTV or lower frequency RV recommendation.

3. Method

3.1. Measures and sampling

This study uses data from surveys of visitors to Tossa de Mar, Spain, which produced 1093 usable questionnaires (595 in 2016; 498 in 2017), consisting of 582 first time visitors and 511 repeat visitors. The questionnaire design was based on a critical review of the extant literature. Visitors were asked to rate 16 cognitive image items (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004), seven affective image items (Russel et al., 1981), and their overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the destination (Bigné et al., 2009; Chi & Qu, 2008). Visitor responses were measured using five-point disagreement/agreement scales (Lozano, Garcia-Cueto & Muniz, 2008). The survey also included questions on respondent demographics: age, gender, country of origin, level of formal educational attainment, employment status and frequency of re-visitation (Table 1).

***** **Table 1 in here** *****

Data collection was carried out during both the peak season (June-September 2016) and off-season (October-December 2017), using interactive questionnaire surveys with tablet computers. Interviewers were fluent in Catalan, Spanish, English and French, the main languages spoken by visitors to the destination. To increase the representativeness of the participants, systematic random sampling was used (Daniel, 2012), involving the selection of every fifth element after a randomly generated starting point. To increase the representativeness of the sample, the survey was also carried out during weekdays and weekends, and at different times each day.

3.2. Data analysis

First, the hierarchical factor structure of the destination's primary image attributes and their asymmetric impact on overall visitor satisfaction were identified through penalty-reward

contrast analysis using dichotomized regression analysis (Matzler et al., 2004). Next, FTV and three categories of RV ratings on the destination's cognitive and affective image attributes, classified as BFs, PFs, and EFs, were compared using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Third, we predicted the impact of the cognitive and affective image attributes (and the hierarchical factor types) on both FTV and RV satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation using ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression analyses. In the OLS model with n predictor variables:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_j X_j + \varepsilon,$$

where Y is the outcome variable; β_0 , is the model intercept; β_{i-j} are the estimated regression coefficients which quantify the association between the predictor variables and the outcome; X_{i-j} are the predictor variables; and ε is the random error component reflecting the difference between the observed and fitted relationship. The OLS method minimizes the sum of squared errors (differences between the observed and predicted values) to estimate the regression coefficients; under the assumed statistical model, OLS provides maximum likelihood estimation i.e. the observed data is the most probable (Hair, Babin, Anderson & Black, 2018).

3.3 Method of classification for the hierarchical factors

The dichotomised regression analysis to identify the BFs, EFs and PFs among the destination's image attributes adopted the following procedure (Matzler et al., 2004). First, visitor performance ratings on 16 cognitive and seven affective image attributes were recoded to form dummy variables. The 'strongly agree' (5) ratings were recoded to represent the excitement factors (value of 0), while the 'strongly disagree' (1) and 'disagree' (2) ratings were used to form dummy variables expressing basic factors (value of 1). Second, visitor overall satisfaction ratings (1 to 5) were then regressed against the dummy variables expressed as

'penalties' and 'rewards' to identify the hierarchical factor types (Brandt, 1988). For each of the image attributes two measures were, therefore, obtained: i.e. how positive and negative perceptions of the destination's performance on these variables impacts on visitors' overall satisfaction. The constant in the regression equation is the average of all the referent groups on visitor satisfaction. As such, 'penalties' are expressed as the amount subtracted from the constant i.e. low satisfaction, and 'rewards' represent the amount added to the constant i.e. high satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2004).

If the reward significantly exceeds the penalty, the attribute is considered to be an EF (satisfier), and if the penalty significantly exceeds the reward, the attribute is a BF (dissatisfier). If there are both statistically significant rewards and penalties and there is a symmetrical relationship between the destination's perceived performance on the attribute and the visitors' overall satisfaction, the attribute is a PF. In other words, PFs result in visitor satisfaction if it is perceived positively, but in dissatisfaction if it is perceived negatively. Three image attributes had no statistically significant impact on overall visitor satisfaction: CI2: 'It has attractive nature and scenery'; AI3: 'It is an exciting place'; AI5: 'The holidays are an opportunity to see places, and discover new things'. As such, they could not be classified as hierarchical factor types and were excluded from the analysis. The remaining 20 attributes had a significant impact on overall visitor satisfaction (Figure 1).

***** **Figure 1 in here** *****

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The satisfaction factor structure of the destination's image attributes

The 20 significant attributes vary in the impact of their performance on overall visitor satisfaction. The significance of the impact is asymmetrical for four of the cognitive image attributes: CI4; CI8; CI10; CI16. The 'availability of open air activities' (C14) is the only EF (satisfier); it significantly increases visitor satisfaction if delivered successfully but does not result in significant dissatisfaction if not delivered. By contrast, there are three BFs (dissatisfiers), which are all cognitive attributes: 'good nightlife & entertainment' (C18), 'good gastronomy' (CI10) and 'security' (CI16). As such, they are critical destination attributes which cause significant visitor dissatisfaction if they are not delivered successfully, but they will not significantly increase satisfaction when performance is improved because of visitor expectations concerning these basic requirements. 'Good nightlife & entertainment' (C18) is notable because the penalty for poor performance is particularly severe compared with the others.

The remaining 11 cognitive image attributes, together with the five affective image attributes, are PFs because they have statistically significant impacts on satisfaction for both low and high performance. The PFs with an impact of 0.15 or above (Figure 1) i.e. those which contribute most to overall satisfaction, are hereafter referred to as important performance factors (IPFs). From the cognitive attributes, the IPFs are: 'suitable accommodation' (CI1), 'good local transport' (CI5), 'interesting and friendly people' (CI12) and 'it is a quiet place' (CI13). The IPFs among the affective attributes are: 'it is an arousing place' (AI1), 'it is a relaxing place' (AI4) and 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' (AI7). As all of the IPFs have a higher penalty for poor performance compared with the reward for high performance, their good performance is important to both maintain visitor satisfaction and avoid dissatisfaction (See Penalty Reward (PR) Proportion values in Table 2).

Maintaining high performance in the IPFs is particularly important for visitors' destination choice as CI4 is the only EF (satisfier) and is one of the lowest rated cognitive image attributes. In the absence of EFs (satisfiers), comparisons of alternative destinations will be made on the basis of PFs, assuming BF performance has been met (Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). The PFs are therefore critical for differentiating this destination from competitors (Alegre & Garau, 2011).

***** **Table 2 in here** *****

4.2 First Time Visitor and Repeat Visitor Image Comparisons

The differences between the destination image attribute ratings of FTVs and RVs who have previously visited once (RV1), two to three times (RV2-3) and at least four times (RV4+) are presented in Table 3.

***** **Table 3 in here** *****

The results from previous research regarding FTV and RV ratings on destination image attributes are inconclusive, particularly in relation to the impact of repeat visitation frequency on destination images. We therefore tested H1 (High frequency RVs (RV4+) rate cognitive image attribute performance higher than FTVs or lower frequency RVs, whereas FTVs rate affective image attribute performance higher than RVs). The RV4+ ratings are significantly higher on nine of the 16 cognitive image attributes, and FTV ratings are significantly higher on four of the seven affective image attributes. As such, H1 was only partially accepted. While this result lends some support to Bruwer and Lesschaeve's (2012) findings, it also reflects the mixed outcomes from previous research. It is interesting to note that a basic dichotomous comparison of FTV and the mean of all RV ratings shows that RV ratings are

significantly higher on only five of the cognitive image attributes whereas FTV ratings, as before, are significantly higher on four of the seven affective image attributes. The subdivision of the repeater market has therefore revealed additional differences between FTV and high frequency RVs.

Table 3 also shows the FTV and RV image attribute ratings classified as the three factor types. On the basis of experiential familiarity with a destination (Prentice, 2004; Tan, 2017; Tan and Wu, 2016), it would be expected that the image attribute ratings would be different for FTVs and RVs. While this is the case for the large majority of the image attributes, it is interesting to note that there are no significant differences between FTV, RV1, RV2-3 and RV4+ ratings on the EF 'availability of open air facilities' (CI4), four PFs: 'interesting historical/cultural attractions' (CI7), 'good infrastructure' (CI11) 'it is a quiet place' (CI13) and 'it is a pleasant place (AI2) and one BF: 'good nightlife & entertainment' (CI8). This indicates that these particular destination characteristics are perceived as unchanging irrespective of the frequency of revisitation. While the resort's nightlife and entertainment receives a relatively low rating from FTVs and RVs alike, it is notable that firstly, its 'historical and cultural attractions' and its 'pleasant' character are among the highest rated attributes by all visitor groups, and secondly, that the destination is able to retain repeat visitor interest in these features. This suggests that they are particular strengths which should be promoted effectively to both new and existing visitors.

As there are no differences in the ratings of FTV and RV groups on one of the BFs (dissatisfiers): 'good nightlife & entertainment' (CI8) Hypothesis 2 (BF performance is rated significantly higher by high frequency RVs (RV4+) than by FTVs or lower frequency RVs) is only partially accepted. Nevertheless, the other two: 'good gastronomy' (CI10) and

'security' (CI16) have significantly higher ratings from RV4+ compared with FTV or the RV1 and RV2-3 ratings (with the exception of RV1 on CI10) and this indicates that these dissatisfiers are potentially critical constraints on re-visitation for the large majority of visitors; as such, they should be addressed to reduce dissatisfaction and facilitate repeat visitation.

By comparison, visitor ratings on performance factors: CI1, CI3, CI9, CI12, CI14 & AI4 increase significantly with increasing re-visitation. RV4+ ratings on 'interesting and friendly people' (CI12) are significantly higher than those who have visited less frequently. Interestingly, previous studies (e.g. Fakeye & Crompton, 1992; Meleddu et al., 2015; Osti et al., 2012) have found socialization and a strong emotional attachment to locals to be important for repeaters. 'Suitable accommodation' (CI1) is rated similarly, which supports the findings of Kozak & Rimmington (2000). Also, the increase in positivity with increasing visitation generally supports McDowall's (2010) findings, while the higher RV4+ ratings on the cognitive performance factors mirror Bruwer and Lesschaeve's (2012) higher RV evaluation of tangible destination attributes. Notably, CI12, CI1 and AI4 are among the highest performing IPFs, although there is a disproportionately higher negative impact on visitor dissatisfaction when their performance is poor (Figure 1). Given the critical importance of the PFs in relation to the singular, low performing EF (see Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003), noted in section 4.1, these aspects should be managed appropriately to secure favourable comparisons in the destination choice process and thereby maintain high frequency re-visitation.

By contrast, RV4+ ratings on 'good local transport' (CI5), 'it is an arousing place' (AI1) and 'I move to the area where I spend my vacation and discover new attractions' (AI6) are significantly lower than those of FTV's. All three are IPFs with substantial penalties for underperformance. Therefore, their relative weakness from the perspective of high frequency RVs should be investigated further. RV4+ ratings of 'suitable shopping facilities' (CI6) and 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' (AI7) are also significantly lower than those of FTV's. As with AI1 and AI6, these discrepancies may result from the RVs' increased experiential familiarity with the destination (Prentice, 2004; Tan, 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016). Nevertheless, given the importance of shopping in the visitor experience (Choi, Heo & Law, 2016; Choi, Liu, Pang & Chow, 2008; Divisekera, 2010), the relatively high negative impact of the perceived underperformance of shopping on high frequency RV satisfaction (Figure 1), and the potentially increased significance of PFs in the absence of EFs (Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003), this attribute should be addressed to retain visitors in this key market segment.

4.3 The impact of image attribute performance on visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation

The results for the regression of 'overall satisfaction', against the significant cognitive and affective image attributes, as hierarchical factor types, for FTVs and the three RV sub-groups are shown in Table 4.

***** Table 4 in here *****

FTV satisfaction is significantly influenced by a wider range of destination image attributes ($n = 5$) compared with any of the three RV models, although it is notable that if all three repeater sub-groups are combined, as in the dichotomous comparisons presented in most previous studies, there are also five significant destination attributes. All four models combine both cognitive and affective image attributes; as such, Hypothesis 3 (Both cognitive and affective image attributes are significant predictors of FTV and RV satisfaction.) is accepted. This supports the findings from previous research (e.g. Bigné, Sánchez, & Sanz, 2009; Chen & Tsai, 2007). However, we also examined Bruwer and Lesschaeve's (2012) findings relating to higher ratings of tangible destination attributes by RVs than FTVs, within the context of visitors' overall satisfaction, in the test of Hypothesis 4 below.

It is interesting to note that while the cognitive image attributes which are significant for the FTV and the combined RV models are all different, the two affective image attributes: 'it is a pleasant place' (AI2) and 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' (AI7) are the same, which is surprising, but reflects both the complexity of the findings from previous research in this area (cf. Kozak, Bigné & Andreu, 2005); McDowall, 2010) and the mixed result from the test of Hypothesis 1. Moreover, in three of the four models (including FTV and RV models) the affective attributes have the highest impact, particularly for sustained repeat visitation in model 4. As such, Hypothesis H4 (Cognitive image attributes are better predictors of RV satisfaction than FTV satisfaction) is rejected. In contrast to Bruwer and Lesschaeve's (2012) findings, the combination of cognitive and affective attributes which are significant for repeaters supports the findings from other research (e.g. Li, Cheng, Kim & Petrick, 2008; Rittichainuwat, Qu & Mongkhonvanit, 2007), which acknowledges a range of aesthetic and utilitarian reasons for returning to a destination. Nevertheless, the primacy of the affective attributes for high frequency repeaters, also

suggests that emotional attachment strongly influences repeater decisions to return (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Campo-Martinez, Garau-Vadell, & Martinez-Ruiz, 2010).

In model 1 (FTV), all five predictors are performance factors, which explain 30% of the variance in FTV satisfaction. From a theoretical perspective, this is not altogether surprising given the absence of high performing EFs (see Fuchs, 2002; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). Additionally, given that overall satisfaction is potentially more important for FTV loyalty than for RVs' continuing loyalty (Chi, 2012), these image attributes will have a critical influence on initial repeat visitation. Two of the significant predictors are affective image attributes (AI2 and AI7). For a one unit increase in AI2 and AI7, there is a 0.24 and 0.13 of a unit increase, respectively, in FTV satisfaction. Whereas the penalties and rewards are relatively balanced for the destination's performance on AI7, the reward for good performance on AI2 is outweighed by the penalty for poor performance (see Figure 1). Given AI2's importance for first time visitation, this should be managed accordingly. The three significant cognitive image attributes 'Interesting and friendly people' (CI12), 'interesting historical/cultural attractions' (CI7) and 'good cleanliness/hygiene' (CI9) also warrants attention as their poor performance has a disproportionately negative impact on visitor satisfaction. As such, all three cognitive image attributes must be managed effectively to ensure they positively influence the FTV's experience, thereby promoting repeat visitation.

Compared with model 1, where only performance factors are influential in visitor satisfaction, BFs are significant in models 2 and 4, which indicate that they have more influence on RVs than FTVs. However, given that only PFs are significant for model 3, Hypothesis 5 (BF performance will positively influence RV satisfaction more than FTV satisfaction) is only partially accepted.

In model 2, only two attributes are significant predictors of RV1 satisfaction: 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' (AI7) and 'a secure place' (CI16), which have similar individual impacts. The significance of AI7 for FTVs (model 1) and for RV1s (model 2) indicates its continuing importance for these visitors. Its non-significance in models 3 and 4 probably reflects increasing destination familiarity with higher frequency of repeat visitation. Chen and Lin (2012) found destination familiarity to significantly influence destination images and RV behaviour. In addition, the increased second home ownership among the R4+ group (32.4%) compared with R2-3 (2.2%) and R1 (0%) may also be influential. It is interesting to note that while AI7 is an IPF with relatively balanced penalties and rewards for destination performance, CI16 is a BF which will cause dissatisfaction if not delivered. Therefore, security is a critical issue which needs to be addressed to ensure continued re-visitation.

Model 3 has three significant predictors of RV2-3 satisfaction: 'suitable accommodation' (CI1), 'pleasant climate' (CI3) and 'it is a pleasant place' (AI2). While AI2 is also an important predictor of FTV, CI1 and CI3 (together with CI16) are significant only for RVs and CI3 is uniquely significant for RV2-3s. Attributes CI1 and CI3, particularly the former, have the largest individual impacts on satisfaction: CI1 is an IPF, but has a disproportionately higher negative impact for poor performance. This is also the case for CI3 and AI2. As such, high performance on these attributes should be maintained to secure longer term repeat visitation among this market segment.

Model 4 (RV4+) also has three significant predictors, two of which: 'it is a pleasant place' (AI2) and 'suitable accommodation' (CI1) are common with model 3 (RV2-3), and one: 'a

secure place' (CI16) is common with model 2 (RV1). Given that approximately one third of these high frequency repeaters have second homes in the destination, the significance of these three attributes is not surprising. The high individual impact of AI2 should also be noted; for a one unit increase in this attribute, RV4+ satisfaction increases by 0.44 units. Moreover, given its high penalty for poor performance, its criticality should be acknowledged. As with model 2 (RV1), the cognitive attribute 'it is a secure place' (CI16) is also a significant predictor, which mirrors the findings from previous research on RVs (e.g. Beerli & Martin, 2004). This is interesting from the perspective of cognitive ease being induced through repetition; the results show that security has a positive influence only on RVs not on FTVs. It is adaptive for any initial concerns over security at a destination to subside if recurrent exposure, through repeat visitation, signals that it is a safe place i.e. through the 'mere exposure effect', where repetition induces a mild affection (Zajonc, 1968). As a BF, this attribute has significant potential for RV dissatisfaction and must be managed accordingly. Overall, given the dominant influence of the PF: 'it is a pleasant place' (AI2) on RV4+ satisfaction, and also that the BF: 'It is a secure place' (CI16) explains more of the variance in model 2 (RV1) than model 4 (RV4+), Hypothesis H6 (BF performance will positively influence high frequency RV (RV4+) satisfaction more than FTV or lower frequency RV satisfaction) is rejected. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that BF performance does have a significant influence on RV overall satisfaction in models 2 (RV2-3) and 4 (RV4+) while it is nonsignificant for FTV satisfaction.

An overall comparison of FTV and RV satisfaction shows that the former is predicted by PFs only whereas the latter is predicted by both PFs and BFs. Moreover, there are three exclusive predictors for FTV and for RV (if all categories of repeaters are considered together). For FTV, 'interesting historical/cultural attractions' (CI7), 'good cleanliness/hygiene' (CI9) and

'interesting and friendly people' (CI12) are exclusive; these are PFs which have a large negative impact on satisfaction when they are underperforming, particularly CI12, thereby potentially discouraging repeat visitation. The three exclusive predictors of RV are the PFs: 'suitable accommodation' (CI1) and 'pleasant climate' (CI3) and the BF: 'a secure place' (CI16). Underperformance on CI3, and particularly CI1, will result in repeater dissatisfaction as will poor performance on the BF: CI16. It should also be noted that two affective image attributes: 'it is a pleasant place' (AI2) and 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' (AI7) are significant for both FTVs and RVs. These two attributes also have a higher penalty for dissatisfaction when performance is poor.

The influence of the cognitive and affective image attributes, as hierarchical factor types, on word-of-mouth recommendation by visitor category is shown in Table 5. The combination of cognitive and affective attributes which are significant for repeaters provides some support to the findings from previous research (e.g. Li et al., 2008; Rittichainuwat et al., 2007), which acknowledges both aesthetic and practical reasons for returning to a destination. Nevertheless, the primacy of the affective attributes for high frequency repeaters (RV4+), also suggests that emotional attachment strongly influences repeater decisions to return (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Campo-Martinez, Garau-Vadell, & Martinez-Ruiz, 2010).

***** **Table 5 in here** *****

Five of the affective image attributes are significant for either FTV and RV word-of-mouth recommendation compared with only two for satisfaction. This indicates that a wider range of feelings and emotions are influential in visitor recommendation.

In model 1, while the balance of cognitive and affective image attributes mirrors that for FTV satisfaction, four of the predictors are different, and only 'interesting and friendly people' (CI12) is common to both. It should be noted that CI12 is only significant for FTV satisfaction, not RV satisfaction, but is significant for both FTV RV recommendation (RV2-3 and RV4+). The importance of the social environment for RVs resonates with the findings from previous research (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gittleson and Crompton, 1984; McDowall, 2010). Four of the predictors are PFs with disproportionately higher penalties for poor performance, which should be addressed to maximise the potential for recommendation. For model 2, it is interesting to note that, as with visitor satisfaction, only 14% of the variance in word of mouth recommendation is predicted with two affective attributes, albeit different variables. In model 3, recommendations were influenced by 'interesting and friendly people' (CI12), 'it is an exciting place' (AI3), 'it is a secure place' (CI16) and 'good gastronomy' (CI10). Attribute CI12 is an IPF with one of the highest negative impacts for poor performance, and CI10 and CI16 are both BFs, which have the same effect if standards are not maintained. These elements should therefore be managed effectively to ensure continued recommendation. It is notable that CI12, CI16 and CI10 also influence RV4+ recommendations in model 4. This further emphasises the importance of managing these particular destination attributes to secure recommendation from repeaters.

Overall, the EF 'availability of open air activities' (CI4) was not significant for either visitor satisfaction or recommendation; only PFs were influential in FTV recommendation, while BFs were significant in RV models 3 (RV2-3) and 4 (RV4+). Although, this shows that BFs have more influence on repeat visitation, their absence from model 2 (RV1) means that Hypothesis 7 (BF performance will positively influence RV word-of-mouth recommendation more than FTV recommendation) is only partially accepted. However, BF influence on

word-of-mouth recommendation does increase with increasing revisit frequency. As such, Hypothesis 8 (BF performance will positively influence high frequency RV (RV4+) word-of-mouth recommendation more than FTV or lower frequency RV recommendation) is accepted. Nevertheless, it should be noted that BFs explain more of the variance in RV2-3 recommendation (model 3) than RV4+ recommendation (model 4).

Some previous studies found no differences between FTV and RV overall satisfaction (e.g. Wahid et al., 2016) or willingness to recommend (e.g. Shavanddasht & Allan, 2018), whereas others found overall satisfaction increased proportionally with increasing frequency of revisitation to a destination (Chi & Qu, 2008) and RVs were more willing to recommend destinations than FTVs (Chi, 2012). Unlike the previous studies that treated RVs as a homogeneous group, we examined the influence of revisit frequency on overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend. The results (figure figure 1) show that while all three RV subgroups' satisfaction ratings were significantly higher than FTV ratings, high frequency repeater (RV4+) satisfaction ratings were only significantly higher than FTV ratings and RV2-3 ratings, but not R1 ratings. As overall satisfaction was more important for securing initial repeat visitation than for repeaters' continuing loyalty (Chi, 2012); our findings suggests that since the R1 group has been satisfied to a high level, they are more likely to return more frequently in future thereby securing higher frequency repeat visitors. The relationship between revisit frequency and willingness to recommend the destination is more straightforward; high frequency repeater (RV4+) recommendation ratings were significantly higher than FTV, R1 or R2-3 groups. These results support the findings of Chi and Qu (2008) and Chi (2012) notwithstanding the difficulties of making comparisons with studies which used a binary division of FTVs and RVs.

***** Table 6 in here *****

4.4 Theoretical and practical implications

4.4.1 Theoretical contributions

The study builds on previous research on FTVs and RVs and addresses a gap in the extant literature because FTV and multiple RV segments have not hitherto been examined in a mature destination context through the prism of the factor theory of consumer satisfaction. The adoption of this theoretical perspective has enabled us to conduct a more critical analysis of FTV and RV perceptions of cognitive and affective image attributes and their asymmetrical relationship with overall visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. This has enhanced the understanding of the key drivers of, and constraints on, FTV and RV behaviour. A further contribution of the study relates to the subdivision of the repeat visitor market on the basis of revisit frequency. This has revealed significant differences between the RV subgroups, which have been overlooked in most previous research on these market segments (cf. Anwar & Sohail, 2004; Kim, Lee & Kim, 2012; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Lee, Lee & Yoon, 2009; Lim, Kim & Lee, 2016).

Previous studies on FTVs and RVs in a destination context have assumed a linear and symmetrical relationship between destination attribute performance and both overall satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation (e.g. Meleddu et al., 2015; Osti et al., 2012; Prentice, 2004; Tan, 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016). In comparison, this study's analysis of the positive-negative asymmetry of the factors has highlighted the instability of many of the destination's features and this has enhanced the understanding of the impact of attribute

performance on satisfaction and recommendation. Moreover, this approach explicitly shows that factor type has a significant differential impact on FTV and RV overall satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. For four of the destination's cognitive image attributes (one EF and three BFs), their performance has a significant asymmetrical impact on overall satisfaction. Notably, the BFs result in significant visitor dissatisfaction if they are not delivered successfully, particularly 'good nightlife & entertainment'. Moreover, the adoption of this approach has also shown that even for the 16 PFs, there is a disproportionately higher penalty for low performance compared with the reward for high performance. This is particularly marked for the cognitive attributes: 'interesting and friendly people' and 'suitable accommodation', and also the affective attributes: 'it is a relaxing place' and 'it is an arousing place'. Moreover, the identification of only one (relatively low performing) EF: 'availability of open air activities' also highlights the criticality of the PFs in relation to visitor comparisons with other destinations (Alegre & Garau, 2011; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). Without this particular theoretical lens, these critical factors would have remained hidden. As such, this represents a noteworthy contribution to the FTV and RV literature in relation to providing new insights into the differential impact of destination image attributes in these key markets.

The combined effect of adopting the three factor theory and also subdividing repeaters by frequency of re-visitation has also made a contribution to knowledge. The R4+ ratings were found to be significantly higher on the BFs: 'good gastronomy' and 'it is a secure place' compared with FTV or the R1 and R2-3 ratings (with the exception of R1 in relation to 'good gastronomy'). This indicates that these dissatisfiers are potentially critical constraints on re-visitation for the large majority of visitors; this finding also would have been obscured if RVs had been treated as a homogeneous group. Equally, visitor ratings on a number of PFs

('suitable accommodation', 'pleasant climate', 'good cleanliness/hygiene', 'interesting and friendly people', 'high quality beaches', 'it is a relaxing place') were found to increase significantly with increasing frequency of re-visitation. While this supports the findings from previous research in relation to destination attributes rather than factor types (e.g. Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012; Meleddu et al., 2015; Osti et al., 2012), this study's designation of image attributes into EFs, PFs and BF provides important additional information in relation to the impact of the hierarchical factors on FTV and high frequency RV satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. For example, BF performance was found to have a significant influence on satisfaction and recommendation for RVs, especially high frequency repeaters, compared with FTVs. Additionally, in relation to the PFs, 'interesting and friendly people', 'suitable accommodation' and 'it is a relaxing place' are some of the highest performing IPFs, which have a high positive impact on visitor satisfaction, but also have a higher negative impact on visitor dissatisfaction in relation to poor performance. Moreover, given the notable absence of EFs, with the exception of 'availability of open air activities', these IPFs also play a critical role in visitor comparisons of competing destinations (see Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003 op. cit.). The particular theoretical and methodological approach adopted in this study has, therefore, highlighted the critical influential value of these factors, but also makes explicit their duality in terms of their precarious nature. The study has therefore informed understanding of the impact of the hierarchical factors on FTV and RV satisfaction and behavioural intention.

The combined effect from adopting the three factor theory and subdividing repeaters has also shown that FTV overall satisfaction is influenced by a wider range of image attributes compared with any of the three RV subgroups. For word-of-mouth recommendation, it is interesting that seven of the image attributes were not significant for visitor satisfaction. In

addition, five affective attributes are significant, compared with only two for satisfaction, indicating the higher impact of feelings and emotions on visitor recommendation. Nevertheless, for the higher frequency RVs, the cognitive image attributes explain most of the variance in recommendation. Additionally, in comparison with overall satisfaction, for visitor recommendation, the influence of PFs is more balanced across FTV and RV segments, and BFs have more impact on repeater recommendation.

Overall, our subdivision of the repeater segment by frequency of re-visitation also enabled a more in-depth analysis of the potential heterogeneity in the RV market in relation to visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. This allowed us to address the mixed findings from previous research regarding FTV and RV differences (e.g. Chi, 2012; Chi & Qu, 2008) and similarities (Shavanddasht & Allan, 2018; Wahid et al., 2016). Both satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation comparisons support the former because of the significant differences between FTV and RV ratings, particularly between FTV and high frequency repeaters..

4.4.2 Practical contributions

From a managerial perspective, the findings have a number of notable contributions. Moreover, the specific context of the study notwithstanding, there is no reason to believe that the implications of both the identification of factor types and RV heterogeneity identified in this study would not be relevant in other settings, but this would need to be tested in future research. The study's asymmetrical analysis of the destination's image attributes has provided key insights for the destination's destination marketing organisation (DMO), including the identification of critical image attribute factor types, which create value and influence visitor decisions. These have important practical implications for destination competitiveness and

sustainability (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Leask, 2010; Vengesai, 2008).

Three BFs (dissatisfiers) were identified ('good nightlife and entertainment', 'good gastronomy', 'it is a secure place'); these are potentially critical constraints on re-visitation for the large majority of visitors. Moreover, good gastronomy and security are highly valued by the R4+ subgroup compared with FTVs and both are significant predictors of either RV satisfaction or word-of-mouth recommendation. Their performance should therefore be maintained to reduce dissatisfaction and secure continued repeat visitation. This is also the case for the seven IPFs which were identified: four cognitive image attributes ('suitable accommodation', 'good local transport', 'interesting and friendly people' and 'it is a quiet place') and three affective image attributes ('it is an arousing place', 'it is a relaxing place', 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home'). Given their importance for visitor satisfaction and destination choice, particularly in the near absence of EFs (Alegre & Garau, 2011; Fuchs, 2002; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003), and also their disproportionately high penalties for poor performance, DMO maintenance of their quality is critical.

It is interesting that for the destination's only EF: 'availability of open air facilities', there are no significant differences between FTV, R1, R2-3 and R4+ ratings. This is also the case for the cognitive PFs: 'interesting historical/cultural attractions', 'good infrastructure' and 'it is a quiet place', the affective performance factor: 'it is a pleasant place' and the BF: 'good nightlife & entertainment'. Two of these PFs: 'interesting historical/cultural attractions' and 'it is a pleasant place' are two of the highest rated attributes by all visitor groups; as such, they are key destination strengths the performance of which is strategically important for the

continuing success of the destination. They should therefore be both maintained and effectively promoted.

One of the main lessons emerging from the study relates to the variability in the large majority of image attribute ratings in relation to the frequency of re-visitation. Over and above the marked differences between FTV and RV ratings, the identification of significant differences between R1, R2-3 and R4+ subgroup ratings and their distinctive drivers of satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation provide the DMO with a better understanding of the priorities for product and service investment in line with Alegre and Garau's (2011) findings but with additional insight. For example, notwithstanding diminishing returns from investing scarce resources in destination features which may naturally become less attractive over time due to visitors' increased experiential familiarity (Prentice, 2004; Tan, 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016), the DMO should consider aspects of the destination which the RV4+ subgroup rate significantly lower than FTVs. For example, the IPFs: 'good local transport' and 'it is an arousing place', which have substantial penalties for underperformance and therefore could be detrimental for high frequency repeat visitation. In addition, RV4+ ratings on 'suitable shopping facilities' and 'I prefer an environment completely different from my home' are also significantly lower than FTV ratings. While the latter was expected because of RV4+ familiarity with the destination, given the importance of shopping in the visitor experience (e.g. Choi, Heo & Law, 2016; Divisekera, 2010), the disproportionately higher penalty for the underperformance of shopping on RV4+ satisfaction this attribute should be addressed to retain visitors in this key market segment.

Differences between FTV, R1, R2-3 and R4+ ratings and predictors of both satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations also highlight the need for differentiated marketing

communications which focus on relevant features to attract FTV and RV interest. For example, the PFs: 'interesting historical/cultural attractions', 'good cleanliness/hygiene', and 'interesting and friendly people', are uniquely significant for FTV satisfaction. As such, these qualities could be used to promote the destination to prospective FTVs. By contrast, for RV satisfaction, the PFs: 'suitable accommodation' and 'pleasant climate', and the BF: 'it is a secure place', are uniquely significant. Therefore, although RVs are not as reliant on external sources of information as prospective FTVs (Li et al., 2008) and require less promotional investment (Lau & McKercher, 2004), these particular aspects could nevertheless be highlighted when marketing the destination to this segment in order to reduce cognitive strain (Zajonc, 1968) and reinforce their familiarity with the place.

A recurrent finding from the asymmetrical analysis was the need to maintain BF performance to avoid visitor dissatisfaction; for example, 'it is a secure place' is a significant predictor of repeaters' satisfaction (RV1 and RV4+) and also word-of-mouth recommendation (R2-3 and R4+). Maintaining the quality of PFs is also vital for visitor satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth recommendation and favourable comparisons with competitor destinations (Alegre & Garau, 2011; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). For example, 'interesting and friendly people' is an IPF and a significant predictor of FTV satisfaction and both FTV and RV word-of-mouth recommendation. As such, these factors are important behavioural drivers and should be maintained and featured appropriately in marketing communications.

5. Conclusion

Previous research has analysed tourism destination attributes from the perspective of the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction and also examined FTV and RV differences from this theoretical perspective, but not in a mature beach destination context. Moreover, while most

previous research has examined RVs as a single market segment, this study subdivided repeaters into three distinct sub-groups on the basis of their revisit frequency. This highlighted the market's heterogeneity in relation to each sub-group's distinctive perceptions of cognitive and affective images classified as BFs, EFs and PFs; additionally, this finding indicates that the simplistic binary comparison of FTVs and RVs in previous research has concealed important differences between low and high frequency repeaters. Adopting this theoretical perspective also enabled us to identify nonlinear, asymmetrical relationships between the predictor and outcome variables and thereby conduct a more critical analysis of the drivers of FTV and RV satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. Additionally, the designation of destination image attributes as particular factor types has provided additional strategic insights for the management and marketing of the destination.

While the study makes a contribution to theory and practice in relation to FTV and RV research, its limitations should nevertheless be noted. First, the research adopted a particular theoretical perspective and the data relates to a single case study design: the mature beach destination of Tossa de Mar in Catalunya. Therefore, there is no previous research examining FTV, RV1, RV2-3 and RV4+ image attributes and their asymmetrical relationship with visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation in a comparable setting with which to make a direct empirical comparison. Second, while the study used a large sample with relatively equal numbers of FTVs and RVs, the positive images associated with the research setting mean that the results may not be representative of different types of tourism destination such as emerging post-colonial, post-conflict or post-disaster destinations, which have more negative images and special interest visitors. Future studies should therefore compare the behaviour of FTVs and RVs at other tourism destinations through the prism of the three factor theory of consumer satisfaction, to compare the findings with those from this

study in order to evaluate their generalisability and longer-term contribution to theory and practice. Additionally, while this study subdivided the RV market on the basis of revisit frequency to facilitate a more in-depth analysis, future research should extend this analysis to more closely examine experiential familiarity and second home ownership in relation to high frequency repeat visitation.

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Table 1. Sample Profile

Category	n	%	Category	n	%
Age:			Employment Status:		
18-25	147	13.45	Self-employed	103	9.42
26-35	285	26.08	Employed	698	63.86
36-45	225	20.59	Unemployed	42	3.84
46-55	206	18.85	Retired	130	11.89
56-65	153	13.99	Student	69	6.32
>65	77	7.04	Other	51	4.67
Gender:			Visitation Frequency:		
Male	515	47.12	FTV: First time visitor	582	53.25
Female	576	52.70	RV1: 1 previous visit	123	11.25
Other	2	0.18	RV2-3: 2-3 previous visits	101	9.24
Education:			Visitor Origin:		
Primary	114	10.43	Domestic	578	52.88
Secondary	467	42.73	International	515	47.12
University	509	46.57			
Other	3	0.27			

Notes: Sample size: 1093:595 (2016); 498 (2017).

Table 2. Destination Attributes as Hierarchical Satisfaction Factor Types

Attribute/Factor	Type	P R Deficit	P R Proportion
Cognitive Image:			
CI4: Availability of open air activities	EF	0.03	1.52
CI8: Good nightlife & entertainment	BF	-0.10	-2.87
CI10: Good gastronomy	BF	-0.04	-1.72
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	-0.02	-1.43
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	PF (IPF)	-0.21	-1.97
CI1: Suitable accommodation	PF (IPF)	-0.16	-1.79
CI11: Good infrastructure	PF	-0.13	-2.01
CI6: Suitable shopping facilities	PF	-0.13	-1.98
CI13: It is a quiet place	PF (IPF)	-0.11	-1.61
CI3: Pleasant climate	PF	-0.09	-1.89
CI7: Interesting historical/cultural attractions	PF	-0.09	-2.19
CI9: Good cleanliness/hygiene	PF	-0.08	-1.75
CI15: Good value for money	PF	-0.05	-1.38
CI14: High quality beaches	PF	-0.03	-1.44
CI5: Good local transport	PF (IPF)	-0.02	-1.13
Affective Image:			
AI4: It is a relaxing place	PF (IPF)	-0.12	-1.78
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	-0.10	-1.69
AI1: It is an arousing place	PF (IPF)	-0.14	-1.55
AI7: I prefer...a different from my home	PF (IPF)	-0.08	-1.36
AI6: I ...discover new attractions	PF	-0.04	-1.54

Notes: CI= Cognitive Image; AI = Affective Image; EF = Excitement Factor; BF = Basic Factor; PF = Performance Factor; IPF = Important Performance Factor; P R Deficit = Penalty Reward Deficit; P R Proportion = Penalty as a Proportion of Reward.

Table 3. Comparison of First Time and Repeat Visitor Image Attribute Ratings

Attribute	Type	Mean Ratings			Mean Ratings		
		FTV	RV	F	RV1	RV2-3	RV4+
Cognitive Image:							
CI1: Suitable accommodation	IPF	4.10	4.38	4.34***	4.07	3.87	4.69
CI2: Attractive nature and scenery	U	4.60	4.67	2.05*	4.60	4.64	4.71
CI3: Pleasant climate	PF	4.42	4.46	0.97 ^{ns}	4.37	4.36	4.53
CI4: Availability of open air activities	EF	4.02	3.86	2.29*	3.78	3.96	3.86
CI5: Good local transport	IPF	3.52	2.73	6.68***	3.07	3.44	2.58
CI6: Suitable shopping facilities	PF	4.09	3.76	5.57***	3.85	3.63	3.75
CI7: Interesting historical/cultural attractions	PF	4.55	4.48	1.55 ^{ns}	4.48	4.48	4.48
CI8: Good nightlife & entertainment	BF	3.04	2.89	1.33 ^{ns}	2.96	2.76	2.91
CI9: Good cleanliness/hygiene	PF	4.31	4.37	1.53 ^{ns}	4.38	4.21	4.41
CI10: Good gastronomy	BF	4.29	4.46	3.65***	4.48	4.23	4.53
CI11: Good infrastructure	PF	4.17	4.19	0.29 ^{ns}	4.23	4.09	4.20
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	IPF	4.23	4.37	3.18***	4.34	4.14	4.46
CI13: It is a quiet place	IPF	4.16	4.19	0.64 ^{ns}	4.26	4.11	4.19
CI14: High quality beaches	PF	4.51	4.63	3.09**	4.62	4.51	4.67
CI15: Good value for money	PF	4.09	4.08	0.20 ^{ns}	4.11	3.86	4.14
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	4.67	4.74	3.33***	4.67	4.64	4.80
Affective Image:							
AI1: It is an arousing place	IPF	3.44	3.18	3.62***	3.23	3.25	3.14
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	4.55	4.61	1.87 ^{ns}	4.57	4.59	4.64
AI3: It is an exciting place	U	4.38	4.37	0.18 ^{ns}	4.30	4.33	4.41
AI4: It is a relaxing place	IPF	4.26	4.38	2.83***	4.38	4.19	4.45
AI5: Opportunity to see places...new things	U	4.72	4.18	11.44***	4.54	4.23	4.01
AI6: I ...discover new attractions	PF	4.59	3.94	12.44***	4.32	4.07	3.92
AI7: I prefer...a different from my home	IPF	4.45	4.05	7.34***	4.28	4.11	3.92

Notes: * significant at the $p < 0.05$ level; ** significant at the $p < 0.01$ level; *** significant at the $p < 0.001$ level;

ns = non-significant. CI= Cognitive Image; AI = Affective Image; EF = Excitement Factor; BF = Basic Factor;

PF = Performance Factor; U = Unclassified; FT = first time visitor (n = 582);

R1 = 1 previous visit (n = 123); R2-3 = 2-3 previous visits (n = 101); R4+ = at least 4 previous visits (n = 287).

Welch's t-tests and Games-Howell multiple comparison procedures were used to allow for unequal variances between visitation frequency sub-categories in the ANOVAs and post-hoc comparison tests, respectively based on modifications to the degrees of freedom.

Table 4. Predictors of First Time Visitor and Repeater Satisfaction

Destination image attributes	Type	Beta	t
1. First Time Visitor: R² = 0.31; Adjusted R² = 0.30; F = 42.14; df = 5; p < 0.001			
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	0.24	6.20***
CI7: Interesting historical / cultural attractions	PF	0.18	4.68***
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	IPF	0.15	3.97***
CI9: Good cleanliness/hygiene	PF	0.14	3.79***
AI7: I prefer...different from my home	IPF	0.13	3.49***
2. Repeater RV1 (1 previous visit): R² = 0.14; Adjusted R² = 0.12; F = 9.60; df = 2; p < 0.001			
AI7: I prefer...different from my home	IPF	0.27	3.15**
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	0.23	2.68**
3. Repeater RV2-3 (2-3 previous visits): R² = 0.21; Adjusted R² = 0.19; F = 8.65; df = 3; p < 0.001			
CI1: Suitable accommodation	IPF	0.32	3.52***
CI3: Pleasant climate	PF	0.26	2.81**
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	0.19	2.08*
4. Repeater RV4+ (4+ previous visits): R² = 0.32; Adjusted R² = 0.31; F = 44.02; df = 3; p < 0.001			
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	0.44	8.63***
CI1: Suitable accommodation	IPF	0.17	3.46***
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	0.17	3.35***

Notes: * significant at the p < 0.05 level; ** significant at the p < 0.01 level; *** significant at the p < 0.001 level;

FT = first time visitor (n = 582); RV1 = 1 previous visit (n = 123); RV2-3 = 2-3 previous visits (n = 101); RV4+ = at least 4 previous visits (n = 287). Durbin-Watson statistics (1.66-1.85) indicate that the assumption of independent errors is tenable in all models.

VIF values (1.01-1.22), tolerance statistics (0.82-0.98) and predictor variance dimension loadings indicate the absence of collinearity in the data. In all models, confidence intervals indicate that the estimates are likely to be representative of 95% of other samples.

Table 5. Predictors of First Time Visitor and Repeater Word-of-Mouth Recommendation

Destination image attributes	Type	Beta	t
1. First Time Visitor: $R^2 = 0.21$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.21$; $F = 30.90$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.001$			
AI4: It is a relaxing place	IPF	0.20	5.12***
CI2: Attractive nature and scenery	U	0.19	4.59***
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	IPF	0.18	4.64***
AI6: I ...discover new attractions	PF	0.12	3.28***
CI3: Pleasant climate	PF	0.12	2.80**
2. Repeater RV1 (1 previous visit): $R^2 = 0.14$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.12$; $F = 9.47$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$			
AI5: Opportunity to see new places...new things	U	0.30	3.55***
AI1: It is an arousing place	IPF	0.20	2.30*
3. Repeater RV2-3 (2-3 previous visits): $R^2 = 0.31$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.28$; $F = 8.65$; $df = 4$; $p < 0.001$			
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	IPF	0.32	3.40***
AI3: It is an exciting place	U	0.32	3.61***
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	0.28	3.05***
CI10: Good gastronomy	BF	0.21	2.19*
4. Repeater RV4+ (4+ previous visits): $R^2 = 0.25$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.24$; $F = 18.8$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.001$			
CI12: Interesting and friendly people	IPF	0.23	3.95***
CI10: Good gastronomy	BF	0.17	2.97**
CI16: It is a secure place	BF	0.16	2.68**
AI7: I prefer...different from my home	IPF	0.15	2.84**
AI2: It is a pleasant place	PF	0.14	2.57*

Notes: * significant at the $p < 0.05$ level; ** significant at the $p < 0.01$ level; *** significant at the $p < 0.001$ level;

FT = first time visitor (n = 582); RV1 = 1 previous visit (n = 123); RV2-3 = 2-3 previous visits (n = 101); RV4+ = at least 4 previous visits (n = 287). Durbin-Watson statistics (1.80-1.92) indicate that the assumption of independent errors is tenable in all models.

VIF values (1.01-1.31), tolerance statistics (0.76-0.97) and predictor variance dimension loadings indicate the absence of collinearity in the data. In all models, confidence intervals indicate that the estimates are likely to be representative of 95% of other samples.

Table 6. Comparison of First Time and Repeat Visitor Satisfaction and Word-of-Mouth Recommendation Ratings

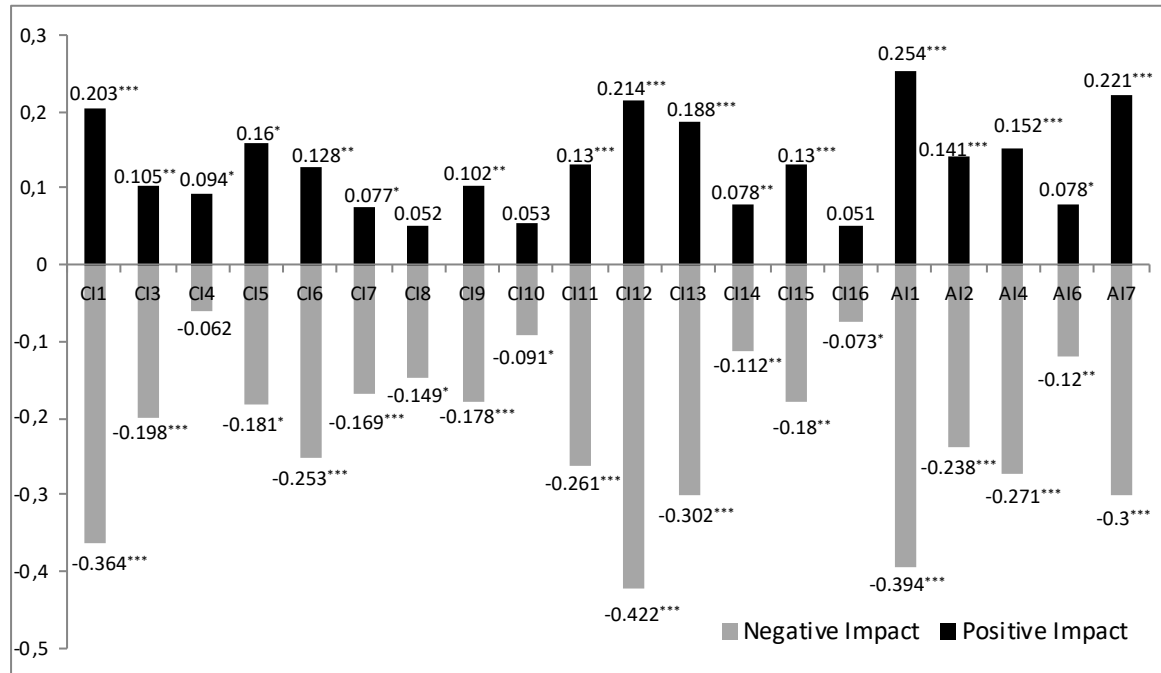
Attribute	Mean Ratings				F
	FT	RV1	RV2-3	RV4+	
Overall visit satisfaction	4.60	4.68	4.60	4.77	7.49***
Willingness to recommendation	8.37	8.61	8.60	9.13	44.63***

Notes: * significant at the $p < 0.05$ level; ** significant at the $p < 0.01$ level; *** significant at the $p < 0.001$ level; ns = non-significant.

Overall visit satisfaction was measure on a 5-point scale; Willingness to recommend was measured on a 10-point scale.

FT = first time visitor (n = 582); RV1 = 1 previous visit (n = 123); RV2-3 = 2-3 previous visits (n = 101); RV4+ = at least 4 previous visits (n = 287). Welch's *t*-tests and Games-Howell multiple comparison procedures were used to allow for unequal variances between visitation frequency sub-categories in the ANOVAs and post-hoc comparison tests, based on modifications to the degrees of freedom.

Figure 1: The Asymmetric Impact of Destination Image Attribute Performance on Overall Visitor Satisfaction



Notes: * significant at the $p < 0.05$ level; ** significant at the $p < 0.01$ level; *** significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Cognitive Image: C11 Suitable accommodation; C13 Pleasant climate; C14 Availability of open air activities; C15 Good local transport; C16 Suitable shopping facilities; C17 Interesting historical / cultural attractions; C18 Good nightlife & entertainment; C19 Good cleanliness/hygiene; C10 Good gastronomy; C11 Good infrastructure; C12 Interesting and friendly people; C13 It is a quiet place; C14 High quality beaches; C15 Good value for money; C16 A secure place.

Affective Image: A11 It is an arousing place; A12 It is a pleasant place; A14 It is a relaxing place; A16 I can discover new attractions; A17 I prefer an environment completely different from my home.

Partial correlation coefficients were used instead of standardised multiple regression coefficients. The former represent a measure of the linear association between overall visitor satisfaction, as the dependent variable, and the perceived performance of the resort on each independent image attribute after adjusting for the linear effect of the other image attributes; this ensures that the potential effects of multicollinearity among the independent variables is avoided (Hair et al., 2009).

