

Do presence of people and perspective impact upon aesthetic and tourist judgements of tourist destination images?

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INTRODUCTION

Tourist destination photographs are pivotal, plentiful media that trigger a first impression of a potential tourist destination, even before the visit occurs. Accordingly, they represent a powerful source for research and destination promotion [1]. Our previous research [2] investigated the role of embodied components (i.e., Presence: beholder's sense of bodily presence; Exploration: the sense of exploration through the represented place; Completion: the will to discover what is beyond the image) in evaluating destination photographs. The results suggested that an embodiment mechanism might play a role in liking and tourist judgements of destination photography. In line with the aesthetic triad model [3], the beholder's engagement through a represented place implies a meaning-knowledge, sensory-motor, and emotion evaluation. The "Embodied Tourist" is then fully immersed in the potential destination's evaluation.

AIMS

To explore the tourist embodiment in a depicted environment by investigating:

- the tourist destination's image components (i.e., emotionally moving, liking judgement) [4, 5];
- the perceptual dynamism in static landscapes images for tourism promotion;
- the images' features by disentangling 1) the type of perspective (i.e., contemplative / distal vs explorative / proximal) and 2) the status of people (i.e., no presence vs presence) [6].

PARTICIPANTS

- Demographics info: sex, ethnicity
- Requirements: 18 years old and above, with normal or corrected to normal vision, and no neurological/psychiatric disorders.
- 43 participants (M = 27.37, SD = 8.67, 31 females, 32 Italian) completed the study;
- Four outliers (i.e., all the images rated with 50 or 100) were deleted;
- Data analyses were carried out on 39 participants (M = 26.64, SD = 8.25, 29 females, 29 Italian).

DEPENDENT VARIABLES (E-Prime Go Questionnaire; 100mm VAS from 0 = Not at all to 100 = Very much)

QUESTION	VARIABLE
How much dynamism do you perceive in the image?	Dynamism
How much is the image emotionally moving?	Emotionally Moving
How much do you like the image?	Liking Judgement
How much would you like to visit that place?	Tourist Judgement

VISUAL STIMULI: 100 PHOTOGRAPHS

MATERIALS & METHODS

FACTORIAL DESIGN (2 × 2 repeated measures ANOVA)

- Within participant Factor 1: Perspective. Two levels: Distal/Proximal
- Within participant Factor 2: People. Two levels: No Presence/Presence

OPERATIVE DEFINITIONS-PERSPECTIVE

- **Distal:** target-environment as outside peripersonal space (i.e., out of reach)
- **Proximal:** target-environment as within peripersonal space (i.e., within reach)

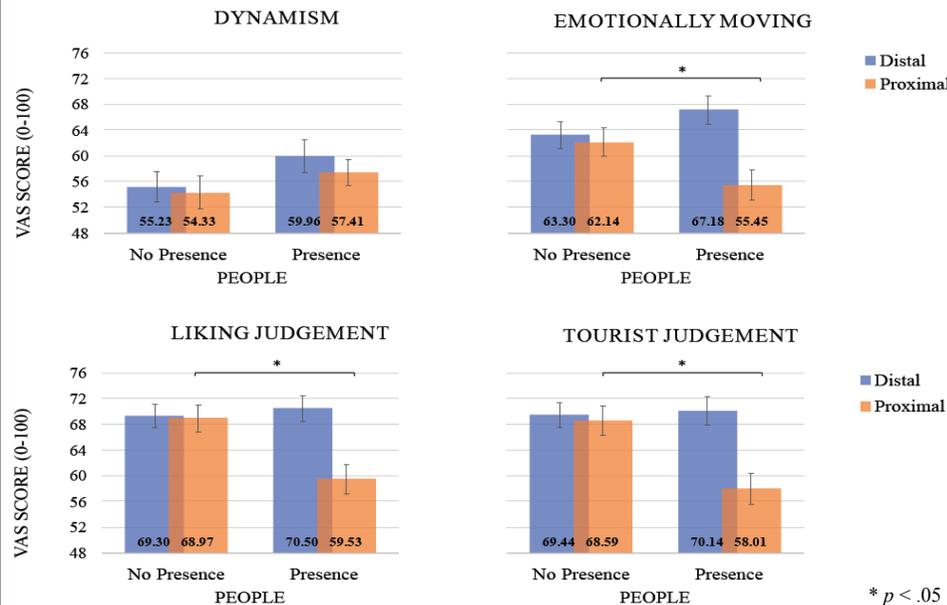
SAMPLES OF THE VISUAL STIMULI



HYPOTHESES

- A higher dynamism for the images with proximal perspective overall;
- Higher ratings in emotionally moving and liking judgement for the images with distal perspective overall;
- A higher tourist judgement for the images with proximal perspective overall;
- A significant interaction between perspective and people on the dynamism (i.e., higher ratings for proximal images with people) and tourist judgement (i.e., higher ratings for proximal images with no people).

RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS

Results suggested that an embodied mechanism through destination photographs could not occur through a dynamic judgement since the images' features allow the beholders to perceive themselves as engaged in the place represented in the image (i.e., proximal perspective). The main effect of perspective on emotionally moving, liking and tourist judgements suggested that a wider scenario could be more engaging. Finally, the main effect of people and the interaction effects suggested that people's presence in pictures could lead the observer to look first at people, ignoring the landscape scenario [7,8] and thus disturbing the destination evaluation in proximal targets [9].

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