

The impact of animal welfare violations on the tourist's decision making process - Case study: Marrakech – Morocco

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Tourism represents a major and global economic sector, in 2013 the industry was worth over one trillion US dollars, representing 9% of global GDP, and covered 1 in 11 jobs all over the world. On an international level, the number of tourist arrivals have increased continually from an approximate number of 25 million in 1950 to more than 1087 million in 2013, and 1.8 billion predicted by 2030. Although there are no global reliable and imposed measures regulating the impact the industry, and more specifically, wildlife tourism (tourism attractions based on interactions with non-domesticated animals), on wildlife, taking in consideration that It is, in some countries, the leading foreign exchange source, and the dominant tourist activity and in many cases, wildlife tourist attractions can be a prime tourist travel motivation. This research is to study the tourists' perception of the animal welfare violation and its impact on their behavior and decision making process as well as how it contributes in building toward an ethical framework of the activity and promoting conscious consumption.

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted on 120 foreigners who have visited Marrakech in the last 5 years, and members of the Facebook group dedicated for touristic attraction in the same city. Data were collected by a valid and reliable questionnaire, consisting of four sections divided into two parts: Demographic information and questions about the experience and its different aspects related to the participant decisions and perception, and an open questions experimental interview analyzing the tourists perception before and after watching content on social media showing clearly different animal ethics violations in a touristic destination. Collected data sets were analyzed by Excel software. In total, the majority of the respondents stated that they make personal considerations. These considerations include understanding the perceived quality of the destination offer, the high or low involvement of animal ethics in their experience and the utility value of the shows as part of the general offer. The study showed that most of the participants felt that their satisfaction about the shows was negatively impacted, as they considered witnessing animal cruelty as a negative and unexpected experience, but this impact can definitely not impact their overall satisfaction about the case study city, as a tourism destination, this impact could neither change their opinion about the city nor their decision to visit the city, and therefore could not impact negatively the brand image of such a big destination. The study could also develop a new buyer decision process schema based of Kotler's taking in consideration the influence of such practices on the tourists perception of the destination and their behavior in the different scenarios.

1. Introduction

Tourism represents a major and global economic sector, in 2013 the industry was worth over one trillion US dollars, representing 9% of global GDP, and covered 1 in 11 jobs all over the world . On an international level, the number of tourist arrivals have increased continually from an approximate number of 25 million in 1950 to more than 1087 million in 2013, and 1.8 billion predicted by 2030. Although there are no global reliable and imposed measures regulating the impact the industry, and more specifically, wildlife tourism (tourism attractions based on interactions with non- domesticated animals), on wildlife, taking in consideration that It is, in some countries, the leading foreign exchange source, and the dominant tourist activity and in many cases, wildlife tourist attractions can be a prime tourist travel motivation. In 2006 only, about 2.2 million of Australia's inbound tourists declared that they have visited at least on wild life attraction, which represents 43% of all Australia's international tourists, and in 1988, a study showed that wildlife tourism represented 20%–40% of international tourism worldwide, which means wildlife tourism market represents a large proportion of a huge global market and its size is predicted to increase more in the coming decades.

Wildlife tourism attractions are diverse, but we can divide them into four main categories: watching or interacting with non-domestic animals; watching animals in an artificially-made environment such as zoos, aquariums and parks, hunting and fishing tourism. Wildlife tourist attractions types can be divided into two categories non-consumptive and consumptive, non-consumptive attractions involving bird, whale and dolphin viewing, aquariums and wildlife parks, or consumptive, which includes all animals being killed or removed, or cached to use their body parts such as hunting and fishing.

Wildlife tourism market, can provide opportunities and create jobs for the local population, which impacts positively their livelihood and can also help preserving wildlife and wildlife habitats with the right ethical framework and practical preservation efforts by volunteers and actors, local bottom-up socio-economic initiatives with goal of preservation of wildlife and its component (9), and tourist awareness raising, which may create positive attitudes towards the used animals, preservation of the species, and development of animal welfare However, the improperly managed wildlife tourism practices worldwide can have an important negative impact on both the preservation and welfare of animals, whether in the wild or captivity. These impacts consist of unmanaged captivity, injuries, disease and death, short- and long-term animal negative changes in term of behavior, stress and negative physiological responses, malnutrition signs and spices loss.

All wildlife tourism attractions through their attitude toward animal welfare is relted to visitor satisfaction and and decision making. Tourists' individual perspectives and awareness will define what they are willing to accept but animal ethics respect or violation may have impacts that may be difficult to detect but may definitely be interacting with the different steps of the tourist decision making process. Based on the present situation—and expected future—global wildlife tourism is increasing worldwide, there is a pressing and urgent need to control the diversity of the animal-based attractions and their impacts, positive, neutral or negative on the customers, on the destination brand image through understanding tourists' perceptions of wildlife tourism attraction in relation to an objective assessment of the impacts, to reach as result the highlight areas in which tourist awareness raising may be beneficial, and on what basis an ethical framework may be build.

Several recent studies have studied and reviewed the different impacts of individual wildlife tourism attraction types made by the tourists on the wildlife or on the local population, but no attempt has been made to describe impact of witnessing animal ethics violations on tourists, either directly or through the different channels as well as its impact on the brand image of the destination. Similarly, while studies have examined levels of visitor satisfaction and the number of interactions with wildlife tourism attractions, tourist feedback has not been considered in relation with the decision making process and the brand awareness.

We here present a preliminary study of non-consumptive wildlife tourism attractions that currently exist worldwide, the perceptions and expectations of the visitors, the reaction of tourist to what they witness and the impact of it on the different steps of their decision making process, depending, on their backgrounds, ideologies and point of views toward the practices.

2. Animal Welfare discussion – Literature review

Since the first sapiens ever lived on earth, we humans use animals. we eat them, play with them and wear their skins, but we most importantly use them as subject of medicals and innovative experiments in the Medical field; and not only one species, but we use a variety of animals – rabbits, dogs, pigs, monkeys, but most of the cases that are raising the debate, we use mice and rats in advancing medical research.

Such research has saved so far millions of other animals and humans thanks to scientific and medical discoveries of new drugs or therapy, or the new vaccine safety testing before release. However, animals serving this way ends up with an overwhelming proportion of dead animals, and can be in most of the cases considered inhuman and unjustified, but the good that it has done can not be undertaken.

The medical field is the one using the most animals for human's interests, yet it is not the only one, animals are used in agriculture, Fashion, film industry... But most importantly in the Tourism Industry, that's why, whether animals do have rights may be a provocative question and raises the question whether it is of practical importance? or it is a set of quarrels so academic, so philosophical that it does not really concern most ordinary folks, after all great industries and tens of thousands of jobs that depend on animal use, hundreds of millions of humans that rely on animals in their daily food set. Animal use is so pervasive, so deep and complete and dispatched all over the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

About this morality debate, and the continuity of the current animals' use, a crusade was opened by an Australian professor of philosophy, Peter Singer, who was deeply troubled by the spreading of animals welfare violations, especially animals raised for slaughter.

His 1975 article, Animal Liberation, went viral with a strong widespread agitation to cover other animal uses as well., Singer believes that humans are obliged to stop experiments using animals for moral reasons, as well as stopping all productions using animals for food because of the horrendous cruelties and violations on helpless and innocent creatures.

The benefits we obtain from animal use, he contends are rightly weighed, but they cannot justify the inhumanity our use of them impose on the other hand, the animal Liberation movement has never made claims about the rights of animals.

Singer is a utilitarian in philosophical method, in an explicit way, what count for him the most are consequences. The campaign that derives its name from his experimentation in the book does more harm than good. The pain caused by experimental experimentation using them on animals is so severe, the liberationists argue, that it outweighs any positive results that these experiments can create.

3. Animal Welfare discussion - Gray L Francione & Robert Garner

In his book *The Animal Rights Debate*, Gray Discussed in the first chapter some very important point in the Animal Exploitation Debate, this discussion was divided to three sections, in the first section Gray rejected the fundamental premise of the animal welfare approach- that animal life has lesser moral value than human life and that, therefore, as long as animals are treated “humanely”, using them for human purposes can be morally justifiable. Gray argues that, for the purpose of being used as human resources, all sentient nonhumans have the same moral value as humans that we have a moral obligation to stop animal use regardless how “humane” our treatment of animals may be.

In the second section, Gray responds to the claim that the regulation of animal use provides significant protection for animal interests, he argues that because animals are human’s property property, the regulation of animal rights provides very limited protection for animals and does not effectively minimize animal suffering in addition, there is certainly no scientific evidence that, as some suggest, welfare regulation would either lead to a reduction or the cessation of the use of animals. However, the animal rights approach makes people feel more comfortable about animal exploitation; actually, it is an explicit purpose of many major organizations for animal advocacy. And finally in the third section, Gray responds to claims made by welfarists that the animal rights position is unrealistic because it rejects the notion of incremental change to reduce animal exploitation and does not provide any practical guidance for what we should do now to help animals. Gray argues that the animal rights position does offer a plan for practical incremental change that has ethical veganism, or the rejection on moral grounds of the consumption of animals as food, clothes, entertainment and other uses, as its foundation. The elimination of animal cruelty inevitably involves a philosophical change away from the property rights of animals and to the position that animals are moral individuals. Right to life, though "humane," is compatible with the property status of animals and with all animal use. Ethical veganism is itself a celebration of animals' moral personhood.

When a consumer is required to make an individual decision by choosing one product between other possibilities and alternatives, it is called consumer decision making according to Sproles & Kendall, 1986, as well as it is considered as one of the most studies aspects of consumer oriented research and lately it has become an attractive field of study for consumer science researchers thanks to the important and noticeable topics it can offer, as a result, Consumer decision making was defined as finding solutions and solving consumer’s problems, which is referred to as *“a discrepancy between a desired state and an Ideal state which is sufficient to arouse and activate a decision process”* (JOBANPUTRA, 2009, P3).

The following Figure 1 diagram highlights the five steps of the consumer's decision- making process. The diagram outlines the first step as “the problem recognition” which simply means identifying the need or the problem, which can be triggered due to an external or internal event. Nevertheless, it is still not very clear how much need is triggered from the stable state until the point on which the

consumer might take actions, nor what defines the type of action or what influences it. “*problem recognition occurs when a perceived discrepancy developed between an actual and a desired state of being*”. MOWEN & MINOR (2000).



Figure 1: Buyer Decision Process by Kotler et al.2005, P21)

4. The General Model of Traveler Destination Choice

In a classic Tourism customer decision making process, the main decisions made are whether to travel, the destination, activities, the travel season and the duration and budget of the stay.

Destinations marketers are generally interested in understanding this process better and have a good idea on how do tourists make these decisions, however the most important decision is always the destination choice, as the tourists in most of cases make the decision about the destination to visit, and then having made that decision, they may make the rest of choices (experiences, stay, budget...)

In this matter, the mental image a tourist has about a particular area, or the destination itself has an important role in the destination choice process, which takes in account the interests, the beliefs, the attitudes of the customer and whatever comes due to the influence of the common beliefs and the public image of this destination.

According to DAN (1981), destination attributes are highly important for every destination to be successful and performant and attract the maximum of tourists, as in order to choose a destination, tourists base on their needs and desires, then get influenced by the destination ‘attributes before making their decision about where to go on the next vacation.

WOODSIDE AND LYSONSKI DEVELOPED in 1989 introduced a general schema model of what the destination decision process looks like, which does consider perception and preferences as a central role.

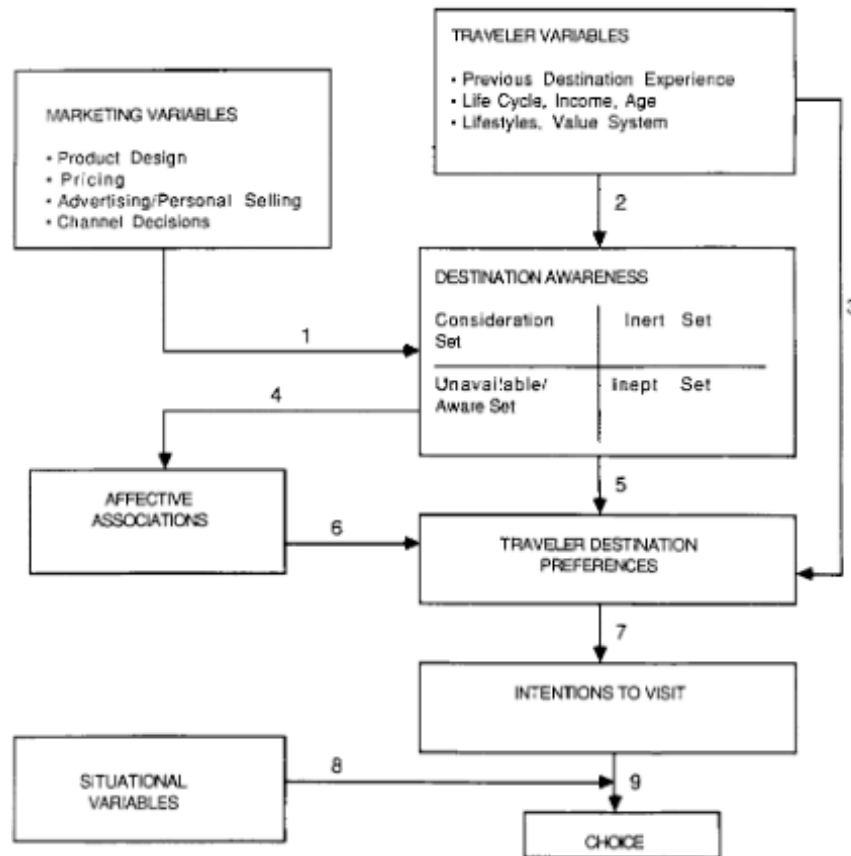


Figure 2. General Model of Destination Choice, WOODSIDE AND LYSONSKI'S, 2015, P13)

Figure 2 represents the WOODSIDE AND LYSONSKI'S General Model of Destination Choice and travel leisure awareness, it shows eight variables and 9 links including exogenous variables, traveler characteristics and marketing variables, which influences the destination awareness of travelers. The model also divides the destination into 4 categories: consideration set, inert set, unavailable set and inept set, which are 4 different mental categories of destination perception of a traveler. The model shows also what it is named affective associations, in other words, the specific positive or negative feelings toward the destinations, for example: beach, sun and music can be linked to Colombia while the same travelers can link pageantry and theatre with London.

Each traveler assigns a mental category a to a destination, which influences the linking of positive or negative associations with that destination. Which is called the affective associations, and we refer by positive to destinations a traveler would consider visiting and negative for destinations the traveler would not or has decided definitely not to visit (a destination in the consumer's inept set).

Learning to make associations between specific affective concepts such as "too expensive, not safe, adventurous..." and a specific destination defines how the destination image is positioned in the traveler's mind. Most travelers require evaluation judgments in order to make a category judgment which means positioning a destination may occur simultaneously with how it is associated.

In figure 2, however, categorization appears in the destination awareness set as one direction influence on affective associations as destination recognition, categorization and memory recall are often important in order to activate positive, negative or neutral affective associations.

A nationwide research study conducted by the Canadian federal government on Americans (TAYLOR 1986) concluded that the majority of Americans had neutral or weakly positive affection associations about Canada as a travel destination, some of them even reported that they did not see Canada as a vacation destination.

The major conclusion of this study defined Canada as not an actively considered destination by most Americans as a vacation destination which places Canada for Americans in the inert set.

The traveler decision-making style and manner are two important processes that researchers try to understand more, and hoped to have a significant correspondence between, pre-visit knowledge, experience and product image.

In order to identify tourists' attitudes and opinions on animals taking part in tourist attractions, a quantitative and qualitative exploratory study was conducted with a focus group of tourists who visited Marrakech. The combination of the two methods aims to test positioning of the participants' ethical perceptions of animal-based tourist attractions on the three hierarchically ordered layers: general justifications, a belief in the driving forces leading to an ethical operation, and the specific conditions required for the ethical operation of animal-based tourist attractions.

During the data collection process, some profiling distinct sections of data collection instruments and instrumentation were taken in consideration, which covers the primary and the secondary data collection instruments and instrumentation. The chapter then detailed the methods and techniques for data processing used to get the results. Following these parts of the chapter were short examples and explanation of ethical questions, reliability and validity problems.

5. Research objectives and methodology

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The interview was designed as an opinion analysis interview, in which we don't define the way the participant should answer, such as scales, multiple choice question... but the questions are open and the time frame for each answer is adequate for long answers, 10min each, enough for the participant to freely express his/her point of view, the interview contains 3 categories of questions, the first category is regarding the participant's demographics, brief examination of the destination awareness, experience with wildlife attractions and religious and philosophical background, the second category, is asked after watching the content about the animal ethics violation in the city, and contains four open questions directly related to the opinion of the participant about the thesis hypotheses.

The variables are put to the test using hypothesis, In the present study, we are testing two dependent variables "decision making" and "overall satisfaction" using 4 hypotheses:

1- Trip planning type: We will test if the decision of whether to attend the shows or not is related to the trip way of planning, in other words, we want to test whether marketing and sales techniques of a planned trip by travel agencies may push the travelers to buy or take part of included animal-based show more. On the other hand, we will test if there is a difference between the overall satisfaction or animal-based satisfaction of a traveler who fully or partially booked his trip and a traveler who bought a fully planned trip with animal-based activities included.

2- Interaction with animals in a tourist attraction: Our hypothesis here is that tourists who had an interaction with animals or attended an animal-based show for the first time and rated it below the average, might have a change on their decision on whether they will attend them again in the future. On the other hand, we will put to the test the difference between the tourists' satisfaction about the destination offer of those who had an interaction with animals or attended any of the animal-based activities or shows, and those who had not.

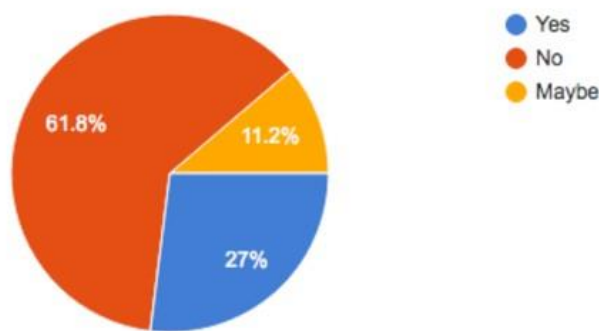
3- Previous view about animal welfare: We will test the hypothesis which suggests that the the tourists may have a too bright vision about the animal welfare in animal- based activities and are ignorant of the dark side of it, we will collect information about that and also build knowledge about how witnessing violations onsite may affect the satisfaction, destination image and future decision of the travelers.

6. Findings

A total of 120 responses were submitted, 16 questionnaires were disqualified, for different reasons, either general information was not matching the target, locals who are members of the group... Also the total number of 104 responses were accepted and taken into analyzing consideration of this thesis. This sample needed to be more analyzed, therefore the 3rd section of questions conducted a brief overview on some relevant demographic information of the respondents, which will help deduct conclusions later on, related to each tourist's background, believes or way of thinking. The 3rd questions section divided the participants according to age range, region, religion and political view, on the other hand it ignored the gender, social category and other demographic factors as irrelevant.

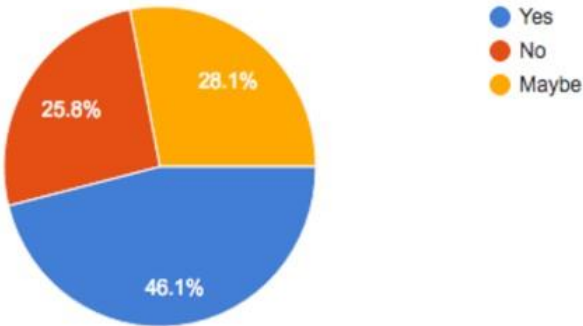
The pie chart shows that 31.5% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement which confirms that witnessing animal welfare violations during the shows impacted negatively their overall satisfaction in Marrakech, as well as 32.6% who agreed also with the same statement but with lower degree, which gives us a group of 64.1% of the total participants, who are agreeing with the statement, while only 13.5% of the participant denied the statement, and affirming that witnessing animal welfare violations during the shows did not impact negatively their overall satisfaction in Marrakech. And the rest 22.5% stayed neutral in this regard.

The probability of changing the travel due to information about animal ethics violations

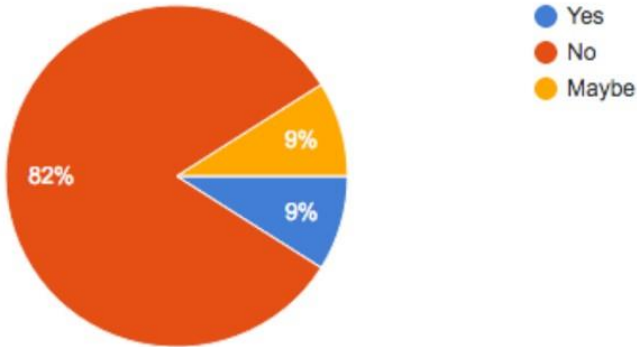


The pie chart shows that 61.8% of the participants have never changed their decision, whether to go to a tourist destination based on information about animal ethics violations in a that destination, as well as 11.2% shoed doubts and did not give an exact answer to the previous question, on the other hand, 27% of the participants have changed their travel decision based on information related to animal ethics violations in that city or country. In the same context, and regarding our case study city, and based on the pie chart of Q32, 46.1% of the participants had no problem returning to Marrakech in other occasion regardless the existence or absence of animal ethics violation in the city, which 25.8% decided not to come back to the city as tourists because of what they witnessed of animal ethics violation, and 28.1% of the participants who were not sure about their future decision.

The probability of returning to Marrakech after witnessing animal ethics violations

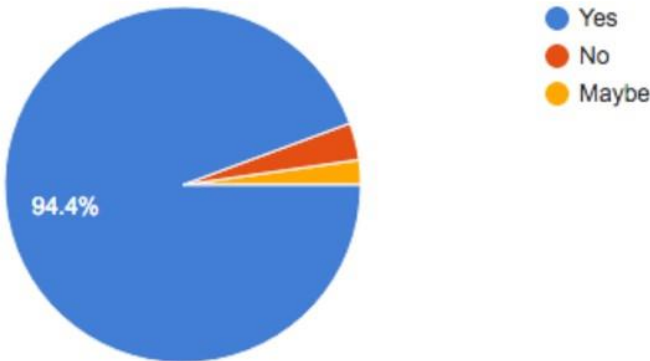


The probability of attending animal-based shows again, if returned to Marrakech



On an other level, we asked the participant about an other aspect of their decision making, which is: in case they returned to Marrakech, would they attend the animal based shows again of not to explore

The participants believe about whether the animal welfare should be taken in consideration in tourism attractions



the deeply the impact of witnessing the animal ethics violations in the city and to what level it can reach. The graph shows that 82% of the participants will not attend the animal-based shows in Marrakech again, as well as 9% are not sure if they will, and only 9% of the participants would attend again the animal-based shows if they came bac again to Marrakech.

The believe and the opinion of the customer is built on several aspects, that's why it is an important pillar in the decision making process, and in the previous question we have been trying to build knowledge about the different points related to animal ethics and tourists, which contribute in creating the tourists' opinion in this matter, and drive them to create an image or destination awareness in their mind and then make a a buying decision about the decision and its products and services. Yet, we also asked the tourists about their opinion with a direct question to help us compare and drop conclusion out of the study, and based on the answers, 94.4% of the participants thought that animal welfare should be taken into consideration for the animals used in the shows, regardless their decision differences while only 3.4% of the respondent thought that animal welfare does not matter when It comes to tourism attractions. On the other hand, one of the main pillars of this study is to investigate the possibility of existence of any Social, philosophical or Religious bases which build the perspective of the tourist about the importance of animal ethics in tourism industry, and creates the difference in opinions between them, and therefore impact their satisfaction as well as brand awareness of the destinatio.

7. Interview findings

The interview was conducted with the 5 participants in the same day, on the 30th November 2020, 3 interviews were voice recorded and two participants insisted on notes only. All the participants confirmed that Marrakech is their first destination to visit in the next travel opportunity they will get, on the other hand, and regarding the second question, 4 out of 5 participant described Marrakech based on the information sources like social media, word of mouth, ads... as an historical city, reference of culture, architecture and traditional life, as well as a destination of nature and landscapes, and the other participant described it as a modern city, and none of the participants described the city as a wildlife tourism destination. Regarding the 3rd question, 2 participants affirmed that they will consider attending animal shows attractions while visiting Marrakech, one of them did not know about them, and affirmed that she just got informed during the interview introduction, and yes she will consider them as a very possible plan, on the other hand, 3 participants, considered animal shows as not attractive idea and affirmed that they will not consider them as part of their travel plan.

All the participants think that animal ethics in wildlife tourism are important, and they justified their answer by considering animal as beings and if we are going to use them for such shows, we should at least consider their welfare, and in the same context, 3 participants have heard about animal cruelty in many destinations around the world, but none of them was informed about it in Marrakech, which makes out sample a perfect sample for measuring any impact or changes on their decision making due to watching, reading or hearing about animal ethics violations in Marrakech.

After watching the pictures and the article, 3 participants rated the violation as 5 out of 5, one participant rated 4/5 and the last participant metaphorically, rated 10/5 to describe her disappointment in what she witnessed, in this regard, the participant described what they seen as cruel, and definitely

a big issue to be solved in the close future, as well as they affirmed that the pictures had a negative impact on their mood. Yet in the next question, all the participants confirmed that they condemn the act of cruelty and maltreatment of animals, but this does not change their opinion about the city, and they still have the same desire to visit Marrakech, we should also mention that, two participants jumped to voluntarily answer to the last question, saying that once in Marrakech they will not attend any animal shows, as the other participant did later when asked about it in the 4th question. The last question investigated the background of the participants for having such an opinion about animal ethics, and 3 participants confirmed that they have no religious or philosophical background for their opinion and they based entirely on their personal opinion, while the 4th participant declared that he is religious and his opinion is related to what his religion says, on the other hand, one participant affirmed that he does not have any religious or philosophical backgrounds, but during his way of expressing the said: “ *It’s totally my personal opinion, I mean... animals have souls too..* ” and I found that his answer is compatible with the views we described in the literature review.

8. Data analysis

8.1. Examining the Relationship between Travelers’ Decision-Making Styles and witnessing animal ethics violations.

While studying customer satisfaction in general and tourists’ satisfaction in particular, it is important to take in consideration the brand or the destination awareness created based on before visit knowledge which can be found on the internet, through word of mouth, books or magazines etc... Which creates expectations about the different aspects of the destination’s offer, moreover, when tourists are asked to evaluate the offer after the visit they may rely on their expectations to make a comparison for the evaluation. In our case, the findings showed that our participants draw their pre-visit destination awareness from friends and relatives, word of mouths, in other words, and then after calculating the average destination rating before the visit, it was 4.13, then calculating the average satisfaction rate after the visit it was 3.96, which means a decrease of 0.17, which illustrates a slight disappointment of tourists in the offer of the destination if we consider both their satisfaction and expectations.

In the same context, more specific findings were introduced, figure 19, such as the average satisfaction rate regarding the cultural exhibitions in the Jemaa El Fna Square and Medina only which was 3.76 which is above the neutral rate or the median 3 and also the trending rate was 5/5 which means the satisfaction about the cultural exhibitions was more or less positive unlike the overall satisfaction about Marrakech. This result should be backed up with more specifications about the role of the attending animal-based activities, as the satisfaction about the cultural shows cannot be applied on the animal-based shows, and the cultural shows in the square are very diverse and the satisfaction about them can vary from one to another which impacts positively or negatively the satisfaction of tourists about the whole cultural shows experience, therefore, figure 20, showed that the majority of tourists who rated 3 or lower did not attend the animal-based shows, which means the shows had not impacted neither positively nor negatively the satisfaction of tourists about the cultural shows, as well as, figure 21, shows that almost half of participants who rated 4 or more attended the shows and they were satisfied, either because they have not witnessed any animal ethics violations or they did but this did not matter

to the point of impacting their satisfaction, and the other half were satisfied of the cultural shows but did not

attend the animal-based shows, which makes their satisfaction in relation with animal ethics violations non conclusive. On the other hand, the number of participants who rated more than 4 is larger than the number of participants who rated lower than 3, which refers to more satisfied participants about the cultural shows. Based on all the presented facts and findings, we can say that the participants were satisfied about the cultural shows, and the remarks about the role of the animal-based shows in the participants' satisfaction was not conclusive whether it has a considerable impact or not and whether this impact is positive or negative.

The figure 22 showed that the majority of the participants agreed in different levels with the statement affirming that witnessing animal ethics violations during the animal-based shows impacted negatively their whole experience with cultural shows, which explain the illogical results presented earlier and inconclusive remarks drew from the previous findings, and shows that even if some participants were not satisfied about the animal-based shows they were satisfied about the rest of the shows which compensated their negative opinion and drove them to rate 4 or more. We can conclude than witnessing animal ethics violations in Marrakech does definitely have a negative impact on the overall satisfaction about the cultural shows satisfaction, which can in some cases drive the tourist to give a negative rate impression about the shows, but this impact can definitely not impact the tourists' overall satisfaction about Marrakech as a destination.

In term of decision making, and considering all the fact mentioned above and the findings of the figures 23, 24, that shows that the majority of the participants have never changed their decision about a destination including their decision about visiting Marrakech, due to information about animal ethics violations, which means regardless their opinion toward the importance of animal ethics, this does not impact their decision making to the point of cancelation or changing of buying decision, as well as the majority of participants would come back to Marrakech in a future occasion regardless if they witnessed animal violations or not, and whether, in case of witnessing, it impacted their satisfaction or not. Based on that we can conclude that the impact of witnessing animal violations in Marrakech does not raise to the level of impacting the decision making process of a traveler neither as a first time visitor nor as returning visitor, yet we should definitely mention an important remark about the rest minority, since the figure 25 shows that more than 80% of the participants who decided not to return to Marrakech agreed with the statement affirming that their

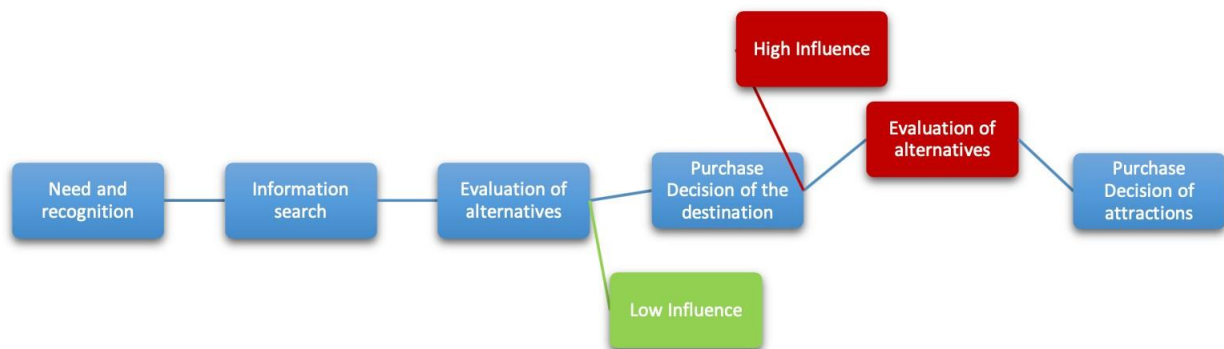
experience was negatively impacted by witnessing animal ethics violations, which may or may not be an important reason of their decision, we cannot conclude based on such fact that this negative impact have influence on the decision making process of all tourists, but in the upcoming year and with more movements of animal ethics preservation as mentioned in the literature review, the impact might raise to interact with some steps of the decision making process and the judgment about the same hypothesis may change.

On another level, the figure 26, shows that the vast majority of the participants would not attend the animal-based shows again if they have ever been back to Marrakech, and taking in consideration that the shows are freely accessed, in open space, in a main square in the most touristic spot in the city which makes them almost an avoidable and require absolutely no effort to attend them, this can only

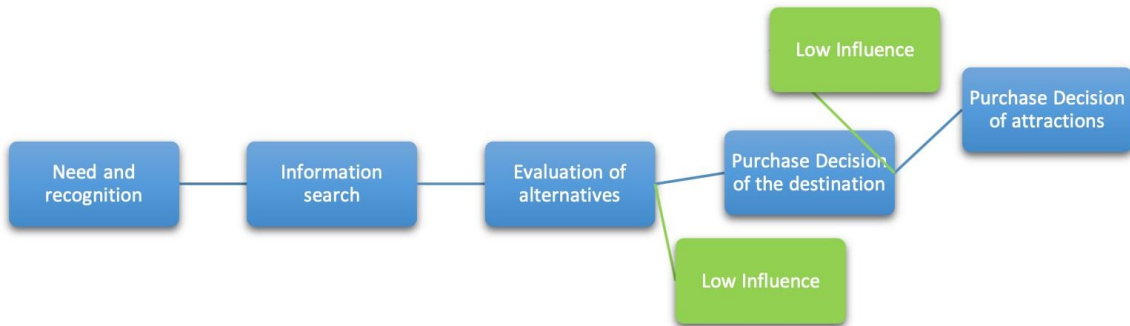
mean that the negative impression of their first experience with animal-based shows, created the idea or the decision of not attending them again and shifted the product from consideration set to the int-set category for the majority of the participant, which means the negative impact of witnessing animal ethics violations in Marrakech could impact the decision making of the travelers about attending the shows.

Our hypothesis 2 suggested that tourists who had an interaction with animals or attended an animal-based show for the first time and rated it below the average, might have a change on their decision on whether they will attend them again in the future, considering all the remarks and conclusions above, we can conclude that the first part of the hypothesis suggesting that witnessing animal ethics violation in Marrakech will impact the decision making process of the travelers negatively and cause a change for the visitors visiting the first time or returning is FALSE, while on the other hand the second part which suggest that this negative impact can reach the decision making process about attending the shows and cause a shift in consideration categories, and by that a change in the tourists' decision is TRUE.

The influence of witnessing animal ethics violations on the decision making process of the returning tourists



The influence of witnessing animal ethics violations on the decision making process of the tourists



Witnessing animal ethics violations either directly or through the different sources such as Social media, word of mouth... does not have a strong impact on the decision making of the tourists visiting the first time, they do take it in consideration, and do not support it, as well as they consider animal welfare as an important aspect in such activities, yet, it is impacting their buy decision about the destination and the attractions on site. On the other hand, witnessing animal ethics violations directly presented a strong impact on the tourists planning to return to the city in the future, this impact did not show in the level of the buying decision of the destination but made the tourists be more selective on the level of buying the attractions on site, which create a new step of “searching for alternatives” in the decision making process.

8.2. Examining the Relationship between Travelers’ Decision-Making Styles and Trip Planning

Trip planning is generally considered as an essential step since it reduces uncertainty and risk, as well as it can increase tourists’ satisfaction about the destination by adding excitement, expectations, foreseeable enjoyment, and anticipation. Professional Trip planning can hide flaws of the destination from the sight of tourists as well as it can promote and sell the destination in a totally different and brighter image from what it actually is. In this context our second hypothesis suggested that satisfaction of tourists who visited that city and experienced animal based activities with a travel agency may be different positively or negatively from the tourists who planned their own trips. We compared the two groups on 3 phases and the results showed that in the first phase, the average satisfaction of the group sample who bought their packages was **4.06** which definitely refers to highly satisfied tourists, while the average satisfaction of the group sample who fully planned their trip is 2.78 which refers to non satisfied tourists about the animal based shows, which leads us to say that when it comes to satisfaction, and for reasons that cannot be determined conclusively in this research, the tourists visiting Marrakech with travel agency are more satisfied with the animal-based shows than tourists visiting alone, and based on our literature review, we can assume that this difference can be related to the attitudes of the animal masters toward tourists with a guide and tourists visiting alone, or due to the extra freedom of tourists visiting alone to observe and have more chance to detect animal ethics violations, or other reasons related to the tourists’ persona. In the second phase figure 30, we examined the degree of observation of the two categories of the respect of animal ethics during the shows, and the results showed that tourists who bought packages from travel

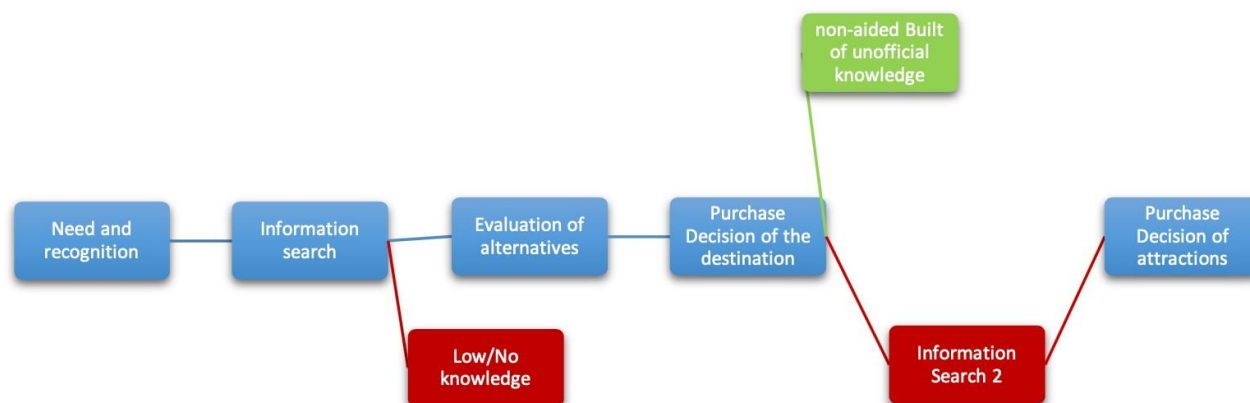
agencies answered “YES” when asked about observing the respect of animal ethics during the shows, but at the same time more people from the same group answered “NO” to the same question, while a large number of the tourists who fully planned their trips when for sometimes as an answer, which indicates that the style of trip planning does not represent an influencing factor defining whether the tourists tend to observe the animal ethics violations or not. In the third and last phase we asked the participants to evaluate the different levels of animals welfare of the animals used in the shows, and the results showed that both the two group were not satisfied about the animals welfare and conditions, even if the group of travelers who bought packages rated slightly higher than the other group, which indicates that regardless the type of trip planning, the tourists still can observe the animal conditions if they were asked to.

We conclude from the 3 phases that the trip planning style does not define the degree of freedom of tourists visiting Marrakech to observe any animal ethics violations during the shows, as well as it does not impact the will of tourists to observe or just focus on the show and ignore anything else, on the other hand, the travelers with travel agencies are more likely to be satisfied about the shows as whole for reasons related to the differences between the experience each group gets, that were not examined in this thesis work and by that they cannot be defined. Based on that and all the facts mentioned above we can conclude that there is a difference in the two groups' satisfaction which makes the hypothesis suggesting that the trip planning style can impact the satisfaction of the tourists about the animal-based shows is TRUE.

8.3. Examining the Relationship between Travelers' Decision-Making Styles and Trip Planning

The pre-visit knowledge about ethics, regulations, laws violations or any kind or illegal or unethical practices related to a tourist attraction, that tourists come with is very important to study, because more knowledge they have about the practice, the most likely they will tend to focus on it, observe and witness it by themselves. In our case, figures 32, 33, the majority of the participants have previous experiences with regulated animal-based activities such as zoos and aquariums, in which the high satisfaction probability is high, as the violations are hard to spot and the animal welfare are often taken in consideration, which makes our participants create their expectations by projecting their previous positive experience on the one in Marrakech and don't feel the probability of any animal ethics violations, moreover the respondents did not come with previous information about animal ethics violations in Marrakech, figure 35. Based on all that we can conclude that the majority of tourists coming to Marrakech, come without previous knowledge about animal ethics violations happening in the city, nor with suspensions and desire to observe and confirm, yet based findings (Phase 3), the majority of respondents did observe different factors related to animal ethics violations, including treatment, hygiene, psychological state of the animals... and could evaluate it in other questions of the same questionnaire. For all the mentioned analysis, we can conclude that the majority of tourists coming to Marrakech come indeed without previous knowledge about any violations related to animal ethics in the

The impact of the previous view about animal welfare on the returning tourists



city, as well as they did not consider animal-based shows as a main activity to do once in Marrakech, figure 34, but instead, they either learned about it from friend or relatives or discovered it on site, figure 35, which means they are ignorant or low informed about the dark side of wildlife tourism in Marrakech, yet they still observe and collect information about how much ethics are respected in these shows and their satisfaction get impacted negatively in case of witnessing violation as we concluded previously, our conclusion makes the third hypothesis which suggests that the the tourists may have a too bright vision about the animal welfare in animal- based activities and they are ignorant of the dark side of it, is partially TRUE. And based on that, we can forecast some changes on the decision making process, with a new step added after the purchase of the destination, as the tourists gather knowledge before attractions purchase, which was not very important until we showed a correlation between the negative impact and the purchase of animal-based attraction.

8.4. Examining the impact of Religious/philosophical backgrounds on tourists' decision making process.

Using animals is a vast expression when examining the perspective of tourists, considering that tourism industry is one of the industries that causes the biggest people movement around the globe carrying their cultural, social, philosophical and religious backgrounds with them wherever they chose as a travel destination, which often cause

clash of cultures, habits, opinions... To be more specific, we should consider that the opinions depend on each practice and how is it related to the tourist's original environment with all the loads of backgrounds, as found in the literature review, tourists are not always objective and tolerant in their opinions about the practices in the destination, for example, Cattles are considered sacred in many religions such as Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others, it is a big ideological challenge to convince a tourist with one of the mentioned religions to have a positive opinion about a tourist show male-exploiting a cattle.

The figures 36, 37 and 38 shows that tourists visiting Marrakech believe that Ethical treatment of animals is an important factor when visiting a wild animal attraction, as well as they agree with statement affirming that they would, indeed, avoid an animal attraction because of media reports of unethical treatment of the animals and they even confirmed that they more likely to book a trip with a tour operator

who had an animal welfare policy, which means that they believe that animal ethics in tourism industry matters... to confirm that, the figure 39 is related to a confirmation question about the same fact, and indeed, the vast majority of the participant gave a positive answer... with that in consideration, the figure 40 shows that the the majority of the participant do not have religious backgrounds or reasons for their opinion about animal ethics, and from that we can conclude that religious background do not create or highly influence the tourist opinion regarding animal ethics in tourist entertainment.

On the other hand the figure 41 shows that the majority of tourists who felt offended by witnessing animal ethics violations in Marrakech, and their overall satisfaction about the city was negatively impacted, do not have any religious backgrounds, as well as, the figure 42 shows that the majority of tourists who have changed their travel destination before due to information about animal ethics violations are those who have no religious background, which leads us to conclude that the religious background has no impact on the satisfaction of tourists in Marrakech or with their decisions. Yet the figure 43 shows that the majority of tourists affirmed that they have philosophical backgrounds for their opinion, which clearly confirms that philosophical views can influence a tourist's opinion which leads to an impact on their satisfaction, which may cause a change of their decision. For the above mentioned facts, we conclude that the hypothesis suggesting that religious background has an impact on the tourist's decision making process is **WRONG**, on the other hand the other half of the hypothesis suggesting that philosophical views can have an influence in the decision making process in **TRUE**.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, the tourists' perception and buying behavior in Marrakech can be addressed based on a number of persona factors. These include the factors like age, gender, and the intentions of purchasing the destination.

Decision-Making in tourism is among the main drivers linking visitors to local governments and tour operators in the sector. Most models have been developed and variables considered. It would examine current models and make parallels to post- modern hypotheses. The way visitors book their holidays has changed and it is important to consider customer behavior in order to benefit from this. The value of the Internet and social media, which are involved in this thesis, should also be carefully considered and studied in almost every step in 21st century decision-making.

The value of travel agents and hard-copy brochures in promoting, maintaining and managing the desired destination image will quickly become outdated, and crucial considerations that are new and updated will have to be implemented. The goal is to emphasize these crucial factors and provide an effective approach to understanding tourist destination decision-making and as a result, to present a new decision-making paradigm through social media and the Internet.

According to the survey majority of the respondents stated that they make personal considerations. These considerations include understanding the perceived quality of the destination offer, the high or low involvement of animal ethics in their experience and the utility value of the shows as part of the general offer. Majority of the respondents in this survey di believe that animal ethics represent an important aspect in the shows. This can be explained as normal as they consider animals as beings, which have feeling and can be heart be hurt in case of cruel treatment. The study showed that most of the participants felt that their satisfaction about the shows was negatively impacted, as they considered

witnessing animal cruelty as a negative and unexpected experience. Witnessing animal ethics violations in Marrakech did definitely have a negative impact on the overall satisfaction about the cultural shows satisfaction, which can in some cases drive the tourist to give a negative rate impression about the shows, but this impact can definitely not impact the tourists' overall satisfaction about Marrakech as a destination. this impact could not change their opinion about the city or their decision to visit the city, nor negatively impact the brand image of such a big destination, as we could also feel that the participants considered the amount of violations, and the number of media content about it is not enough to face the marketing brand and content about the city.

On the other hand, the rating of cruelty was definitely negative for both the questionnaire and interview participants, yet, we noticed that the participants who have not visited the city considered the shows as horribly cruel, as they only based on the articles, pictures and videos which in many cases add more drama describing what is going on. In this context, the interaction and witnessing animal shows had more of less a positive impact in the favor of the city, as it can prove that the media content was exaggerated and that can turn the feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment toward the media instead of the shows or the destination.

In term of decision making, it is true that the study showed that witnessing animal ethics violations in Marrakech, does not impact the tourists' opinion about visiting or returning to the city, and in the worst case scenario, they only decide to avoid the shows, yet, they participants showed also they desire to stick change their decision to stick with a service or products with an ethical policy and framework, which refers to the possibility of an important positive impact on the customer decision making process, which will drive more to tourists toward the destination in case the destination is promoted to have an ethical framework and their service offers introduce some policies preserving animal welfare. The first step could be a starting from a group of the shows responsible, which will differentiate them from the others, and as result, it will create a competitiveness leading to a generalization of the new ethics preservation trend, which will reflect of the destination brand definitely in an international level.

Animal welfare in tourism industry can really benefit from more studies considering the attractions as any other services with the aim of understanding better the consumers' perspectives and reactions toward them, on which we can expect their behaviors and develop the product and marketing strategies based on the results, beside that, we could note thought-out this thesis that tourists treat the subject of animal welfare with emotions, which open a large studies possibilities related to sensorial marketing applied on tourism industry and not only fight to save or maintain a good destination brand image but also create a new positive one by using sensorial marketing tools, and meeting the tourists emotional expectations. On a managerial level, the industry can benefit from a well created and easily applied ethical framework which can guide the practices and define limits and obligations as well as guarantee a basis to edit on flexibly in case of flaws which lead to violations.

Given the substantial difference between our examination and the tourist's subjective reviews, as well as the large numbers of tourists visiting the city and attending the attractions with almost no welfare policies, tourist feedback appears insufficient to regulate and manage the use of animals in such attractions. The vast number of animals and visitors involved, as well as the anticipated potential growth in global tourism, suggest an immediate need for legislation in the form of accreditation or qualification schemes, government policies (e.g. taxes or limit fixing; or agencies to nationally audit and sanction the violations).

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