# ARE MYTHS AND LEGENDS USED IN TOURISM COMMUNICATION AS A RESOURCE?  THE CASE OF ALGARVE ONLINE BROCHURES

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*ABSTRACT*

*Tourist destinations are in search of differentiation in order to improve their attractiveness. According to the literature, myths and legends can play an important role as a tourism resource and, therefore, institutional communication should pay more attention to them.*

*Algarve is the southernmost region of Portugal and it is the country's most popular tourism destination. "Sun and beach" are its main tourist products. Literature on tourism suggests that local myths and legends can add value to a region's core product, differentiating it from competitors. However, few empirical studies have examined to what extent traditional coastal destinations have used those resources to assign themes to their touristic products.*

*This paper aims to analyse the online brochures from the official tourism office in the Algarve with the purpose of evaluating the use of myths and legends in its communication. This mythological dimension can be used as a branding marketing tool as much as it differentiates this coastal*

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*mass tourism destination, makes it more appealing and contributes to the development of new tourism products.*

*Based on the literature recommendations we argue that myths are critical elements in designing tourist experiences within tourism destinations. They are a valuable asset upon which decision makers should develop a coherent place branding and a set of tourism products conveying a unique and meaningful narrative. We have used N vivo to do frequency tables and word cloud analyses of the Algarve's institutional communication as a preliminary analysis and for validation of our findings. The findings show that myths and legends were not used in the place communication put across by tourism authorities in the locations examined.*

*KEY WORDS*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present paper is to analyse the use of myths and legends as a tourist resource in institutional communication. The innovative method Nvivohas been used to capture word associations in official communication texts.

Nowadays, places face new challenges as a result of a context strongly marked by the globalization of economies, the mobility of people and goods and the competition to attract tourists, residents and investors. Current trends in consumption, the growing importance of the symbolic and the need to gain visibility are reasons for places to invest in differentiating aspects with impact on their attractiveness as tourist destinations (Harvey, 2001 cit. in Richards & Wilson, 2004; Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005; Ritzer & Liska, 1997).

Culture is considered a major source of differentiation and innovation with implications on the city definition as a tourist destination (Zukin, 2004).

A tourism destination, currently, is being prepared as a stage to attract tourists and, at the same time, to impact the consumption experience of visiting a place, be it a city, a country or a region. The new tourist wants innovative and memorable experiences during their holidays (Oh & Fiore, 2007). In this sense, this paper underlines the role and importance that myths can have on the process of scenically preparing a place to attract and welcome tourists offering them memorable experiences.

The Algarve is a Portuguese coastal tourism destination and it is one of the most important tourist regions in the country. As any other mass tourism place, Algarve is currently facing problems such as strong seasonality and the growing competition from similar destinations like Spain, Tunisia, Greece, Italy, Morocco and Turkey. These circumstances highlighted the need to diversify the offer, especially complementary tourist products, for instance cultural attractions and events (Cruz, 2010; Valle et al, 2011).

The Algarve's history and cultural heritage are interesting sources of myths and legends which can be used to differentiate it as a tourism destination and thus contributing to improve its attractiveness within other segments. According tothe literature, themes and legends are essential to the development of a place narrative

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with impact the consumption experience.

This paper aims to analyse the use of myths and legends as narratives to differentiate a region in tourist communication. We argue that myths are critical elements in the design of experiences in tourism destinations and cities. They are valuable resources upon which a coherent place branding may be developed.

Here is presented an empirical study of words and communication resources used by public administration and official tourism stakeholders on web media by the Algarve tourism Destination Management Organization.

Thus, this visualization can help official organizations in the development of communication tools. A sample application of our visualization shows tangibly its potential for communication analysis.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1) TOURIST DESTINATION

Without dwelling too much on the problematic, still a controversial one (Davidson &Maitland, 2002), around the concept of "tourist destination", we took a few definitions as a reference. Gunn (1994, cit in Davidson & Maitland, 2002: 3) considers the destination "a geographic area containing a critical mass of development that satisfies traveller objectives". In 1975, Flament (cit in Davidson & Maitland, 2002) established a causal connection between the fact that the tourist is above all "a consumer of places" and destinations "capable of satisfying the tourists' need (for relaxation)". For Silva, Mendes and Guerreiro (2001) the tourist destination is built on a supply structure of tourism products and services, consistent and based on a geographically defined area, which is associated with a given image set, usually marketed in an integrated manner and under a hallmark.

"Destinations are amalgams of specific products and services (accommodation, transport, catering, entertainment, etc.), from private or public initiative (landscapes, sea, beach, heritage, hotels, restaurants, etc.), which form a global and composite product, the tourist destination. The ubiquity of the concept allows the existence of a

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subjective tourism product, defined in terms of image and expectations that visitors have of the place" (Buhalis, 2000).

A growing number of cities have become major tourist destinations (Jutla, 2000), holding a large variety of attractions, events and services, concentrated in a relatively confined space (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Kotler et al., 1999; Joppe, Waalen & Martin, 2001). Cities have become a "territoire spécifique de consommation touristique" (Barçon, 1994: 14). Theincreased demand by an increasingly significant segment of tourists - consumers of cultural products – and, on the supply side, a greater awareness about the importance of preserving culture and engaging local communities and entities in that process, are two trends which converge and have repercussions in the way cities are managed. In a scenario of fierce competition between cities, innovation is considered a critical success factor to maintain a city on the international circuit of urban cultural tourism. LAgroup and Interarts (2005) consider cultural events effective in attracting and retaining tourists. Especially in the case of large towns and cities, the concept of creative city (Landry, 2006) to promote the relationship between heritage, history and creative industries (entertainment, media, design, architecture and fashion) helps to attract tourists.

Cities have known in recent decades an indisputable revaluation, especially in their historical centres, making them desirable and attractive. Cazes (1994:28) quoted Blanc, for whom "La ville interesse, la ville plaît, la ville se vend, la ville fait vendre. Jamais encore nos sociétés n'avaient manifesté une telle sympathie pour la ville, à une telle échelle et dans une telle conjonction de forces" with the purpose of enhancing the emotional relationship that is established nowadays with the city. This trend marks the profile of the contemporary city increasingly equated as a tourist destination and events stage. On the one hand, this is a stage where the tourist experience takes place in a setting marked by the importance of the symbolic and the emotions are raised by a festive atmosphere, and on the other hand, this condition requires a management from a marketing perspective.

A city is not and could never be a homogeneous product. Incidentally, a city is both a product and a set of different products (Barke & Harrop, 1994). This perspective results from an integrated view of the offered reality and experienced by tourists (residents and investors) in the urban context. This is a product which is

assumed as the result of a combination of tangible and intangible components which must be equated in terms of the macro product conception, similarly to what happens with the target. Cities are facing a new urban order, envisaged as a composite, heterogeneous and poly nuclear entity. (Silva, 2001; Doors, 2002).

We are faced with a product or overall multifaceted composite, which may even be associated with the figure of the cultural destination (Guibilato, 1983; Silva, 1991; Cazes, 1994:28; Thibaut, 1994: 61). The composite product has a strong impact on the image that the tourist city retains as it sees itself as "an overall concept of integrated instalment and consumption of experiences and services" (Smith, 2001: 66).

The definition of a tourist destination in terms of space leads us to different scales, so it is possible to apply the concept to countries, regions or cities. Davidson and Maitland (2002) consider cities, towns or villages typical examples of tourist destinations whose borders are clearly demarcated. Coastal cities are the most popular urban destinations.

In the future, cities will evolve regarding their spaces, transports, economy, culture... in spite of all this, the literature on destinations does not anticipate such tremendous changes in the appearance of cities other than an expansion of the megalopolis type conurbation (Brown, 2014). We will not see the impact of these changes in the image that the tourist city retains before then.

Therefore, what constitutes tourism experiences and the use of myths and themes in destination communication will be analysed in the theoretical section of this paper. The article offers an understanding of myths and legends for tourism communication purposes. Hardly any literature exists on the study of what institutional organizations do with myths and legends resources for tourism communication; and there is no previous analysis assessment with Wordle, thus, this article can be seen as an attempt to fill the gap by offering an insight into the matter.

## 2.2) TOURISM EXPERIENCE

A large number of researchers focus on the study of tourism experience from different perspectives such as preferences (Manfredo, Driver & Tarrant, 1996), activity (Guilmore, 1999), definition and conceptualization of the term (Feifer, 1985;

Frazer, 1989; Lengkeek, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Stamboulis et al., 2003; Frey, 1998, quoted by Cary, 2004; Cohen, 2004; Pizan, 2004; Uriely, 2005; O'Dell, 2007), place attachment (Gross & Brown, 2006; Ek, Larsen, Buhl & Kjaer, 2008), preferences (Raadik, et al., 2010), and attributes (Jackson, White & Schmierer, 1996; Tangeland, & Aas, 2011; Tangeland, Vannesland & Nybakk, 2013).

The increasingly competitive environment and the growing similarity on products and services cause tourists to look for something exotic and different. Pine and Gilmore argue that "even the most mundane transactions can be transformed into memorable experiences" (1999: 4). Recently, experience has been considered the way to maintain the long-term competitiveness of a destination (Machado-Chaviano et al., 2008). In this sense, tourists are changing from the act of travelling to see something, to the idea of travelling to do something (Avila & Barrado, 2005). Thus, there is a change from contemplative, overcrowded and seasonal tourism – which provides the basic services tourists need– to an active tourism that favours "activity enrichment" over "rest at destination". It can be noted as major trends of this active tourism: individuality of products and services, products that suit consumers' tastes and more frequent and shorter-term trips looking for recreational, cultural and sports activities (Machado-Chaviano, 2008). This is, therefore, a great challenge for tourism and for the contemporary city: offer unforgettable experiences. The sensory landscape of the city offers us, today, great opportunities to make the latter a spectacular experience. Each city is "a sensory experience, emotional and alive" (Landry, 2006: 2).

Pizam (2010: 343) emphasizes the importance of experience in the tourism context by stating that "creating memorable experiences is the essence and the *raison d'être* of the hospitality industry." As a research area, the tourist experience dates back to the 60's. Throughout the 70's research in this field has developed mostly within the social sciences, being prominent the work of MacCannel (1973) in which the tourist experience itself is equated to a ritual of modern society wherein the tourist searches authenticity and the meaning of things.

The experience economy paradigm was put forward by Pine and Gilmore (1999; Gilmore & Pine, 2002) with the aim of contributing to improve the performance of service providers and it has been progressively incorporated in the tourism sector

agenda by academics and by professionals (Gilmore & Pine, 2002; Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

The tourist experience concept is a complex and multifaceted psychological process (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Researchers have been looking into it trying,on the one hand, to reconcile different perspectives translated into a comprehensive and consensual enough concept and, on the other, to identify in a coherent conceptual framework its nature and various dimensions.

Pine and Gilmore (1999: 12) defined experience as the set of "events that individuals engage in a personal way". Oh, Jeoung and Fiore (2007: 120) add that "from a consumer perspective" tourist experience is something "enjoyable, engaging, memorable encounters for those consuming these events". Tung & Ritchie (2011: 1371) state that "the motivation to design and stage memorable experiences stems from the focus that an experience is subjectively felt by an individual who is engaged with an event, at an emotional, physical, spiritual, and/or intellectual level".

It is generally accepted that the tourist experience is, by definition, a subjective and personal, intangible and continuous construction  (O'Dell, 2007; Frey, 1998, quoted by Cary, 2004; Lengkeek, 2001; Uriely et al., 2002; Feifer, 1985; Frazer, 1989) which takes place in a proper and definite time (Cary, 2004). It is a complex and multidimensional concept, since "everything tourists go through at the destination can be experience, be it behavioural or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, or expressed or implied" (Oh, Jeoung, & Fiore, 2007: 120).

As a starting point, many authors agree that the tourist experience is, by nature, particular and distinct from everyday experiences (Cohen, 2004; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010), insofar as the touristic act provides a specific set of experiences, memories and emotions connected with the places visited (Noy, 2007). This perspective, as it relates the formation of the tourist experience and the places visited, is manifest in the definition proposed by Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003), in which experience arises from the interaction between tourists and destination. In this case, the destination is the setting and the tourist is the actor. In turn, according to Larsen (2007), memory is the best indicator of the travel experience, considering that a relevant experience is one that remains in memory.

For Ryan (1997, cited by Li, 2000: 865) a tourism experience is any "multifunctional leisure activity that involves aspects of entertainment and learning." The same coincides therefore with any contact experience with spaces, places and landscapes (Seamon, 1979; Tuan, 1993), and the "entertainment is only one side of the experience" (Pine & Guilmore, 1999: 3). The composite nature of the tourist experience immediately raised a multidimensional approach over its study. However, there are acknowledged lacunae in terms of the articulation between, for example, the tourist experience stages, the influences received, criteria and the most relevant results.

## 2.3) TOURISM EXPERIENCE CONSUMPTION

In the specialized literature there is a recurrent idea that consumers seek to live unique, differentiating and memorable experiences, (Oh, Jeoung & Fiore, 2007). This emerging trend of demand encourages organizations to develop an offer whose added value is beyond the achievement of functional quality in high levels. O'Dell (2007) draws attention to the crucial role played by the various elements positioned along the value chain of the tourism industry to the extent that the various stakeholders are primarily responsible for the "generation, staging and consumption of experiences through the manipulation of place and presentation of culture "(Cutler & Carmichael, 2010: 4).

Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007: 119) argue that "what tourists primarily seek and consume at destinations is engaging experiences accompanied by the goods and/or service components of the destinations". During their travels, tourists "are in a quest for psychological rewards such as inspiration, authenticity, belonging to a meaningful community, value and meaning in general".

This time, the management of the tourist offer from the experience perspective requires a deep understanding of the psychological nature of the experience as a determinant factor for the definition of settings potentially more engaging for every tourist. Presently, it is assumed that each setting in each moment has the ability to satisfy a "wide range of personal needs ranging from pleasure to the search for meaning" (Li, 2000: 865). In this sense, according to Kim et al. (2012), individuals tend to remember positive experiences more easily than negative ones.

With regard to the study of the factors that influence the formation of the tourist experience, Nickerson (2006 cit. in Cutler &Carmichael, 2010) identified three essential aspects: the tourist, the product (or destination) and the local population. In turn, Mossberg (2007) and Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) identified three main factors influencing the tourist experience: physical environment, service providers, and other tourist souvenirs. At all times and in varying degrees of intensity, the various factors contribute to the formation of the tourist experience. It is, thus, a creative process, hybrid and dynamic, in which tourists are both producers and consumers of experience. Tangeland (2013) also assumes that, when tourists stay at their destination, they may undertake outdoor activities in a "free" and unorganized manner or within a "commercial" well-organized context. A number of nature-based tourism activity products are based on special-interest outdoor recreational activities.

In line with Binkhorst, den Dekker and Melkert (2010: 41, 42) it is assumed, as a starting point for tourism, that "the 'experience environment' is made up of all the people and things that surround the tourist." Therefore, and according to those authors, "each person is surrounded by a unique 'tourism experience network' of all the stakeholders involved in his or her tourism experiences". Hence the notion that the tourist experience develops in a continuous and permanent co-creating process resulting from the interactions between the various actors sharing the same stage - providers, tourists and local actors.

Binkhorstand den Dekker (2009: 313) defines co-creation as a "process through which customers interact with the company and generate their own experience". A co-creative experiences encompasses therefore, the result of the interaction between the individual, the time and place where he stands and a given context. Tourism is by nature one of the most interesting sources of experiences, a context in which individuals tend to construct narratives of their own.

In order to capture the essence of memorable tourism experiences, Tung and Ritchie (2011) conducted in-depth interviews and found four dimensions (affect, expectations, consequentiality and recollection. And Kim et al., (2012) determined seven factors that characterize memorable tourism experiences: Hedonism, Involvement, Local Culture, Refreshment, Meaningfulness, Knowledge and Novelty.

Also, the joy and excitement felt in a tourism experience reinforce the memories in the tourists' minds. Positive emotions and memories are important predictors of intentions to recommend a place to others or to return there (Correia, 2014). Place attachment implies identification with its physical attributes, and bond development in relationships with other people (Correia, 2014).

## 2.4) THE MYTH AS A THEME

Roland Barthes, one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century, about the challenge that represents finding a definition for myth, says "the myth is a speech ... a system of communication, a message." In this sense, "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse…" and "because the universe is infinitely suggestive" (Barthes, 1987: 209-210). Thus, according to this contemporary thinker and philosopher, an object, a person or an event may assume the status of myth when, in a given social context, meaning is added to them.

Mythology has a historical foundation whose discourse can be translated into languages as diverse as speech, writing, film, photography, entertainment, advertising, sports, among others.

The events and characters that play a part in the history of a place are important sources of themes around which tourists can draw stories and construct narratives with tourism potential.

The psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have long acknowledged the role of stories as a unifying element within the complex web of social relations where human beings move (Schank & Abelson, 1977; Holloway, 1997). Regarding the literature on tourism, this is a little explored topic, although it has recently been object of attention in the field of tourist experiences (Moscado, 2010).

With the purpose of defining narratives, Moscado (2010: 44) quotes Adaval and Weyer (1998). To these authors, narratives are "knowledge structures that consist of a sequence of thematically and temporally related events". Furthermore, they argue that stories are submitted under narratives; we are talking about stories as "anecdotes that have a beginning, a plot and an end" (Adaval & Weyer, 1998 cited by Moscado 2010: 44) that are designed to entertain (Moscado, 2010). Considered as a

discourse that uses cultural symbols to reinforce values and behaviours within a special group, myths as storytelling are a discursive output of our society and they can be a fruitful resource of themes under which one can develop meaningful stories. We expect that they can attract tourists and, simultaneously, convey meaning to their experiences (Moscado, 2010: 46). According to Chronis (2005, as mentioned by Moscado, 2010) these representations influence the choice of the destination and, once on location, they give tourists a coherent set of networks around which they organise their visit. Jenkins (2003) found, in her research, that this is reproduced in the stories that tourists tell about their experiences at each destination. Till (2003: 63 quoted by Chronis, 2012: 1798) noted that tourism sites "are always both imaginary and real" and the "imagined and the real are inseparable" (Chronis, 2012: 1798 mentioning Gao et al., 2011). Assuming that tourism "is about storytelling", we can therefore understand that "tourism experiences depend on the availability and communication of stories" (Chronis, 2012: 1799).

Like any other organization, a tourism destination has no competence to offer an experience to the tourist. It will only offer the circumstances and the setting where tourists can live an individual experience (Mossberg, 2007). It is advisable that marketers and managers identify myths and narratives as the umbrella under which they should create the setting where tourists will live their own experiences. The city as a stage must be prepared in order to introduce the city's theme enabling tourists to live memorable experiences and to tell coherent stories about it. According to Woodside, Cruickshank and Dehuang (2007: 163) "visitors' own storytelling about their own experiences often describes myth enactments/climaxes uniquely relevant to specific destinations". That is the main reason why we assert the relevance of using local myths as the backbone of a tourism destination proposal. In line with Mossberg (2007) and Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) we argue that it is of the utmost relevance to have themes as they contribute to structure the tourism experience. Similarly, to Pine and Gilmore (2002) a service becomes an experience when it is developed under a theme.

Also, Razak cited by Zinal et al. (2012) proposed that mythological elements could be used in tourism marketing to emphasize the distinctive identity of a particular ethnic group or destination. The authors used content analysis of myths and legends

found in brochures published from 1962 to 2007. They concluded that the representation of Malay myths in brochures which mainly depicts stories involving supernatural, magical and mystical aspects add to the projection of destinations.

It is under it that will be taken place several tourism experiences? It is advisable to work on the relationship between a narrative inspired in a local myth, and a theme, as the base for the development of experiences in destinations that can be managed from the experiential marketing perspective.

Considering a specific case of a historical region located in the Algarve -  a "sun and beach" mass tourism destination – it is necessary to improve its potential as a stage in order to attract tourists. It is advisable to look for local myths under which a calendar of events and routes should be designed, thus fulfilling the need to live authentic and fantastic experiences.

This paper can be considered as an attempt to fill a gap in the literature about the use of myths and legends in tourism communication by offering an insight into the case of the Algarve institutional tourism brochures.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1) SETTING

Located in the south of Portugal, Algarve is the country's most important coastal site and it is listed among the top 20 travel destinations in the world. Besides the national tourists who visit the region every year, especially in the summer months (around 40%), most tourists travelling to the Algarve come from Great Britain (around 25%), Spain or The Netherlands (around 10% each) (Statistics Portugal, 2010).

The climate and the large number of beautiful beaches are important reasons to make such a decision.

Accordingly with some relevant studies (Valle, Guerreiro, Mendes & Silva, 2011) the main motivation to travel to Algarve is to seek sun and beach. However, by looking at studies that focus on characterizing the tourist profile, new market opportunities were detected. Besides tourism entertainment, historical and cultural resources as well as architectural resources have revealed to be potentially attractive

tourism elements, yielding the capacity to prolong average stays and daily expenditures by tourists.

## 3.2) RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature review shows that myths and events can be used as tourist resources and can be transformed into tourist products by authorities. Also, the authorities and the stakeholders are primarily responsible for the generation, staging and consumption of experiences through the manipulation of place and presentation of culture. Although recent studies confirm that creating memorable experiences is the essence of the hospitality industry, not all stakeholders are working within that idea.  The two research questions in this study result from this premise and intend to identify if Algarve institutions use myths and events resources in its tourism communication. The research was therefore guided by the following questions:

> **Q1:** Are myths and legends used in tourism brochures from Algarve institutions?
>
> **Q2:** Is the history of the region used as a resource in tourism brochures from Algarve institutions?

The methodology involved the identification of as many references of myths and legends, in general, and the history of municipalities particularly in brochures from Algarve institutional organizations as possible. The brochures available in www.visitalgarve.pt, the sole web page used by Algarve institutions for tourism communication are web brochures which are not downloadable.

## 3.3) TECHNIQUES AND VARIABLES USED:

To carry out this empirical research we used the online resources that are available to tourists on the official web page of institutional tourism organizations in the Algarve region (http://www.visitalgarve.pt), for 2014. All specialized web brochures from www.visitalgarve.pt were analysed with Wordle and Nvivoaiming to identify the most relevant words in order to build word clouds that could help us to

determine to what extent the official tourism board uses local myths and legends to communicate the tourism destination.

Wordle is a tool already described in literature to study brand image associations (Danes, Hess, Story& York 2010) and used to obtain word clouds from texts in which the more frequently used words are highlighted.  As seen in tourism literature (Hede & Kellet, 2011; Duarte, Bressan, O´Shea & Krajsio, 2013), Nvivo software is used to organise data and is also used in the process of managing the content of online brochures, as well as in illustrating part of the qualitative data (figures 1 to 6….. with descriptive data and word count in word clouds).

In this sense, McNaught (2010) suggests that word clouds can be a useful research tool to aid findings, allowing researchers to quickly visualize some general patterns within text.

Aside from visual impact, word clouds capture the variety of words and phrases used in a less condensed form than tables tend to display (Ramlo, 2011; Harris, 2011; Forsey, 2014).

Specifically, the analysed online brochures are:

- **Algarve regional cooking guide,** a tourist-oriented brochure by Algarve Tourism Board, aiming to disseminate and promoting the traditional culinary art of the Algarve.

  **Guide to the wines of the Algarve,** in which the importance of vineyards in the south of Portugal is linked back to the Arab presence, a period when quality and highly appreciated wines were already produced and exported.

- **Guide to the Algarve´s beaches,** with respect to coastline traits like coves, cliffs, caves, rocky beaches and vast expanses of sand, which can be enjoyed all year around.

- **Guide to the Cultural Heritage of the Algarve** which is presented to tourists as "a chance to discover a rich cultural heritage handed down over many centuries of history".

- **Routes and Tours of the Algarve** focusing on the idea that "the Algarve is the most westerly part of mainland Europe, the last harbouring place before entering the waters of the Atlantic, a region where cultures have mingled since

time immemorial". This means an invitation to discover the secrets of the region.

- **Guide to walking trails in the Algarve** used for promoting walking as a form of tourism and describing a variety of different landscapes in the Algarve. Scrub and Mediterranean forest, oak woods and riverine woodlands in upland areas, karst landscapes and rain fed orchards in the Barrocal, and cliffs, dune systems and lagoons along the coast are some of the typical landscapes described.

- This comprises the total offer of information based in brochures of the Algarve public institutions.

## 4. FINDINGS
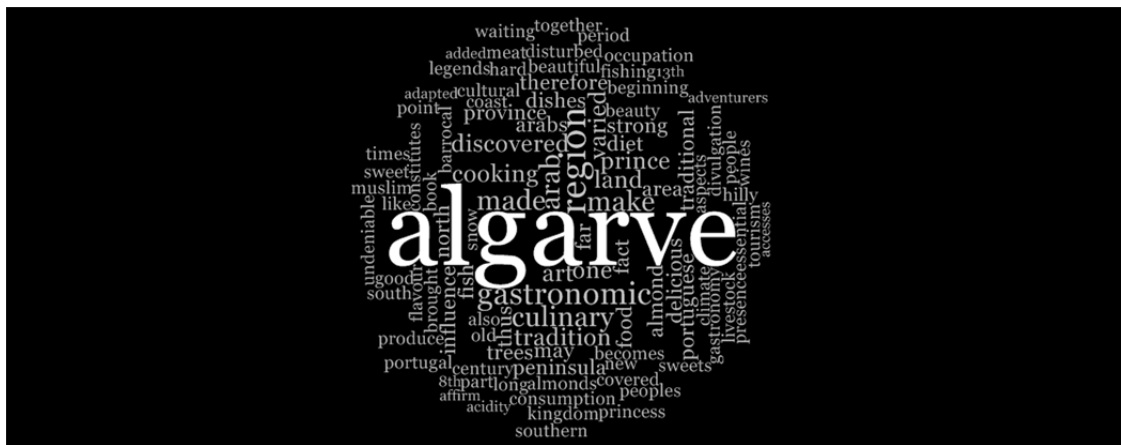


Figure 1 – Word cloud of "Algarve regional cooking guide"
Source: Own elaboration.

To complete the findings a descriptive analysis of the words used in each brochure is done with Nvivo software.

| Word | Length | Count | Word | Length | Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Algarve | 7 | 30 | area | 4 | 3 |
| region | 6 | 8 | delicious | 9 | 3 |
| gastronomic | 11 | 6 | diet | 4 | 3 |
| Arab | 4 | 5 | dishes | 6 | 3 |
| culinary | 8 | 5 | fact | 4 | 3 |
| made | 4 | 5 | far | 3 | 3 |
| make | 4 | 5 | fish | 4 | 3 |
| art | 3 | 4 | food | 4 | 3 |
| cooking | 7 | 4 | influence | 9 | 3 |
| discovered | 10 | 4 | may | 3 | 3 |
| land | 4 | 4 | north | 5 | 3 |
| one | 3 | 4 | peninsula | 9 | 3 |
| prince | 6 | 4 | portuguese | 10 | 3 |
| tradition | 9 | 4 | province | 8 | 3 |
| varied | 6 | 4 | strong | 6 | 3 |
| almond | 6 | 3 | therefore | 9 | 3 |
| Arabs | 5 | 3 | thus | 4 | 3 |
| Traes | 5 | 3 | traditional | 11 | 3 |

Table 1: Word frequency of "Algarve regional cooking guide"

Source: Own elaboration.

There are 36 attributes mentioned in the "Algarve regional cooking guide" more than three times; only the term "Arab" is related to myths or history events and the word count shows it is repeated three times.
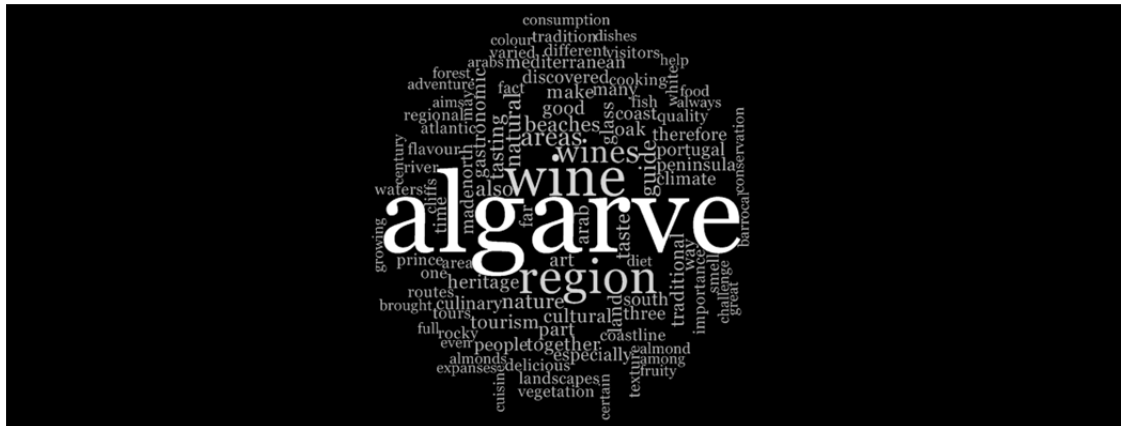
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Figure 2 – Word cloud depicting "Guide to the wines of the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

| Word | Length | Count |
|---|---|---|
| wine | 4 | 28 |
| wines | 5 | 12 |
| taste | 5 | 7 |
| tasting | 7 | 7 |
| glass | 5 | 6 |
| Algarve | 7 | 5 |
| good | 4 | 4 |
| quality | 7 | 4 |
| smell | 5 | 4 |
| texture | 7 | 4 |
| three | 5 | 4 |
| climate | 7 | 3 |
| colour | 6 | 3 |
| growing | 7 | 3 |
| many | 4 | 3 |
| region | 6 | 3 |
| sight | 5 | 3 |
| vines | 5 | 3 |

Table 2: Word frequency of the "Guide to the wines of the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

There are 18 attributes mentioned in the brochure "Wines of the Algarve" more than three times, like "wine", "taste", "glass", "Algarve", "quality", "texture", "colour", "vines" and none of them is related to myths or history events.
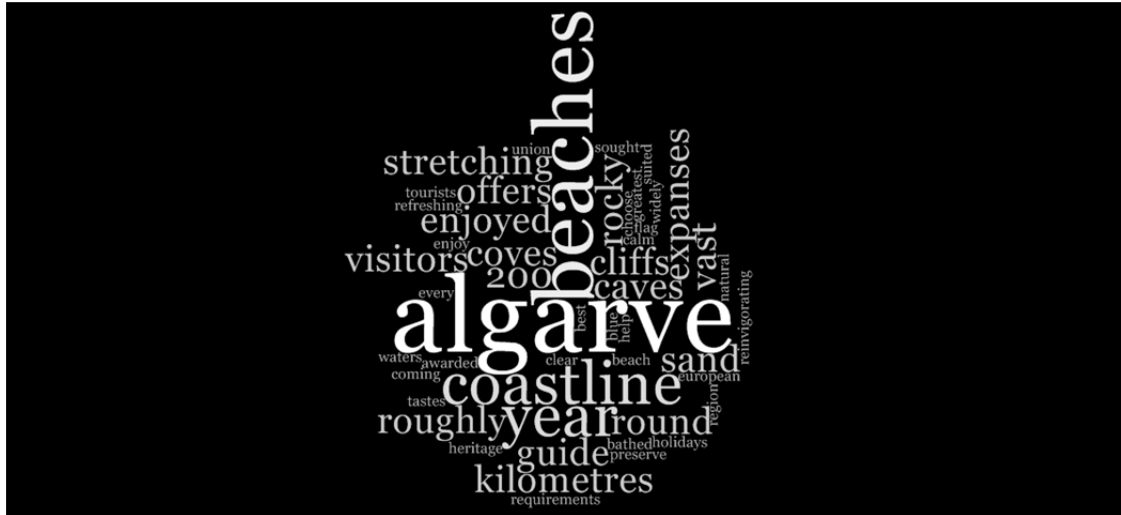


Figure 3 – Word cloud depicting "Guide to the Algarve's beaches"
Source: Own elaboration.

| Word | Length | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Algarve | 7 | 5 |
| beaches | 7 | 4 |
| coastline | 9 | 3 |
| year | 4 | 3 |

Table 3: Word frequency of the "Guide to the Algarve's beaches"
Source: Own elaboration.

In the brochure "Algarve's beaches" there are only four attributes mentioned more than three times: "Algarve", "beaches", "coastline" and "year" and, again, none of them is related to myths or history events.

Figure 4 – Word cloud depicting the "Cultural heritage of the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

| Word | Length | Count |
|------|--------|-------|
| Algarve | 7 | 3 |

Table 4: Word frequency of the brochure "Cultural heritage of the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

As we can see in figure 4, the "Guide to the cultural heritage of the Algarve "highlights five main words: "weather", "accessible", "tourists", "Algarve" and "guide". Concerning the topic of cultural heritage itself, there are a great many words, none of them highlighting the myths or legends of this tourism destination. Despite this fact, only one attribute is mentioned more than three times in this brochure: Algarve.



Figure 5 – Word cloud depicting the "Routes and tours of the Algarve"

Source: own elaboration.

| Word | Length | Count |
|------|--------|-------|
| Algarve | 7 | 11 |
| tours | 5 | 4 |
| adventure | 9 | 3 |
| Atlantic | 8 | 3 |
| hospitality | 11 | 3 |
| nature | 6 | 3 |
| routes | 6 | 3 |
| waters | 6 | 3 |

Table 5: Word frequency of the "Routes and tours of the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 5 depicts a word cloud from the guide "Routes and tours of the Algarve". It shows Algarve as the biggest word and some of the most important ones are attributes like "traditional", "nature", "people", "hospitality", "activity", "sea", "places", "adventure", "beaches", "way", "always", "Atlantic" and "water". Once more, there are no references to any myth or legend of the Algarve. This is a set of attributes that range from functional to psychological characteristic of the region (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).
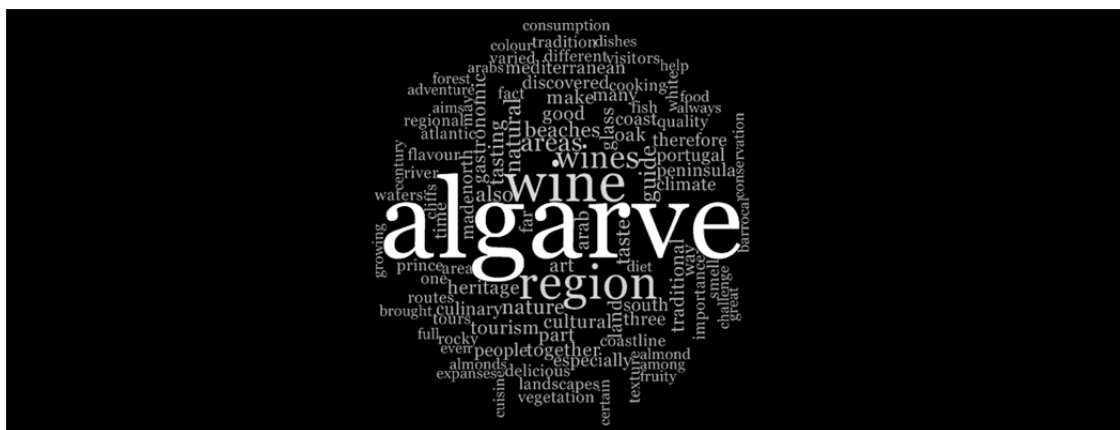


Figure 6 – Word cloud of the "Guide to walking trails in the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

| Word | Length | Count |
|------|--------|-------|
| Algarve | 7 | 9 |
| region | 6 | 9 |
| areas | 5 | 8 |
| natural | 7 | 6 |
| oak | 3 | 6 |
| especially | 10 | 4 |
| landscapes | 10 | 4 |
| nature | 6 | 4 |
| river | 5 | 4 |
| vegetation | 10 | 4 |
| among | 5 | 3 |
| coast | 5 | 3 |
| conservation | 12 | 3 |
| forest | 6 | 3 |
| important | 9 | 3 |
| Mediterranean | 13 | 3 |
| orchards | 8 | 3 |
| protected | 9 | 3 |
| ria | 3 | 3 |
| scrub | 5 | 3 |
| serra | 5 | 3 |
| species | 7 | 3 |
| tourism | 7 | 3 |
| trails | 6 | 3 |

Table 6: Word frequency of the "Guide to walking trails in the Algarve"

Source: Own elaboration.

Again, in the "Guide to walking trails in the Algarve" (Figure6) there are no references related to myths or history events. The attributes mentioned more than three times are: "Algarve", "natural", "landscapes", "river", "vegetation", "coast", "conservation", "protected", "ria", "scrub", etc.

## 5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

The identity attributes of a city should be highlighted as they differentiate it and are cornerstones of the tourist experience that visitors seek to live in an area that is normally restricted. The situation becomes more complex when the space in question is a historic town and the visit is limited to a few hours.

The existence of a narrative based in reality or history, or in fiction stories developed over centuries, can be an invaluable script for the performance of the actors and that can become a memorable experience for visitors.

In this sense, it is argued that, in addition to the historical facts and the authenticity of the place, if sensations and perceptions of visitors are stimulated using legends and fantasies passed from generation to generation, that will help to strengthen the differentiation of a place features. Because they are imaginary constructs, myths must be regarded as very conducive to the tourists' need of evasion, a kind of scripted dream and fantasy foundation that differentiates and positions the Algarve history, and the destination itself, as a unique cultural experience.

Despite the very rapid evolution of online communication, the different Internet based capabilities and events based on myths in the Algarve tourism sector have not been developed.This preliminary research sought to shed light on two overarching themes: Are myths and legends used in tourism communication from Algarve institutions? And is the history of the region used as a resource in tourism brochures from Algarve institutions?

Relating to first question (**Q1**): Are myths and legends used in tourism communication from Algarve institutions?

No myths or legends are referred in communication from Algarve institutions or any such terms are used in institutional brochures.

Relating to second question (**Q2**): Is the history of the region used as a resource in tourism brochures from Algarve institutions?

Concretely, in the Algarve institutional communication based on online brochures there is no reference to the history of the region.

In this context, it is assumed to be crucial to understand what tourists expect from a visit to a historical monument, which encompasses more than just providing a service and offering the possibility of a visit to a space that represents the foundation of a glorious historic past; it matters also offering people the possibility to revive today the fantasies of past times, and to co-create their own experiences in such settings.

This process of deconstruction of monuments and their transformation into privileged settings for living experiences should be developed in line with a marketing perspective and not, as presently continues to happen under a production perspective clearly away from the marketing view.

This is a new approach to the cultural consumption of both tourists and residents, taking into account their expectations, needs and desires, adapting and transforming historic sites into stories, fantasies, myths and reality scenes.

In order to materialize this new version of cities and cultural spaces it matters, first, to know more in detail the potential public and their expectations and then to format and facilitate consumption so that it contributes to the personal enrichment of visitors, providing an experience of vivid memories. The history, myths, beliefs, legends, traditions, customs and cultural practices of the region shall be poured in itineraries and themed tours to use in the construction of a coherent narrative of the place. This way we ensure that the tourists' visit draws greater value that will reverberate in the stories through which they will socialize their experience and simultaneously contribute to the formation of a positive image of the destination.

Overall, Algarve institutions are not adequately using and benefiting from websites and online brochures as tools. While online brochures or a destination website can be an important promotional tool, in this study it became clear that Algarve institutions are not fully benefiting from these media. This finding confirms that Algarve institutions are not using correctly their web-based means of communication and creating a correct atmosphere for tourist experience.

Implications

Given the links between myths and events in tourism experience consumption, and the fact that some tourism communication has not been using these resources in

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online brochures, the findings have several implications for tourism institutions and the tourism industry, as well as for the image of the destination.

For example, there is the fact that Algarve tourism institutions do not seem to realise the potential value of myths and history events in their tourism communication, and that overall, the potential benefits of online brochures do not seem to be fully maximised. This rather passive attitude maybe compromising the tourism of Algarve and other forms of linking or connecting to potential consumers and other "web surfers", including cultural tourists or travel enthusiasts.

The lack of interesting website content - including online brochures about myths and history events which could led to constructive and informative interactions between web surfers and a destination - may limit, or even prevent, tourism optimal exposure of the region and the area where these myths and history events are located.

Moreover, this lacuna may affect tourism communication since it will not enlighten web users about destination's features and products. It is important to bear in mind that nowadays a growing number of people uses websites as a medium to learn more about a tourism destination before making final purchasing decisions (Velikova et al., 2011).

Future research

While several limitations were acknowledged in this study, overall the findings provide a preliminary foundation for future research to investigate the use, by tourism institutions, of different approaches when communicating through online brochures.

Future studies could, for instance, follow the developments occurring in online communication of tourism, in particular the usage of online brochures and their potential to draw on myths and events. These studies could be used to the advantage of tourism regions, stakeholders, and government agencies which could fully maximise any potential benefits of using websites. In pursuing that goal, research could focus on a greater number of online brochures of tourism destinations from different tourism regions or countries.

This information could be very valuable, particularly in monitoring the progress, or lack thereof, of the adoption of the Internet and other forms of technological means

among tourism destination communication. Within this framework, research could also examine the consumer perspective, that is, the visitors' experience, examining their perceptions of destinations' attempts to adopt those technological tools, as well as their perceptions of destinations' degree of success in doing so. Such research could significantly contribute to a better understanding of consumers and their ever-changing ways of gathering information.

Websites and social media usage in the tourism communication would undoubtedly guide or encourage destinations, and their sector, to adapt or "catch up" with their consumers and visitors' technological habits.

Given the increasing number of new destinations and tourism regions competing in the global economy, governments and institutions cannot afford to ignore consumers and visitors continuously changing their ways of purchasing, finding information, and travelling.

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