HOW SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE INFLUENCES INTENTION TO TRAVEL

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes tourist intention in the early phase of the tourists' decision-making process. Through correlations and web-experiments, we trace subjective knowledge through the tourists' accumulation of diagnostic cues inherent in a destination and the ways tourists falsely believe that having more knowledge can be beneficial. This research uncovers the negative relationship between tourists' subjective knowledge about a destination and their intention to travel. Subjective knowledge psychologically activates a higher degree of self-congruity with a destination, impregnating the destination with a sense of familiarity that curbs the intention to travel. The results indicate that practitioners need to understand the way that congruence between market-generated materials and tourists' sense of self can counterintuitively clog the decision-making process at the early stages.

Keywords: subjective knowledge, self-congruity, intention to travel, decision-making process

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowing how tourists make decisions is a fascinating research domain for scholars and a challenge for practitioners. The decision-making process is a step-by-step "funnel-like" progression that unfolds in stages. Using the stage-like mechanism of the decision-making process as a starting point, we offer substantial empirical contributions through an in-depth investigation into a single, early phase of the tourist's destination choice process with the goal to understand how external stimuli (e.g., information) can trigger unexpected tourist behavior.

The purpose of this study is to better understand travel intentions and the function of diagnostic cues (i.e., a piece of information that is relevant for making a decision) in the very early phases of the tourists' decision-making process. Through studies examining the purchasing of trips (Nicolau & Más, 2008; Jun, Vogt, & MacKay, 2007), the expressing of loyalty (Oppermann, 2000; Wang et al., 2019), and the triggering of word-of-mouth (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Viglia, Minazzi, & Buhalis, 2016), tourism research has empirically substantiated the importance of later stages in tourists' decision-making processes. What we know less about is the early stages of the tourists' decision-making processes. We suggest that the relevance of which sits in uncovering the importance of cues in the psychological mechanisms that result in travel intention and drive the perception of a favorable destination choice. While tourists collect a wide range of initial information and cues on a tourist destination, these often enable subjective knowledge (i.e., how much a tourist perceives they know about a place; Sharifpour et al., 2014a) and establish congruence between the tourist's self-concept and the destination's values. As a consequence, we propose that self-congruity is a mediator in the relationship between tourists' subjective knowledge and their intention to travel.

Specifically, we intend to explain how tourists deal with subjective knowledge in the early decision-making phase. The early phase of the decision-making process represents a significant topic in tourism because it has a direct bearing on tourists' behavior (Fridgen, 1984). What we know less about is how tourists make decisions about objects such as travel destinations and thereby deal with their self-perceptions of a holiday location. We propose that we need to know more about how subjective knowledge may mislead the intention to travel due to a higher congruence between the destination and one's tastes. Tourism research has investigated the ways that tourists accumulate knowledge about a destination before the actual vacation due to a lack of direct experience or previous visits (Gursory & McCleary, 2004). This has led, perhaps unintendedly, to empirical analysis which implies that having more knowledge about a destination choice will allow one to make better decisions and thus lead to an increased intention to travel. Hence, research overlooks tourists' desires for unique experiences and that an increase in subjective knowledge may inhibit their willingness to choose particular destinations (Park & Jang, 2013).

Furthermore, subjective knowledge is the process by which tourists accumulate new information cues, and the exposure to different degrees of subjective knowledge is an important pre-requisite in distinguishing "knowledge" from information. This is relevant because subjective knowledge arises as a consequence "objective knowledge" (i.e., actual amount of accurate information as an independent object stored in one's memory) that may trigger tourists' intention to travel (Raju, Lonial, & Mangold, 1995). What is missing from this stream of work is a better understanding of how a higher degree of subjective knowledge on a particular destination will lead tourists to perceive congruence between a destination and their

self-concept. In turn, self-congruity decreases the prospects of travel intention because it magnifies familiarity with the destination and therefore accentuates the sense that the holiday location lacks novelty.

Our research approach (i.e., web-experiment design) allows us to manipulate different degrees of subjective knowledge on proposed destinations and then to observe tourists' reactions and the psychological activation of perceived congruence between those locations and the tourists' self-concept. Through a combination of correlations and then experimental design, our study detects the misalignment between what tourists believe (see Study 1) and how they currently behave (see Study 2 and 3). In particular, we chose web-experiments because they provide the opportunity to reach a vast population of respondents with a high interest in travel. Further, web-experiments allow us to observe cause-effect relationships and thus disentangle the common misnomer that having more subjective knowledge leads tourists to have a higher intention to travel to a particular destination. Our approach improves on previous work in tourism because it allows us to fill a much-needed gap in causal-effect studies (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014; Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020) that address counterintuitive beliefs whereby tourists act irrationally (McCabe, Li, & Chen, 2016) due to an overload of information (Thai & Yuksel, 2017a).

The most important constructs for this research on the tourist destination choice process are subjective knowledge (Hadar & Sood, 2014; Sharipfour et al., 2014a), self-congruity (Sirgy & Su, 2000), and intention to travel (Lam & Hsu, 2006). These constructs are related to each other in the following ways. People actively seek information and details about topics of interest. The overload of information creates the psychological feeling of oversaturation that lowers the decision maker's ability to make a judgment (Jacoby, 1984; Malhotra, 1984), even in consumption settings (Hu & Krishen, 2019). Under these suboptimal processing conditions, people will self-assess which cues or how many cues are important in their decision-making; a process that results in subjective knowledge. Matching diagnostic cues with personal preferences establishes self-congruence between subjective knowledge on a travel destination and their self-concept. Self-congruity refers to psychological devices that simplify and streamline information into cues that allow them to perceive congruence, or lack thereof, between the object of interest and their self-preferences (Smallman & Moore, 2010), which in turn influence the intention to travel.

This paper breaks new ground in tourism research by showcasing the effects of a high degree of subjective knowledge, wherein difficulty arises in the elaboration and evaluation of information, challenging one's ability to move forward in the decision-making process. Tourists are more likely to be pleased with a destination choice when a limited amount of knowledge is available in the initial phases of the decision-making process (i.e., search and evaluation of alternatives). The tourists' decision-making process can be characterized as an irrational one that influences actions and behaviors. This is relevant because tourists' destination decisions often happen in a different contextual setting than the actual consumption occurs, and a trip is usually organized on gradual and interconnected decisions that altogether define the whole experience. Thus, the psychological process that takes place early in the decision-making process can define the intention to travel.

This paper offers two key contributions to tourists' destination choice processes. First, this research examines an under-studied phase of the tourist decision-making process: the psychological organization of information in a tourist's early decision-making process that drives the perception of an enjoyable destination. This study empirically substantiates that tourists falsely believe that higher volumes of

diagnostic information lead to positive destination choices. Instead, we show that tourists subjectively perceive higher volumes of information in ways that activate a higher sense of congruence between a destination choice and the tourist's sense of self, reducing the novelty of the destination and, ultimately, decreasing the intention to travel. Second, this study contributes to managerial practice by showing how practitioners can better advise tourists through a gradual sharing of diagnostic cues about a given destination that is unknown to the tourist. Overall, this research provides insight into the psychological drivers of the tourists' decision-making and showcases the complexity of the early phase of destination choice processes.

2. A REVIEW OF THE TOURIST'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Many tourists' decision-making models are extensions and adaptations from earlier models developed in consumer behavior. Common amongst all of the decision-making models is the importance of reducing states of mental uncertainty through information collection (McCabe, Li, & Chen, 2016). Despite different theoretical perspectives used to study the phenomenon, we know that rational, emotional, and irrational decisions have some important practical similarities. For instance, they share the presence of multiple and distinct stages in a funnel-like process where tourists develop a set of preferences. By consequence, tourists take further actions in a step-by-step development where phases are linked to each other in a cause-effect relation. These phases are: (a) awareness and recognition of a problem, (b) goal/objective formulation, (c) generating an alternative set of options, (d) extensive information search, (e) careful evaluation of alternatives, (f) complex choice strategies, (g) action based upon the decision, and (h) post-purchase evaluation (e.g., Andreason, 1965; Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1986; Wilson & Moore, 2018).

These phases, however, have generated a twofold approach in the examination of tourists' decision-making. These approaches take place at the macro and micro level. At the macro-level theories are discussed holistically as unique processes, and researchers elaborate on how consumers' decision-making perspectives fit into tourism frameworks (e.g., McCabe, Li, & Chen, 2016; Smallman & Moore, 2010). While at the micro-level, the focus is about a deeper analysis of the single phase of the decision-making process. Here, single phases can remarkably influence tourist intentions, and analysis focuses on the advancement in fine-grain constructs and variables (Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014; Quintal, Lee, & Soutar, 2010).

The tourism perspective has highlighted the complexity of decision-making due to unique situational conditions where tourists' decision-making involves a subset of decisions. For instance, tourists may develop decisions over long periods of time that could span days or even months, and decisions are based on balancing both perceptions and evaluation judgments (Smallman & Moore, 2010). What is more, when tourists plan and decide on recreational vacation spots, travel intentions become more complicated because they are associated with a higher degree of uncertainty (Reisinger & Mavodo, 2005). Even more so, tourism research makes general interpretations of the decision-making process as a logical and rational flow. That is to say, extant studies examine, using a socio-psychological approach, the ways tourists cognitively elaborate information and make sequential decisions where the influence of others is taken into account. With the exception of Thai and Yuksel (2017a), previous papers have not investigated the travel intention and the very earlier phase of the decision-making process and the related psychological mechanisms that may

boost tourists' behaviors. The early phase of the decision-making process represents the momentum by which tourists move from 'information search' to 'evaluation of alternatives' (e.g., positive vs. negative) where some choices are declined and some embraced. Further, the early phase represents a pivotal point in the decision-making journey that allows them to move into the subsequent decision phase. The accumulation of subjective knowledge on a particular destination choice is the foundation for creating information overload (i.e., a dysfunctional consequence resulting from providing individuals too much information; Jacoby, 1984) where the perception of dissimilarity between a location and self-congruity may not be strictly related with the real features of the destination. The following table (see Table 1) summarizes the relevant literature in tourists' decision-making process with the aim to depict the foci of previous literature and to highlight the lack of investigation on the phase of the tourist decision-making process.

Table 1: Literature review of the tourists' decision-making process

Study Author(s)	Year	Study Purpose	Method	Contribution(s) on Decision Making Process	Relevant Findings
Mansfeld, Y.	1992	To present theoretical aspects of the destination-choice process.	Review Paper	The paper focuses on the stage of assessment and elimination of alternatives and how tourists handle different sources of information.	- The destination-choice process is an extremely complex phenomenon guided by random-utility theory and the probabilistic approach. - Travel motivations and irrational behaviors trigger the decision process. - A different source of information (informal vs. formal) leads to bias effects on choice destination.
Goossens, C.	2000	To present motivation and positive emotional aspects of destination choice behavior.	Conceptual Paper	The paper takes into consideration the decision-making process as a whole based on a psychological approach.	- Destination-choice is pushed by emotional needs and pulled by emotional benefits. - The informational process is affected by the mental imagery of the destination-choice.
Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W.	2004	To develop a theoretical model of information search.	Conceptual Paper	The paper focuses on the pre-purchase information search.	- The model proposed integrates all at once psychological/motivational, economics, and consumer information approaches. - The proposed integrated approach enables researchers to examine the impacts of the perceptions of costs and the benefits of information search.
Thai, N. T., & Yuksel, U.	2017	To investigate why choices overload curb tourists' decision behavior.	Empirical Paper	The paper focuses on the very early and late phases of the decision-making process.	- They highlighted the importance of investigating tourists' decision-making processes and the psychological mechanisms behind them. - Due to the choice overload phenomenon, perceived uncertainty mediates the relationship between choice-set size and destination evaluations. - Self-confidence (as a psychological factor) moderates choice overload effects.

Karl, M., Reintinger, C., & Schmude, J.	2015	To investigate the rejection or selection of destinations among the alternatives available.	Empirical Paper	The paper looks at the micro-aspects of the decision-making process in the phase of the formation process and outcome.	- The key destination features influence tourists' decision-making process, such as perceived familiarity with the place. -The rational decision-making process is a stronger predictor of evaluation of alternatives about a destination-choice.
Bieger, T., & Laesser, C.	2004	To present the influence of information sources and how tourists mentally organize them.	Empirical Paper	The paper analyzes the phase of information acquisition in the very early stage of the decision-making process.	- Information about a destination received by friends and relatives is perceived as more important than information received by professional operators after the choice. - For very high risks travel (i.e., non-standardized trip), tourists prefer information from professional operators for reducing risks perceived.
Sharifpour, M., Walters, G., Ritchie, B. W., & Winter, C.	2014a	To illustrate the relationship between tourists' risk perception and prior knowledge on the decision-making process.	Empirical Paper	The paper focuses on the phase of information search and subsequent tourists' behavior.	- Tourists' risk perception (psychological, physical, and performative) mediates the relationship between prior knowledge and information search. - Subjective (vs. objective) knowledge is the most influential type of knowledge. - Subjective knowledge reduces perceived risks because of self-confidence.
Gardiner, S., King, C., & Grace, D.	2013	To investigate the existence of different tourists' decision-making patterns between Generation X and Y.	Empirical Paper	The paper analyzes tourists' decision-making processes, including the influence of cultural factors.	- Historical memories of major events affect cohorts of tourists in their decision-making processes differently. - Societal and personal influences are the key formative referents in shaping the generational mindset.

McCabe, S., Li, C., & Chen, Z.	2016	To review and propose a new tourists' decision-making process based on dual-system theory.	Conceptual Paper	The decision-making process integrates psychological processes accounting for tourists' heuristics choices.	- Conventional tourists' decision-making processes are based on rationality rather than cognitive processes. - Tourists may apply the analytical or heuristic system at each stage of the decision-making process depending on factors such as involvement and cognitive load.
Fodness, D., & Murray, B.	1999	To test tourists' information search strategies as a dynamic process.	Empirical Paper	The paper focuses on the information search phase and the related behaviors of the tourists.	- Tourist information search strategies are the result of various types, and amounts of information sources used to respond to internal and external contingencies, informational search strategies (spatial, temporal, operational), tourist characteristics, and search outcomes.
Karl, M.	2018	To offer an integrated research approach in using tourists' self-assessments of risk and uncertainty of the destination-choice process.	Empirical Paper	The paper focuses on the perception of relevant information for tourists' final choice.	- The model integrates tourists' demographic characteristics, perceived risks, and destinations' features as antecedents of the final choice. - They found that high educational levels and high travel frequencies are key characteristics of risk-affine tourists, while higher age groups are more dominant in risk and uncertainty-averse tourist types.
Sirakaya, E., & Woodside, A. G.	2005	To offer conceptual propositions for "grand models" of tourist decision-making in the field of tourism services.	Conceptual Paper	The paper reviews the main decision-making processes with the aim of increasing the "sense-making" of tourist decision-making.	- Through an in-depth literature review, the most discussed and relevant areas for tourist decision-making are identified. - The paper suggests how destination-model choices are developed.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Subjective knowledge and intention to travel

Subjective knowledge can be defined as the individual perception of how much an individual knows (Brucks, 1985; Sharipfour et al., 2014a, 2014b). Subjective knowledge is independent to objective knowledge and has direct influence on the decision-making process and consequential psychological processes such as the arousal of confidence and willingness to act (Hadar & Sood, 2014). The different magnitude of subjective knowledge (high vs. low) can influence the tourist decision-making process on the potential destination to visit (Sharipfour et al., 2014a).

Collecting new knowledge in advance is a fundamental pre-requisite for decision-making. The richness in options and cues is a favorable human condition with advantages both economically and psychologically in consumption settings. Park and Jang (2013) reported that psychologically, having more subjective knowledge is preferable since it increases an individuals' sense of personal control on uncertain scenarios. Gathering cues for the desired destination may include, for example, information for transportation, types of accommodation available, and climate of the place, attractions, and gastronomy. The feeling of uncertainty is pervasive in tourism settings and especially when results and outputs are unknown or difficult to predict (Wong & Yeh, 2009). The essence of the tourism package where multiple services such as hotel, car rental, transportation, or meals are bundled together adds amplification to uncertainty for tourists in their decision-making process (Mwesiumo & Halpern, 2018). Services cannot easy be psychologically categorized due to the intangible experiential benefits that tourists may receive (Sirakaya, McLellan, & Uysal, 1996). The experiential nature of touristic services decreases the psychological capacity to forecast certainty about the entire trip and makes it challenging to establish comparable evaluations with other experiences and objects (see also Carter & Gilovich, 2010).

For this reason, tourists may believe that having more cues can be beneficial for their decision-making process and helpful for clarifying doubts and reducing uncertainty about a destination choice. Tourists accumulate subjective knowledge about a destination through ongoing cues that happen to exclude, in the majority of the cases, previous visits or other forms of direct experiences before the actual vacation (Gursory & McCleary, 2004). This is common when there is a lack of direct experiences and when tourists rely on the cues available (Sharifpour et al., 2014a). The lack of previous direct experience with a given destination is a psychological precondition that characterizes the essence of tourism but with contradictory reactions (Baker & Cropton, 2000; Fuchs & Reichel, 2010). Intuitively, one might believe that more knowledge on a destination choice would lead to increased awareness and thus lead to better decisions and stronger intentions to travel. This is counterposed to the tourists' desire for novelty, and an excess of cues may inhibit their willingness to make particular decisions because of choice overload (Park & Jang, 2013). The overload of information can lead to self-assessment and the development of subjective knowledge, which can temper optimistic impressions and then decrease liking a potential option because "familiarity can breed contempt" (Norton, Frost, & Ariely, 2007, p. 97). In line with this, we believe that more subjective knowledge leads to reduced intention to travel. We can then hypothesize as follows:

H1: Having a higher subjective knowledge about a destination decreases the intention to travel.

3.2 Higher subjective knowledge leads to self-congruity, and this leads to a diminished intention to travel

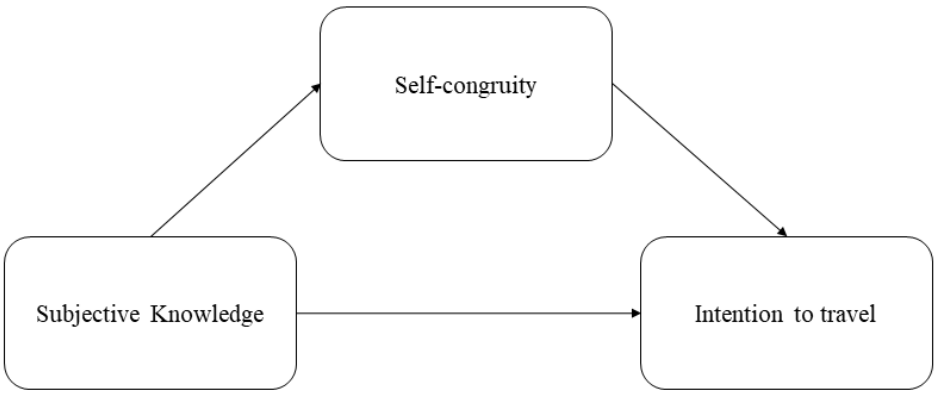
The intention to travel is not always based on the congruency between available subjective knowledge and the self-concept. Rather it is based on the willingness to satisfy distinctive psychological conditions and the willingness to create a unique touristic experience (Song et al., 2015). Self-congruity is a cognitive mechanism that determines whether the value expressed by a product (a destination in this case) matches the self-concept (Sirgy et al., 1991; Usakly & Balaglu, 2011). The multidimensional nature of self-concept can lead the tourist to evoke cognitive and psychological elements that may or may not maximize their satisfaction in the decision (Bekk, Sporrle, & Kruse, 2016). In fact, a higher level of subjective knowledge can lead individuals to recognize a higher level of self-congruity and thus decline a proposed destination choice because of its perceived similarity with their self-concept (Sirgy & Su, 2000). A parallel stream of literature in tourism considers the concept of novelty-seeking behavior and addresses how this influences the decision-making process (Solomon, 2002). However, the literature in psychology has postulated that higher degrees of self-congruity between a choice and one's own tastes can decrease the capacity of surprise (in a positive way) since the knowledge increases predictability and with familiarity (Wilson et al., 2005).

Along with the negative relationship between self-congruity and intention to travel, we also expect to observe the psychological mechanism that explains such connections. We know that the accumulation of more knowledge has a direct impact on the decision-making process (Norton, Frost, & Ariely, 2007). Specifically, uncertainty is often resolved through a collection of higher volumes of knowledge, which results in dissimilarities between viewpoints and causes a decrease in liking a choice option (Norton, Frost, & Ariely, 2007), or in the context of this paper, the destination proposed. It is important, however, to highlight that the perception of disagreement between destination and an individual's self-concept is related to the incremental amount of subjective knowledge. Furthermore, such knowledge has to be diagnostic for the self and thus influencing the decision-making process (Hastie & Kumar, 1979). In contrast, we propose that less subjective knowledge leads to less perceived self-congruity but a higher likelihood of having increasing intent toward a particular choice by the decision maker (Miller, Downs, & Prentice, 1998). This happens because tourists' look for novelty in the destination, and thus having less subjective knowledge may lead to increasing the intent to visit (Jang & Fang, 2007).

Due to the gradual accumulation of subjective knowledge and the subsequent destabilization of the decision-making process, the perception of similarity between a choice and the self-concept leads decision-makers to avoid the option. Encountering several bits of knowledge at once and perceiving even minor dissimilarities with the self-concept shapes the perception of the other knowledge as well. In other words, the increase of subjective knowledge and the likelihood of viewing a single cue as misaligning with the self-concept affect the perception of other knowledge and, ultimately, leads to confirmation of the initial negative intention (Norton & Goethals, 2004). The intention to travel, as seen by tourists, is an assemblage of knowledge necessitating a higher level of involvement to maximize the outcomes of their choice (Li, McCabe, & Song, 2017). A destination choice is based on the psychological need to experience trips that are fulfilling, meaningful, and far from the classical view that tourists see themselves (Petterson & Pegg, 2009). We thus hypothesize as follows:

H2: A higher degree of subjective knowledge leads to the perception of self-congruity, which in turn decreases the intention to travel.

Figure 1 Conceptual model



4. THE OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We investigate our theoretical assumptions in three main studies. The whole set of studies allows the investigation of both the tourists' credence (study 1) and, subsequently, the causal-relationship between subjective knowledge, self-congruity, and intention to travel (study 2 and 3). Specifically, in study 1 we show, through correlations, that tourists intuitively believe that having more cues in advance will lead them to liking a potential tourist destination. In study 2, we show that when respondents are exposed to a high degree of subjective knowledge they are less likely to have an intention to travel. This study also pre-tests (i) the cues that formed the subjective knowledge conditions (which serve in our manipulations) and whether (ii) cues were perceived as diagnostic, i.e., meaning that every single cue is relevant for a tourist's decision (Nisbett, Zuckier, & Lemlens, 1981). In study 3, we observe that the negative relationship is due to the mediation of high self-congruity measured as perceived similarity between tourists' own tastes and the cues listed. Within the studies, we consider subjective knowledge, as a single cue, to be accumulated one piece at a time. Also, subjective knowledge is unvalenced, and we do not repeat pieces of information throughout the experiment.

Further, running all studies online allows us to control the conditions of the decision-making process, where a cue is held constant for intention to travel, and respondents cannot search for other sources of cues such as images or videos. We are aware that online respondents are more likely to form a self-perceived knowledge about a destination based on textual cues (vs. images), and this was taken into consideration during the experimental design (Pelled et al., 2017). The studies took place during December 2018 and July 2019.

4.1 Study 1: Tourists' initial beliefs

This initial study aimed to provide a correlation between tourists' intention to travel and their beliefs. Followers and members of a social network group page that is dedicated to travel passions (N= 259; M_{age} = 36.2, *SD* = 11.6; female 53.8%) were

invited to participate in a study following a link. Under the pretense of selecting an unknown destination for their next leisure trip, participants were asked to choose between two options. Each option was solely based on the number of cues (i.e., number of details) that they could know about an undistinguished destination that was purposefully presented as "international." We asked them to answer the following question: "What do you think you would like more, a place where you had 1 knowledge cue or a place that you had 2 knowledge cues?" We randomly assigned respondents to one of the five different "subjective knowledge" conditions ad hoc designed for the purpose of this study (1 vs. 2 cues; 2 vs. 4 cues; 3 vs. 6 cues; 4 vs. 8 cues; 5 vs. 10 cues) and which were adapted from Norton, Frost, and Ariely (2007). Along with this initial study, we ran a follow up study under the pretense of already having visited the location on the last vacation, and we gave the condition that they could choose between less or more undefined cues about that destination. We found that respondents prefer to have more knowledge. Through the manipulation in this study, we showed that respondents believe that this relationship between knowledge and liking a destination also exists when they have direct experience. Respondents (N= 113; M_{age} = 37.1, *SD* = 12.6; female 50%) were asked to answer the following question: "When you visited the place for the first time did you tend to like the place better the more you got to know about it or did you like the place less the more you got to know"? Rate either "Like the place more, the more I knew about it" or "Like the place less, the more I knew about it."

Consistently across all five conditions, 73% (189/259) of respondents rated that they would prefer to have more cues about the destination, $\chi^2(4, 259) = 10.732$, $p = .03$. In the follow-up study we observed similar reactions to the first study where 84% (95/113) respondents stated that the more they know about a place the more they like it.

4.2 Study 2: Tourists and diagnostic cues on the destination

Rather than exploring merely the amount of information, study 2 aims to explore the content of that information and its influence on tourists' liking a proposed destination. We ask respondents to choose whether to visit a place based on diagnostic cues (i.e., cues like climate, transportation, hotels, etc.). Before this, destinations' cues had been developed through a pre-test study. The pre-test asked respondents (N = 28; M_{age} = 38, *SD* = 11.6; female 57.1%), with an open-ended question, to list the most important cues that a touristic destination should have according to their experiences and tastes. The pre-test generate a total of 145 terms that we grouped in 10 categories: leisure and events; natural attractions; socio-cultural events; gastronomy; shopping; hospitality services; transportations and infrastructures; climate; accessibility to attractions; variety of the place. In a subsequent phase (Amazon Mechanical Turk N= 99, M_{age} = 36.9 *SD* = 11.6; female 51%) we tested whether these cues were perceived important (1= not important at all, 7= very important) and thus diagnostic for selecting a location to visit (General Mean= 5.5). This step was necessary for developing five different conditions that reported diagnostic destinations cues (i.e., content details).

Table 2: Mean differences per destination cues

Cues	MEAN (*SD*)
Leisure and events	5.5 (*1.1*)
Natural attractions	5.9 (*1.0*)

Socio-cultural events	5.1 (*1.3*)
Gastronomy	5.4 (*1.4*)
Shopping	4.8 (*1.7*)
Hospitality services	5.5 *(1.1)*
Transportations and Infrastructures	5.6 *(1.3)*
Climate	5.7 *(1.3)*
Accessibility to attractions	6.0 *(.8)*
Diversity of the place	5.6 *(1.1)*

We pre-tested, also, whether the diagnostic cues presented in the five conditions provoked information overload. In all, 100 respondents (M_{age} = 35.7, *SD* = 9.8; female 52%) were randomly assigned in one of the five conditions (2 diagnostic cues; 4 diagnostic cues; 6 diagnostic cues; 8 diagnostic cues; 10 diagnostic cues) and were asked whether there were too many cues to take into consideration for their next trip (1= strongly agree, 7= strongly disagree). Planned contrasts revealed that there was a general statistical significance among conditions (t(1, 99) = 2.1, *p.* = .04) while there were not statistical differences among 2 diagnostic cues vs. 4, 6 and 8 diagnostic cues, but there was a statistical difference between the condition 2 diagnostic cues vs. 10 diagnostic cues (t (1,99) = 2.5 *p.* = .01).

Table 3: Mean differences per condition on information overload

Condition	***N***	**MEAN (*SD*)**
2 diagnostic cues	19	4.1 (*1.8*)
4 diagnostic cues	17	3.5 (*1.8*)
6 diagnostic cues	21	3.0 (*1.8*)
8 diagnostic cues	22	3.5 (*2.3*)
10 diagnostic cues	21	2.9 (*2.3*)

We recruited 192 respondents (M_{age} = 38.1, *SD* = 12.7; female 60%) on Amazon Mechanical Turk and paid for their time. They were randomly assigned one of the five "subjective knowledge" conditions made up by the diagnostic cues that were randomly shown. Conditions were presented in a ballot of 2 diagnostic cues, 4 diagnostic cues, 6 diagnostic cues, 8 diagnostic cues, and 10 diagnostic cues derived from the list generated during the pre-test (see Appendix A). We put forward that these conditions are capable of activating subjective knowledge because of the evaluative process triggered by the diagnostic cues (Moorman et al., 2004). Based on the cues that respondents saw, we then asked whether or not they would like to visit

the place (1= I would not like at all; 10= I would like very much). This measure serves as the dependent variable.

In contrast to the previous studies, knowing more led participants to perceive liking their choices less. Observing the mean values across different conditions, the intention to travel increased with the decrease of diagnostic cues for the destination described.

Table 4: Mean differences per condition on intention to travel

Condition	*N*	MEAN (*SD*)
2 diagnostic cues	37	8.3 (*1.7*)
4 diagnostic cues	41	7.6 (*2.1*)
6 diagnostic cues	35	7.7 (*1.8*)
8 diagnostic cues	40	8.1 (*2.1*)
10 diagnostic cues	39	7.1 (*1.9*)

We detected a negative correlation between the number of details and the intention to travel $r(192) = -.205$, $p = .05$. In order to find differences between conditions with a diverse degree of diagnostic information, we performed planned contrasts. Planned contrasts revealed that the number of cues has a direct effect on the intention to travel. Specifically, we compared manipulated conditions to each other in order to observe differences among each group of cues (2 diagnostic cues vs. 4 diagnostic cues vs. 6 diagnostic cues vs. 8 diagnostic cues vs. 10 diagnostic cues) that show partially significant results (t(1, 187) 0 1.8 *p*. = .06). Taking the condition of 2 cues as a benchmark, we observed a statistical significance with the condition of "10 diagnostic cues" through planned contrasts (t(1, 187) = 2.5 *p*.= .01) while further planned contrasts with the other conditions were not statistically significant (2 diagnostic cues vs. 4 diagnostic cues t(1,187) = 1.63 *p. = ns*; 2 diagnostic cues vs. 6 diagnostic cues t(1, 187) = 1.4 *p. = ns*; 2 diagnostic cues vs. 8 diagnostic cues t(1,187) = .39 *p. = ns*). Subsequently, a one-way ANOVA was performed. We observed that subjective knowledge had a direct effect on intention to travel with significant statistical results (F(1, 191) = 2.5, *p* =.04) and supporting H1. In this phase of the decision-making process, these results showed that respondents intend to travel less when they have more diagnostic cues that contribute to the formation of higher subjective knowledge. This study is particular relevant because the results are opposite to study 1 (which investigates tourists' beliefs). With the inclusions of defined destination cues, general intuitions were not confirmed. The results in our study prove that having a lower subjective knowledge leads to higher intention to travel while the higher subjective knowledge can lead to negative reactions and inhibit positive decision-making processes.

4.3 Study 3: The mediation role of self-congruity on intention to travel

Study 3 sought to explain the reason for the negative causal relationship between subjective knowledge and intention to travel. To show why more knowledge leads participant's to have less intention to travel, we hypothesize (H2) that perceived self-congruity plays a role as the mediator. This study aimed to show the mediation role of self-congruity as a mechanism that leads tourists to decline their intention to

travel due to the condition of higher subjective knowledge on that tourist destination. As in previous studies, we designed a between-subjects study with five conditions and random defined destinations cues (see study 2). We recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk 246 respondents and paid for their time (M_{age} = 32.9, *SD* = 10.9; female 50%). After conditions randomization, we asked respondents how the match between the diagnostic destinations' cues and their self-congruity measured as perceived similarity between themselves and the cues listed for the place (1= not at all; 10= very much) influences their intention to visit that location (1= not at all; 10= very much; see table 5).

Table 5: Mean differences per condition on self-congruity and intention to travel

Condition		Self-congruity	Intention to travel
2 diagnostic cues	MEAN *(SD)*	6.8 *(2.5)*	7.8 *(1.5)*
	N	38	38
4 diagnostic cues	MEAN *(SD)*	7.7 *(1.5)*	7.7 *(1.8)*
	N	51	51
6 diagnostic cues	MEAN *(SD)*	7.7 *(1.5)*	7.8 *(1.4)*
	N	63	63
8 diagnostic cues	MEAN *(SD)*	7.8 *(1.6)*	7.7 *(1.4)*
	N	49	49
10 diagnostic cues	MEAN *(SD)*	8.0 *(1.5)*	7.1 *(1.8)*
	N	45	45

As predicted in H2 (*a higher degree of subjective knowledge leads to the perception of self-congruity, which in turn decreases the intention to travel*), a high similarity between destination cues and the self-congruity mediated the relationship with intention to travel. Planned contrasts revealed that there are not statistical differences among conditions and self-congruity taken together (2 vs. 4 vs. 6 vs. 8 vs. 10 diagnostic cues t(1,241) = -3.1 *p.* = .002). We also contrasted our benchmark condition (2 diagnostic cues) with the others conditions (4 diagnostic cues; 6 diagnostic cues; 8 diagnostic cues; 10 diagnostic cues) observing statistical significant effects (2 diagnostic cues vs. 4 diagnostic cues t(1, 241) = -2.2 *p.* = .03; 2 diagnostic cues vs. 6 diagnostic cues t(1, 241) = -2.5 *p.* = .02; 2 diagnostic cues vs. 8 diagnostic cues t(1, 241) = -2.6 *p.* = .01; 2 diagnostic cues vs. 10 diagnostic cues t(1, 241) = -3 *p.* = .003).

Next, we tested a mediation model (model 4 bootstrap 5,000; Hayes, 2017) where subjective knowledge acts as an independent variable, self-congruity as a mediator, and intention to travel as the dependent variable. Statistical analyses showed a general significance fit of the model (R^2 = .03, p = .001). Subjective knowledge had a significant effect on self-congruity (*b* =.23, CI 95% [.06,.39]), and a significant direct effect on intention to travel (*b* = -.23, CI 95% [-.38, -.09]). The self-congruity and the subjective knowledge had a significant indirect effect on intention to travel (*b* = -.08, CI 95% [.02,.17]). Overall, this study showed that the lower the perceived subjective knowledge and self-congruity, the higher the likelihood of

intention to travel. These results supported our H2. These findings highlighted the interplay of the psychological mechanism between subjective knowledge and self-congruity. Further, subjective knowledge had a critical role in determining information overload, which leads tourists to a lower intention to travel.

5. CONCLUSION

Our study contributes to a better understanding of how tourists cope with uncertain conditions as an idiosyncratic psychological state related to the cues available and tourists' cognitive capabilities (Aarstad, Ness, & Haugland, 2015). Through diagnostic cues, our study highlights the relationship between the psychological process in the early phase of the tourists' decision-making process and the intention to travel. As a result, the early phase of the tourists' decision-making process serves as a psychological condition that reduces uncertainty and allows tourists to assume pre-defined behavior (Faraji-Rad & Pham, 2017). Tourists often believe that more subjective knowledge leads to better choices. However, our correlations and web-experiments suggest that knowing more decreases the intention to travel toward a given destination. Finally, the current findings illustrate the presence of psychological limits in mental processes through an overload of diagnostic cues.

Our research contributes to tourism research by showing the psychological mechanism that is behind the early phase of the decision-making process during the tourist's destination choices for leisure trips. Building on this, our findings address how higher degrees of subjective knowledge (i.e., the individual's perception of how much an individual knows; Brucks, 1985; Sharipfour et al., 2014a, 2014b) about a destination, where information is shared with tourists all at once, can induce negative decision-making responses. The contribution of our research is couched in the effects of subjective knowledge and how the number of attributes for a single destination may influence tourists' behavior (Park & Jang, 2013; Thai & Yuksel, 2017b). We look at very specific tourist actions while they evaluate a single destination based on the diagnostic cues offered. Having a very parsimonious perspective enhances the comprehension of theoretical paradigms in both tourism and the consumer psychology field. We highlight how tourists deal with conditions where cues must be elaborated and evaluated so as to move forward in the decision-making process. We also show that the early phase of the decision-making process is a key psychological condition by which consumers attribute and weigh up a limited amount of knowledge. Accounting for this, we flesh out the theoretical difference between exposure to knowledge and the acquisition of diagnostic cues about a destination. In doing so, we observe that the early decision-making process is built on a limited amount of diagnostic cues. To illustrate, higher subjective knowledge leads tourists in perceiving higher self-congruity (a cognitive mechanism that determines a match between the value expressed by a destination and the self-concept; Sirgy et al., 1991; Usakly & Balaglu, 2011) and, ultimately, having less intention to travel toward the destination proposed.

Interestingly, and compared to the several studies in marketing that have investigated the role of valence (positive vs. negative) and its effects on consumers (Dubois, Bonezzi, & De Angelis, 2016; Kimmel, 2018), our study proves that the increase of subjective knowledge leads tourists to have less intention to travel regardless of the valence thereof (in our studies the destination features were unvalenced). Within the realm of consumer psychology, we highlight how the decision-making process follows a counterintuitive pattern. Individuals believe that

knowing more leads to better decisions because they omit the effects of overload of subjective knowledge and the accentuation of perceived dissimilarities with the accretion of knowledge. This reflects that focal decisions are more likely to be taken when there is a psychological reactance to external stimuli. These stimuli drive the deliberate evaluation of alternatives based on limited cues that are believed to be decisive and crucial (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The tourists' decision-making process is characterized by the presence of irrational decisions that influence actions and behaviors, particularly when a cue is not perceived as relevant.

A related effect in the early decision-making process plays a key role in the tourists' behavior due to the implicit psychological power to trigger subsequent actions such as the selection of accommodation and transportation. A trip is often organized on gradual and interconnected decisions that altogether define the whole experience. Ultimately, being aware of how subjective knowledge is organized and psychologically processed can shed light on behavioral aspects of the tourists' decision-making process in the early phase.

Leisure trips include several types of activities. For instance, tourists have different lengths of stay (extended stay, annual leave, and short vacations) or trips that may happen in a range of times in the calendar year (summer vacations, winter, and spring breaks). These conditions, all together, can increase the overload of information cues that force the activation of subjective knowledge. In these sorts of situations, our findings reveal that inappropriate communication can engender negative results and distance tourists from a positive response. The existence of tourist's beliefs may encourage them to look for a wide range of initial information and collect a conspicuous number of cues. Similarly, tour operators and travel businesses may believe that furnishing an extensive and detailed list of cues may persuade tourists efficiently. This, in reality, can become a boomerang effect and unleash unexpected outcomes. Cues shared in the very early phase must be balanced in terms of quantity in order to avoid negative consequences that inhibit the decision-making process. Hence, considering the number of attributes per destination should be critically evaluated in order to advise tourists efficiently. What is more, cues can be balanced between those that are diagnostic and those that are not but that may contribute to a sense of fulfillment.

According to our findings, the perception of similarity between a destination's features and a tourist's self-concept can curb the tourist's advancement in the decision-making journey. This is noteworthy because cues perceived to match a tourist's self-concept persuades them to refuse the destination choice, especially when, as in our case, it refers to a leisure trip. This is due, in part, to the fact that tourists may prefer destinations that are perceived as unique and original, thus operators have to recognize how to calibrate and address cues during the tourists' decision-making process. For example, practitioners can disseminate cues highlighting the "point of difference" with previous places visited by the tourist with the aim to highlight the uniqueness of the new destination proposed. Given that, practitioners can better educate sales representative through a defined plan that stipulates what cue is delivered in order to establish a persuasive relationship with potential clients. Cues can be gradually introduced and assessed by clients' reactions (e.g., willingness to move forward in the decision-making process and to ask for subsequent information for example on travel transportation and types of accommodation).

This study features some methodological and theoretical limitations that may represent future venues for research. Methodologically, the experiments do not

manipulate the self-congruity between destination features with subjective knowledge, and this can be implemented in future studies. Further, we employ single-item measurement for both self-congruity and intention to travel, and this can provoke a lack of understanding for a multidimensional attribute. We do not control for tourist's characteristics such as their expertise and whether there are differences between leisure and business travel, and this may represent a further boundary condition. Running field experiments can be beneficial in order to observe tourists' behavior in real settings. Further, we employed written stimuli (i.e., destination cues), and it would be interesting to observe whether employing visual cues (e.g., images) can have a different impact on the decision-making process. Moreover, destination cues do not take into account tourists' attitudes, such as the willingness to have an adventure and extreme vacations that may influence the interpretation of such cues presented. Theoretically, we have investigated a single psychological mechanism, but other alternative accounts could exist. For example, we do not take into consideration the possibility that tourists can form cognitive bias impression. Investigating tourists' cognitive biases can shed light on how these are organized and how to influence mental schema. There is also a need to understand how decision making is linked with conditions by which tourists have to make a decision in a short period of time (e.g., time poverty condition). Further research is required to explore the socio-psychological effect during the tourists' decision-making process and when two or more tourists are involved simultaneously. Finally, there are many cases where the exposure of subjective knowledge will increase the willingness to like a given destination, and this highlights the importance of identifying further boundary conditions in the realm of irrational choices.

6. REFERENCES

Aarstad, J., Ness, H., & Haugland, S. A. (2015). Innovation, uncertainty, and inter-firm shortcut ties in a tourism destination context. *Tourism Management*, *48*, 354-361.

Andreason, A. R. (1965). Attitudes and consumer behaviour: A decision model. In L. Preston (Ed.), New research in marketing (pp. 172–203) Berkeley: University of California, Institute of Business and Economic Research

Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research 27*(3), 785–804.

Bekk, M., Spörrle, M., & Kruse, J. (2016). The benefits of similarity between tourist and destination personality. *Journal of Travel Research*, *55*(8), 1008–1021.

Bieger, T., & Laesser, C. (2004). Information sources for travel decisions: Toward a source process model. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*(4), 357–371.

Brucks, M. (1985). The effects of product class knowledge on information search behavior. *Journal of consumer research*, *12*(1), 1-16.

Carter, T. J., & Gilovich, T. (2010). The relative relativity of material and experiential purchases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *98*(1), 146.

Cohen, S. A., Prayag, G., & Moital, M. (2014). Consumer behaviour in tourism: Concepts, influences and opportunities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *17*(10), 872–909.

Dolnicar, S., & Ring, A. (2014). Tourism marketing research: Past, present and future. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *47*, 31–47.

Dubois, D., Bonezzi, A., & De Angelis, M. (2016). Sharing with friends versus strangers: How interpersonal closeness influences word-of-mouth valence. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *53*(5), 712–727.

Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (1986). *Consumer behavior* (5th ed.). Chicago, IL: The Dryden Press.
Faraji-Rad, A., & Pham, M. T. (2017). Uncertainty increases the reliance on affect in decisions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *44*(1), 1–21.
Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2014). E-WOM and accommodation: An analysis of the factors that influence travelers' adoption of information from online reviews. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(1), 44–57.
Fodness, D., & Murray, B. (1999). A model of tourist information search behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, *37*(3), 220–230.
Fridgen, J. D. (1984). Environmental psychology and tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, *11*(1), 19–39.
Fuchs, G., & Reichel, A. (2011). An exploratory inquiry into destination risk perceptions and risk reduction strategies of first time vs. repeat visitors to a highly volatile destination. *Tourism Management*, *32*(2), 266–276.
Gardiner, S., King, C., & Grace, D. (2013). Travel decision making: An empirical examination of generational values, attitudes, and intentions. *Journal of Travel Research*, *52*(3), 310–324.
Goossens, C. (2000). Tourism information and pleasure motivation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *27*(2), 301–321
Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004). An integrative model of tourists'information search behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *31*(2), 353–373.
Hadar, L., & Sood, S. (2014). When knowledge is demotivating: Subjective knowledge and choice overload. *Psychological science*, *25*(9), 1739-1747.
Hastie, R., & Kumar, P. A. (1979). Person memory: Personality traits as organizing principles in memory for behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*(1), 25.
Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Publications.
Hu, H. F., & Krishen, A. S. (2019). When is enough, enough? Investigating product reviews and information overload from a consumer empowerment perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, *100*, 27–37.
Jacoby, J. (1984). Perspectives on information overload. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *10*(4), 432–435.
Jang, S. S., & Feng, R. (2007). Temporal destination revisit intention: The effects of novelty seeking and satisfaction. *Tourism management*, *28*(2), 580-590.
Jun, S. H., Vogt, C. A., & MacKay, K. J. (2007). Relationships between travel information search and travel product purchase in pretrip contexts. *Journal of Travel Research*, *45*(3), 266–274.
Karl, M., Reintinger, C., & Schmude, J. (2015). Reject or select: Mapping destination choice. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *54*, 48–64.
Kimmel, A. J. (2018). *Psychological Foundations of Marketing: The Keys to Consumer Behavior*. Routledge.
Lam, T., & Hsu, C. H. (2006). Predicting behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination. *Tourism management*, *27*(4), 589–599.
Li, C., McCabe, S., & Song, H. (2017). Tourist choice processing: evaluating decision rules and methods of their measurement. *Journal of Travel Research*, *56*(6), 699–711.
Malhotra, N. K. (1984). Reflections on the information overload paradigm in consumer decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *10*(4), 436–440.

Mansfeld, Y. (1992). From motivation to actual travel. *Annals of Tourism Research, 19*(3), 399–419.
McCabe, S., Li, C., & Chen, Z. (2016). Time for a radical reappraisal of tourist decision making? Toward a new conceptual model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *55*(1), 3–15.
Miller, D. T., Downs, J. S., & Prentice, D. A. (1998). Minimal conditions for the creation of a unit relationship: The social bond between birthdaymates. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *28*(3), 475–481.
Moorman, C., Diehl, K., Brinberg, D., & Kidwell, B. (2004). Subjective knowledge, search locations, and consumer choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*(3), 673–680.
Mwesiumo, D., & Halpern, N. (2018). Effect of component failure on tour package evaluation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *72*(C), 172–174.
Nicolau, J. L., & Más, F. J. (2008). Sequential choice behavior: Going on vacation and type of destination. *Tourism Management*, *29*(5), 1023–1034.
Nisbett, R. E., Zukier, H., & Lemley, R. E. (1981). The dilution effect: Nondiagnostic information weakens the implications of diagnostic information. *Cognitive psychology*, *13*(2), 248–277.
Norton, M. I., & Goethals, G. R. (2004). Spin (and pitch) doctors: Campaign strategies in televised political debates. *Political Behavior*, *26*(3), 227–248.
Norton, M. I., Frost, J. H., & Ariely, D. (2007). Less is more: The lure of ambiguity, or why familiarity breeds contempt. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*(1), 97.
Oppermann, M. (2000). Tourism destination loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research*, *39*(1), 78–84.
Park, J. Y., & Jang, S. S. (2013). Confused by too many choices? Choice overload in tourism. *Tourism Management*, *35*, 1–12.
Patterson, I., & Pegg, S. (2009). Marketing the leisure experience to baby boomers and older tourists. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *18*(2-3), 254–272.
Pelled, A., Zilberstein, T., Tsirulnikov, A., Pick, E., Patkin, Y., & Tal-Or, N. (2017). Textual Primacy Online: Impression Formation Based on Textual and Visual Cues in Facebook Profiles. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *61*(7), 672–687.
Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In *Communication and Persuasion* (pp. 1–24). Springer, New York, NY.
Quintal, V. A., Lee, J. A., & Soutar, G. N. (2010). Risk, uncertainty and the theory of planned behavior: A tourism example. *Tourism Management*, *31*(6), 797–805.
Raju, P. S., Lonial, S. C., & Mangold, W. G. (1995). Differential effects of subjective knowledge, objective knowledge, and usage experience on decision making: An exploratory investigation. Journal of consumer psychology, 4(2), 153-180.
Reisinger, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2005). Travel anxiety and intentions to travel internationally: Implications of travel risk perception. *Journal of Travel Research*, *43*(3), 212–225.
Sharifpour, M., Walters, G., Ritchie, B. W., & Winter, C. (2014a). Investigating the role of prior knowledge in tourist decision making: A structural equation model of risk perceptions and information search. *Journal of Travel Research*, *53*(3), 307–322.
Sharifpour, M., Walters, G., & Ritchie, B. W. (2014b). Risk perception, prior knowledge, and willingness to travel: Investigating the Australian tourist

market's risk perceptions towards the Middle East. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *20*(2), 111-123.
Sirakaya, E., & Woodside, A. G. (2005). Building and testing theories of decision making by travellers. *Tourism Management*, *26*(6), 815–832.
Sirakaya, E., McLellan, R. W., & Uysal, M. (1996). Modeling vacation destination decisions: A behavioral approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *5*(1-2), 57–75.
Sirgy, M. J., & Su, C. (2000). Destination image, self-congruity, and travel behavior: Toward an integrative model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *38*(4), 340-352.
Sirgy, M. J., Johar, J. S., Samli, A. C., & Claiborne, C. B. (1991). Self-congruity versus functional congruity: Predictors of consumer behavior. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *19*(4), 363-375.
Smallman, C., & Moore, K. (2010). Process studies of tourists' decision-making. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(2), 397–422.
Solomon, M. B. 2002. Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Song, H. J., Lee, C. K., Park, J. A., Hwang, Y. H., & Reisinger, Y. (2015). The influence of tourist experience on perceived value and satisfaction with temple stays: The experience economy theory. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *32*(4), 401–415.
Thai, N. T., & Yuksel, U. (2017a). Choice overload in holiday destination choices. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *11*(1), 53–66.
Thai, N. T., & Yuksel, U. (2017b). Too many destinations to visit: Tourists' dilemma?. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *62*, 38–53.
Usakli, A., & Baloglu, S. (2011). Brand personality of tourist destinations: An application of self-congruity theory. *Tourism Management*, *32*(1), 114–127.
Viglia, G. & Dolnicar, S. A review of experimental research in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* (forthcoming).
Viglia, G., Minazzi, R., & Buhalis, D. (2016). The influence of e-word-of-mouth on hotel occupancy rate. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *28*(9), 2035–2051.
Wang, Y. C., Liu, C. R., Huang, W. S., & Chen, S. P. (2019). Destination Fascination and Destination Loyalty: Subjective Well-Being and Destination Attachment as Mediators. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1-16 0047287519839777.
Wilson, J., & Moore, K. (2018). Performance on the frontline of tourist decision making. *Journal of Travel Research*, *57*(3), 370–383.
Wilson, T. D., Centerbar, D. B., Kermer, D. A., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005). The pleasures of uncertainty: prolonging positive moods in ways people do not anticipate. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*(1), 5.
Wong, J. Y., & Yeh, C. (2009). Tourist hesitation in destination decision making. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *36*(1), 6–3.

Appendix A

Diagnostic cues randomly presented per condition

2 Diagnostic cues

1. Leisure and events attractions
2. Socio-cultural events

4 Diagnostic cues

1. Hospitality services
2. Natural attractions
3. Diversity of the place
4. Gastronomy

6 Diagnostic cues

1. Climate
2. Accessibility to attractions
3. Socio-cultural events
4. Gastronomy
5. Shopping
6. Leisure and events attractions

8 Diagnostic cues

1. Transportation and infrastructures (e.g., airport and roads)
2. Natural attractions
3. Socio-cultural events
4. Gastronomy
5. Shopping
6. Hospitality services
7. Leisure and events attractions
8. Climate

10 Diagnostic cues

1. Gastronomy
2. Natural attractions
3. Shopping
4. Climate
5. Socio-cultural events
6. Hospitality services
7. Transportation and infrastructures (e.g., airport and roads)

8. Leisure and events attractions
9. Accessibility to attractions
10. Diversity of the place