DESTINATION FAMILIARITY, AWARENESS AND IMAGE OF BULGARIA AMONG
U.S. COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THEIR INTENT TO TRAVEL

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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To my loving husband, parents, sister, and professors without whom I would not have been able to succeed in this endeavor

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of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
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As travelers become more sophisticated destinations need to become more creative in capturing those tourists. Images have been shown to be critical to the tourism development of destinations. Related to image constructs are destination awareness, familiarity, and intent to visit.

The purpose of this study was to examine the awareness, familiarity, images of Bulgaria held by U.S. college students and their intent to travel. Bulgaria is a little known country among Americans. As a potential tourist destination it needs to create a brand to compete in the global tourism marketplace. Several variables identified in the literature that may affect an individual's image, familiarity, and intent to visit a destination, including prior international travel experience, tourist role preference, and gender were also examined. This investigation drew upon several theories: Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior, and marketing theories related to Awareness – Interest – Desire – Action (AIDA) sequence.

A one group pre-test post-test experimental design was used where the participants filled out a part of a questionnaire, then they were shown a map of Bulgaria, watched two videos about Bulgaria and completed the post-test questionnaire. Results showed that students had minimal knowledge of Bulgaria before the intervention, even though the majority had heard of the

country. Not surprisingly, some of their images were inaccurate. In addition, the variables prior international travel experience, prior travel to Europe, tourist role preference and gender did not influence the students' awareness, level of familiarity, image and intent to travel. However, there were significant differences in both types of familiarity – self-rated and knowledge-based when responses before and after the intervention were compared. Familiarity greatly improved after the intervention. In addition, overall image, the five image categories (Atmosphere; Culture, History and Art; Infrastructure; Natural Resources and Environment and Tourist Attributes) and 28 out of the 36 image items significantly improved after the intervention. A multiple regression model revealed that overall image, and both types of familiarity were not good predictors of intent to visit Bulgaria in the next five years. Results are interpreted in line with the theoretical framework, previous research, practical implications and recommendations for future research. For example, one implication is that Bulgaria will benefit from building a brand emphasizing its unique attractions, cultural heritage, and characteristics. Bulgaria is not a well known country, therefore, a promotional campaign might increase the level of awareness of the country, especially if Bulgaria is to become a country in individuals' evoked sets.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest industries worldwide and an important export industry for many countries. In 2006 tourism accounted for $733 billion (WTO, Tourism highlights 2007 edition). International arrivals in 2006 totaled 846 million and have grown continuously since the 1950s, with the only notable decreases occurring in the years following the September 11 attacks in 2001 (WTO, Tourism highlights 2007 edition). Tourism has become a leading industry in many countries and as such constitutes a major social and economic force in the world (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 1999).

As tourists have become more sophisticated consumers (Moutinho, 1987) and as the availability of destinations has increased (Goodall, 1991), it is critical to understand how tourists make decisions, what motivates them to go to certain destinations and not others. Mountinho explained that social and economic factors influence patterns and trends in travel and tourism on a regional, national, and international scale. In addition, Goodall pointed out that more destinations and a wider choice of activities are available to the consumer today. Therefore, destinations must employ strategies that will position them in the minds of the targeted consumers and differentiate them from their competitors. Central to the success of a country in the global tourism marketplace is differentiation. Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003) emphasized that many destinations' accommodations, attractions, and services are no longer sufficient to differentiate one destination from another and indicated that all countries claim to have unique heritage and cultural resources. "As a result, the need for destinations to portray a unique identity is more critical than ever. Indeed, it has become *the* basis for survival within a globally competitive marketplace…" (p. 286).

Likewise, understanding 'who goes where and why' as Goodall (1991) suggested is critical to the success of destinations. The answer to such questions involves on the one hand an examination of the product and its attributes, positioning, branding of, and images destinations want to portray and, on the other, the process of tourist decision making for selecting destinations. The decision making process is influenced by components such as tourist perceptions, familiarity, preferences, images, personal motivations, information search behavior, and so forth (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Goodall, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). In other words, both cognitive and affective processes take place before a traveler makes a decision as to where he/she will vacation.

A significant amount of research in tourism behavior has been conducted over the last 30 or so years and includes concepts such as awareness, image, preferences, information search, destination choice process, intentions, satisfaction and repeat visits related to the choice process. Other fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, geography, and marketing have explored consumer behavior related to travel. These studies have shown that many factors influence the formation of destination images (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1972; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993) and the process of selecting a vacation destination (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Goodall, 1991, Gunn, 1997; Moutinho, 1987; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). According to Gunn (1997) the most important factor in the decision making process is the organic image (formed from information not disseminated by the destination), which individuals hold of a destination. Gunn (1972) emphasized that perhaps children's geography and history books are most important in the shaping of early images. In addition, awareness plays a significant role in the decision making process. Awareness is described as whether an individual has heard of a product or

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place (Milman & Pizam, 1995). A product or service cannot be selected if a person is not aware of its existence and in terms of travel, whether this product or service can meet the needs of the traveler. Ehrenberg (1974) stated that before individuals can have an interest in a product, they need to be first aware of that brand or product. Familiarity is another concept discussed primarily by marketers, however, in more recent years familiarity has attracted the attention of tourism scholars. How familiar a person is with a destination, whether from knowledge about the destination from an actual visit, by information received from family and friends or media , for example, has been examined in several studies (Baloglu, 2001; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Prentice, 2004; Prentice & Andersen, 2000). Therefore, familiarity with a destination is different from awareness. Familiarity is conceptualized as individuals having some knowledge about a destination (which maybe detailed or very little) whereas, awareness implies whether individuals have heard of the existence of a product or a destination.

Before a selection is made for a vacation destination, an individual is involved in the complex process of decision making, which involves information search, evaluating alternatives and eliminating choices from a total opportunity set. The decision making process models have been extensively discussed in the literature (Crompton, 1992; Goodall, 1991, Moutinho, 1987; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonksi, 1989). These models present a staged process which is eventually completed with the selection of one destination. The vacation choice process involves several steps, which apply to the various models according to Goodall (1991). First, the process starts with the question of whether to take a vacation (in which various motivations are involved). After a decision is made to travel, the individual engages in information search, which can vary in extensiveness. The evaluation of alternatives follows, after which the traveler makes a choice. Finally, the vacation experience is evaluated and in this step feedback is

provided to the beginning stages of the process and can be used in future holiday decision making.

This decision making process has many components. Destination awareness has been shown to be a critical component in tourist choice and behavior (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Woodside & Sherrell, 1977). An individual forms awareness and images of places from internal or external information about the different destinations. This information, along with other factors such as preferences, personal needs, and motivations, goals (Goodall, 1991) helps individuals evaluate destinations and eliminate some places from consideration. Eventually, an individual will decide which destination to visit in a specified time frame, which forms intent to visit. This, however, does not represent an actual travel behavior. Travel behavior will only occur with the purchase of a travel product or service such as booking an airplane ticket or a hotel. However, intent may not always lead to behavior as will be discussed in chapter 2.

As the literature on destination awareness, familiarity, image, and intent to travel has developed and their relationship within the decision making process has been established it will be important to see how these constructs can be measured on less known destinations with tourism potential. One of those destinations is Bulgaria. Knowing the level of familiarity, awareness and images of potential travelers toward a specific destination can assist marketers in the process of marketing their destination. Moreover, based on Goodall and Ashworth's (1988) argument that destinations are aiming to create favorable images it can be concluded that knowing what influences the destination image in the minds of consumers will help marketers design targeted promotional campaigns aimed at specific markets. In addition, marketers can

determine if the images they desire to portray match the existing images of potential travelers, and if a discrepancy exists, the subsequent promotional efforts can be changed.

Statement of the Problem

Bulgaria

Bulgaria is located in the Southeastern Balkan Peninsula. Its territory is 110, 910 sq km (approximately 42,800 sq mi) with population of approximately 7.97 million. To the east the country borders the Black Sea and the length of the coastline is 354 km. Bulgaria borders to the South Turkey and Greece, to the Southwest – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to the West Serbia and to the North the River Danube serves as most of the border with Romania. Human inhabitation on its territory has been dated to the Paleolithic Period (100,000-40,000 BC). Later, in the Neolithic Period agriculture developed and in the Bronze age Thracian tribes occupied its territory. The Roman Empire also reached the Balkan Peninsula and numerous ruins serve as a witness to this era. Bulgaria is one of the oldest European nations founded in 681 AD after proto-Bulgarians settled the lands that were predominantly occupied by Slav tribes and some Thracians. It was also one of the first European countries to accept Christianity as an official religion (started in 864 AD). The Byzantine Empire also left its mark and Bulgaria was under its rule for more than a century during the 11th and 12th centuries. Since 1396 until 1878 Bulgaria was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Bulgaria actually remained dependent on the Ottoman Empire until 1908 when it fully gained independence. Until 1944 when the communist party took over, Bulgaria was a monarchy. During that period of independence Bulgaria developed its economy with initial accumulation of capital. Due to its geopolitical location on the crossroads of major routes from the West to the Middle East and Asia and the history of the peoples occupying it, Bulgaria has influences from various cultures that Bulgarians have interacted with over the millennia. As a result a unique rich cultural heritage and traditions

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were formed. Ancient Thracian customs, for example are still seen in today's Bulgaria. Due to its location and abundance of natural resources (sea, mountains) the country has developed traditional forms of tourism. Its rich cultural heritage also offers potential for tourism development and attracting culturally minded travelers. The combination of natural resources, unique culture, history, and tourist products are conditions that Bulgaria can emphasize in positioning itself as a destination in the global marketplace and creating a brand and an image to the outside world.

Previous studies relating to Bulgaria

Bulgaria is not well known to many people in the U.S. Therefore, it was postulated that awareness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination would be lower than some of the more traditional international vacation destinations frequented by U.S. travelers. The author is not aware of any studies that have examined the familiarity, awareness, image and intent to travel to Bulgaria by foreign, including US residents. In fact, Hughes and Allen (2008) confirmed that there are not many studies on images of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Hall with some colleagues has written extensively on economic development and issues related to tourism in CEE and the Balkan states (Hall, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2004; Hall and Danta, 1996). When examining the image of Turkey in relation to destination choice, Sirakaya, Sönmez, and Choi (2001) emphasized that "the need for image research is especially pronounced for emerging tourist destinations in developing countries" (p.126). In addition to Turkey, a number of studies have been completed relating to the image of other European countries, including Finland (Haahti, 1986, Haahti & Yavas, 1983), Ireland (Prentice & Andersen, 2000), and Norway (Prebensen, 2005, 2007). Baloglu, (2001) also examined the image of Turkey. Together with McCleary they discussed the images of four Mediterranean countries – Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Egypt (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) also discussed the

images of those four Mediterranean countries in the minds of U.S. tour operators and travel agents. Several studies on tourism in Bulgaria have mentioned image and branding, but no in-depth discussion was found by the author linking awareness, image and intent to travel.

Baláz and Mitsutake (1998) focused on the Japanese tourist market in four Central European countries- the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Since the end of communism in 1989, Central and Eastern Europe have been one of the fastest growing tourist regions in terms of international arrivals and tourist receipts. They explained that the Japanese market is lucrative for two reasons: it is considered one of the largest markets and Japanese tourists spend more money on average compared to other tourists. The importance of gaining knowledge of how Western tourists perceive the countries from Eastern Europe is significant to marketers (McCleary & Whitney, 1994). According McCleary and Whitney who used a Delphi method to identify western consumer attitudes toward travel to Central and Eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Romania lacked marketing ability, among other issues. Even though the authors recognized that the Delphi method has limitations, the authors suggested it can be used to gain insight into consumer attitudes and help with tourism development and marketing. McCleary and Whitney's primary recommendations for Bulgaria and Romania were the need to create a plan for image modification and strategies to develop tourism products and improve distribution systems. Similarly, Koulov (1996) pointed out that the image of Bulgaria was affected negatively in the mid-1990s during the period of political instability and severe economic hardships. Hall (2004) also emphasized the importance of creating a brand for countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Moreover, he identified specific obstacles, one of which is inadequate funding. In addition, these countries have been associated with lower quality and limited variety of products.

In a more recent study Hughes and Allen (2008) used qualitative analysis to evaluate the images of 15 Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries among 34 British visitors and non-visitors. Due to the large number of countries in this study individual details could not be provided specifically for each country, including Bulgaria. The two authors were interested in holistic images of the countries, however, they also asked participants to point out unique attractions, which they found difficult. Wine emerged as a unique feature for Bulgaria with most often mentioned attractions were those of Prague, Czech Republic such as the Wenceslas Square, Charles Bride and others. In general there was a distinction made between countries in Eastern and Western part of the region. War and political turmoil were characteristics of the eastern part and culture - of the western. The region was also described as "depressed" and "bleak". In addition, history and heritage were often used by non-visitors to describe the CEE countries and culture was used by both groups. Non-visitors emphasized that availability of more information and promotion would motivate them to visit.

Tourism has been a priority industry for Bulgaria over the last 30 years and Bulgaria has become a major sun, sea, and sand destination for westerners and primarily visitors from the former Soviet block countries and the former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). In 1990, approximately 80% of the overnight international stays were made by travelers from other communist European countries and the Soviet Union (Bachvarov, 1997). Carter (1991) showed that for the period 1964 until 1987 West Germany was the primary western European market, followed by France, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Italy. For example, West Germany accounted for approximately 100,000 tourists in 1987. Winter tourism has also become popular. Bulgaria has a favorable climate and mountains for winter sports. Winter tourism started developing in the 1960s with several resorts. The cost of skiing in Bulgaria has

been less than in other European areas such as the Alps. However, many more opportunities

exist for tourism in Bulgaria such as cultural and heritage tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism,

mountaineering and hiking, spa and balneothermal therapy tourism (Bachvarov, 1997, 2006;

Hall, 1998; Petreas, 2006). These other forms of tourism in addition to the traditional seaside

and winter tourism, which are highly concentrated seasonally and geographically in terms of

number of visitors, overnights stays (Bachvarov, 1997) and, therefore, expenditures can be used

to spread the tourist flows more evenly throughout the year. Goeldner et al. (1999) emphasized

the importance of cultural and educational travel (including, meetings and conventions, some arts

and cultural tourism) as so-called "out-of-season" tourism, which is not dependent on weather

and can be developed to boost tourism in the traditional off-season months.

Cultural tourism can be of significant importance to destinations with rich cultural and

historical heritage such as Bulgaria and, therefore, can attract foreign visitors. For example, even

though many countries are known for their cultural attractions, Bulgaria can differentiate itself

by focusing on some unique aspects such as Orthodox churches and monasteries. Together with

the rich folklore traditions (Bachvarov, 2006) this can serve as an attractive combination to

explore the lesser known parts of the country and to diversify Bulgaria's tourism product.

Thus, while Bulgaria's international tourist flow has been increasing since the 1960's, a

period which marked the development of tourism along the Black Sea coast and several

mountain resorts, the tourist flow in the 1990s consisted primarily of transit or day-visitors

(Paskaleva & Kaleynska, 2001). According to Bachvarov (1997) international visitors reached

approximately 8 million in 1989 and 10 million in 1990 (which was the highest ever) after which

the numbers declined in the mid-1990s. In 2006 7.5 million international travelers visited

Bulgaria, of which 4.4 million came as pleasure travelers. However, as of 2006 only 5% of the

tourists on a package vacation to the Black Sea visited the interior of the country where cultural and other sites abound (Bachvarov, 2006). Therefore, there is an opportunity to develop other forms of tourism in addition to the sun and ski forms already in existence. Certainly, in studies of the average cultural tourist, such travelers tend to be over 35 years old, well educated and with a higher socio-economic status (Mintel, 1993), empty nest professionals with higher incomes and as such may constitute a lucrative market (Berroll, 1981). According to Mintel the younger generation, those between ages 20-24 were likely to be cultural non-visitors.

Currently, the Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism in its Strategic plan for the development of tourism in the period 2006-2009, which is a European Union (EU) PHARE[1] project has outlined various forms of tourism including those outlined above that could be potentially developed. In addition, the plan's SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) has outlined several weaknesses relating to the image of Bulgaria: lack of awareness abroad and lack of branding, limited knowledge of the cultural and historical heritage by the markets, "generally unclear or 'insufficient' image of Bulgaria's tourism - lack of adequate information availability" (Petreas, 2006, p. 10). Two opportunities related to image were outlined: promoting Bulgaria as a cultural and historical heritage tourism destination and image improvement as a newly accepted nation in the EU. The plan includes objectives directly related to improving the image and creating a 'Bulgaria' tourism brand. Therefore, studies such as the present are needed to assess the familiarity with and knowledge of the country's products and tourist regions, and image in the minds of potential travelers. Bachvarov's (1997) suggestion emphasizing the role of promotion is right to the point "Demand can be stimulated by a *promotion* strategy" (p. 49). Such targeted promotion will likely increase the awareness of

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[1] Poland, Hungary Assistance in Research and Education Programme

Bulgaria and may improve the image of the destination. Awareness and image are two factors the tourism literature has emphasized that may lead to a change in consumer behavior in such way as to stimulate travel (Goodall, 1991; Hunt, 1975; Mayo, 1973; Relph, 1976; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Hall (2004) recommended building of a brand for each of the CEE countries, which Bulgaria will undoubtedly benefit from. For example, he suggested common factors to be considered in building a brand: focus on 'Europeanness', build customer loyalty by encouraging repeat visitation, and increase tourist income.

Given the gaps in the literature about Bulgaria as a tourist destination and the needs of the industry as evidenced by the SWOT analysis, this study has both theoretical and practical implications. First, it investigated the existing images of Bulgaria, awareness, familiarity, and intent to travel reported by U.S. college students. In the existing literature little is known about the images U.S. travelers hold of Bulgaria, including college students. Although various researchers have examined the relationships among variables such as awareness, image and intent to travel (Millman & Pizam, 1995), awareness, preferences, image, and intent to visit a destination (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003; Qi, 2005; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), and between familiarity and image (Baloglu, 2001; Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Sirakaya, Sönmez & Cho, 2001), or intent to visit and variables such as prior experience, socio-demographics and travel information source exposure (Court & Lupton, 1997). The affective and cognitive dimensions of image, organic and induced image, overall image and some unaided free elicitation of image as perceived by U.S. students were examined in a pre-test post-test design with an intervention and as such this study contributes to the literature as very few researchers have focused on all of these image types in one study.

The majority of destination image studies have been cross-sectional and only a few longitudinal studies exist. Thus, there is also a need for studies that employ experimental design, which can examine the change in variables such as awareness, familiarity, image, and intent over time. Kim and Richardson (2003) utilized an experimental design to examine the influence of a motion picture portraying a destination (Vienna) on the level of familiarity with the destination, and images and interest in visiting it. They found that of the four affective image variables one was significantly different when results obtained from the experimental (those who viewed a movie portraying Vienna) and control group (those who did not watch the movie) were compared. In terms of the cognitive image, there were statistically significant differences among three image factors. When the researchers compared the interest in visiting the destination of those who saw the movie and those who did not, they found that those who viewed the movie had a higher interest in visiting Vienna. The authors also compared the perceived degree of familiarity between the two groups. No significant differences were found between the control and the experimental groups. However, more research incorporating experimental designs is needed and in particular when examining various complex constructs such as familiarity, image, and intent to travel.

As the importance of information sources has been emphasized in the image formation and destination choice process, experimental design may lead to improved understanding of the relationships between and among variables. This supports Baloglu (2001) who suggested that studies using experimental design can be useful in exploring the relationship between destination familiarity and image. He also suggested that future research could use a greater variety of information sources for informational familiarity validation. Experimental design such as the design of the present investigation could be of value in the study of destination awareness,

familiarity, image and intent and the relationships between them especially for a lesser known country. Such a design may be able to account for the change in the image, awareness, and intent variables due to the influence of a stimulus. In reference to this study it was expected that the stimulus would bring about change in the overall image of Bulgaria, thereby demonstrating the role of targeted information in the formation of an induced image.

There are also several practical implications from this study. First, the findings may aid destination marketers by helping them create more effective promotional and marketing programs for enhancing the tourism destination images. Creating a promotional strategy, improving the image and increasing awareness of Bulgaria and knowledge of its tourist products abroad as outlined by the SWOT analysis in the BSAT Strategic plan is of high priority if Bulgaria is to compete in the international tourism marketplace. This study may help the BSAT and other promotional agencies by presenting the existing images so that marketers could determine whether they match the image the agency wants to evoke. Currently, the BSAT has included the North American, specifically the U.S. market as one of the markets of interest in its strategic plan. It is the belief of this author that further studies need to be implemented in the international markets and in Bulgaria surveying foreign visitors to help determine what markets should be targeted, to help in the development of the tourist products, their quality, and to help in the development of promotional campaigns for the respective markets. Another implication lies in the fact that the U.S. market is an attractive market because of higher propensity of some tourists to spend more while traveling (Ryan, 1995). Also, with the potential development of cultural tourism, Bulgaria can be an attractive destination to the growing cultural tourism market in the U.S. and worldwide.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on three main theories: the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein (1967), Fishbein and Ajzen (1980), the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1987; Ajzen & Driver, 1992) and theories such as the Awareness - Trial - Reinforcement (ATR) and Awareness – Interest – Desire - Action (AIDA) linking several concepts – awareness of the product, creating interest in the product, intent, trial and repeat purchase (Ehrenberg, 1974; Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Rogers, 1962; Strong, 1925) in terms of cognitive, affective and behavior dimensions. Milman and Pizam (1995) linked the ATR theory in their study of familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to visit Central Florida as a destination.

Theory of Reasoned Action

Human behavior is extremely complex and many variables influence individual behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) first introduced by Fishbein (1967) and further developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) focused on explaining human behavior. The underlying concept is that human beings are rational and they utilize the information available to them in a rational way. The theory's significance is that it links the concepts of beliefs, attitudes, intentions and a specific behavior, including travel. Attitudes, according to the authors stem from a person's beliefs. Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) described attitudes as something that is learned. In addition, attitudes can be fairly persistent over time. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), however, recognizing they had not discussed external variables such as socio-demographics, personality characteristics, and certain human needs, pointed out that some external variables may or may not influence behavior.

These external variables may be the factors that Mayo and Jarvis (1981) point to. Mayo and Jarvis posited that individuals generally try to match their knowledge, feelings and subsequently their behavior. However, people do not always behave consistently. Other factors

such as curiosity and impulsiveness can interfere and direct individuals to behave in ways not so consistent with their attitudes. The external variables are significant to the extent that they influence the determinants of the behavior described in the theory: underlying beliefs, attitudes and subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). People, generally tend to engage in a behavior when they feel positive toward that behavior and when they perceive that others approve of that behavior. According to TRA a person's behavior can be explained by examining on the one hand their underlying beliefs that a specific behavior will provide certain outcomes and their evaluations of those outcomes. This forms the attitude towards the behavior. In other words, this attitude is represented by positive or negative feelings toward engaging in that specific behavior. On the other hand, the beliefs of people who are significant to that person, who may "approve" or "disapprove" of that behavior and the person's motivation to comply with his/her reference group form the subjective norm. Therefore, one of the main intention determinants is personal in nature (the attitude of the person toward the behavior) and the other is social (subjective norm). The relationships between the components are presented in Figure 1-1. In addition, for some individuals and groups the normative component may have a greater influence than the attitudinal component on intentions and behaviors and vice versa. This combination of the two may vary from one behavior to another (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992). The determinants of intention are linked to the specific behavior. According to this model, first a specific behavior needs to be identified. The behavior is thought of in terms of four components: action (specific behavioral category), target (object, destination), context (situation) and time. However, all elements: intention, attitude, and norm must align with the behavior in terms of the four components (Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992). The theory provides researchers in the fields of sociology, psychology, consumer behavior, marketing, and tourism

with a causal model of the relationships between determinants of behavioral intentions and specific behaviors. Fishbein and Manfredo also emphasized that in order to change a behavior one needs to change first the underlying cognitive organization, i.e. the underlying beliefs, attitudes, and norms.

In relation to marketing communications, including tourism, interventions and programs do not achieve the desired results because these communications do not address specific beliefs. According to Fishbein and Manfredo effective communications and programs should focus on counteracting a specific belief. For example, if individuals believe that a visit to Bulgaria will not lead to an increase in the individual's education from exposure to the local culture a promotional campaign can focus on emphasizing the opportunities for learning and for increasing one's education and personal enrichment through a visit. Therefore, this theory has practical applications and is relevant to the study of preferences for, and perceptions of, tourist destinations. Knowing the beliefs, attitudes and intentions can aid marketers in designing more effective marketing campaigns for their destinations. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) discussed in detail the role of attitudes in travel behavior.   They presented attitudes as being influenced by perception, learning, personality, and motivation. In addition, they posited that attitudes reveal how an individual may behave in a situation.

Based upon the Theory of Reasoned Action marketers can use different strategies to change the attitudes and beliefs of consumers. According to Mayo and Jarvis (1981) the stronger a person's values, the stronger his/her attitudes and, therefore, their impact on behavior is greater. In such situations attitudes may be difficult to change.

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ The person's beliefs that the │
│ behavior leads to certain │        ┌──────────────────┐
│ outcomes and his/her │ ────────>  │ Attitude toward the │
│ evaluations of these │            │ behavior │
│ outcomes │                         └──────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘
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The person's beliefs that the behavior leads to certain outcomes and his/her evaluations of these outcomes

Attitude toward the behavior

Relative importance of attitudinal and normative considerations

Intention

Behavior

The person's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think he should or should not perform the behavior and his/her motivation to comply with the specific referents

Subjective norm

Note: Arrows indicate the direction of influence.

Figure 1-1. Factors determining a person's behavior[2]

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[2] From "Introduction" Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior" by M. Fishbein and. I. Ajzen, 1980, p. 8

Several attitude characteristics may indicate how easy or difficult it may be to change those

attitudes: intensity of attitudes, stability of attitudes, centrality of attitudes (how strong the

attitudes are rooted in one's values), and social anchoring of attitudes (anchoring of attitudes

within groups the individual is part of). Social anchoring is related to the socially-based

subjective norms. Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) discussed several strategies to change attitudes.

For example, beliefs[3] may be changed relating to the consequences of buying a service or

product. In other words, beliefs may be weakened when an individual perceives negative

consequences and beliefs may be strengthened to emphasize positive outcomes. Another

strategy is to change the individuals' evaluations of the consequences. A third strategy might be

to present a new belief. For example, emphasizing or adding a new attribute that leads to

positive beliefs will make the individuals' attitude more positive. Finally, normative beliefs may

be targeted and changed to bring a possible attitude and behavior change. This strategy's success

will vary in different cultures, some of which put greater emphasis on the individual and some on

group values.

The Theory of Reasoned Action provides a useful framework for understanding behavior

and intentions (including leisure-related, Young & Kent, 1985) from an individual's beliefs,

attitudes and subjective norms. This theory provides a measure with good predictive power of

intentions and behaviors from attitudes and norms, however, other external variables influence

human behavior and may lower this predictive power. In addition, Fishbein and Ajzen (1980)

pointed out that TRA may not apply in a satisfactory way to predicting intentions and consumer

choice from brand attitudes (relating to the target) because of variations in certain components

such as context, action, and time.

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[3] A belief is considered as a type of attitude according to Mayo and Jarvis (1981).

Theory of Planned Behavior

As was mentioned earlier, there are other factors that come into play and influence intent and behavior in addition to attitudes and social norms. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen 1985, 1987) can be thought of as extension to TRA and has been used in the prediction of leisure behavior (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). The theory of reasoned action applies in situations where the individual can exercise volitional control. However, when volitional control may not be enough, perceived behavioral control may improve predictions of intention and behavior. The TPB in addition to attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms adds perceived behavioral control, which reflects the perceived hardship or ease in performing the specified behavior, which in turn is influenced by past experiences and possible constraints (obstacles). Actual control over the behavior is determined by the availability of resources and factors such as (money, time, and others). However, it is thought that perceived control is more important than actual control. Ajzen and Driver (1992) emphasized that perceived control may be of little value in predicting intent and behavior in situations when the individual has limited information about the behavior or when there is a change in the available resources. The theory of planned behavior postulates that attitude and subjective norms do not influence directly behavior. Instead, they influence behavior through the intervening variables of intention and perceptions of behavioral control. Ajzen and Driver's study of leisure behavior understood through the TPB confirmed this. The authors employed hierarchical regression analysis involving three steps for the prediction of behavior and two steps for the prediction of intentions. Results showed that attitude towards specified leisure activities did not significantly predict behavior. However, perceived behavioral control significantly influenced the prediction of intentions related to the studied leisure activities.

The only difference between the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action is the addition of perceived behavioral control to the TPB, which reflects the influence of external factors on intention and behavior. Results from Ajzen and Driver (1992) showed that this variable can improve the prediction of intent and behavior in certain situations, including leisure. However, more studies are needed that deal with such predictions and especially with travel, which can be of value to marketers.

Linking Awareness and Initial Purchase

Several models from advertising may be examined in terms of a sequential process of creating awareness, generating interest, resulting in a trial, and ultimately in repeat purchases. One of the earliest models credited to E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 and discussed by Strong (1925) stated "Attract attention, maintain interest, create desire" (p. 76). According to Strong, E. St. Elmo Lewis added "get action" later to form the well-known AIDA model Awareness → Interest → Desire → Action. The sequential pattern is evident. Creating awareness starts the process (Ehrenberg, 1974). Awareness in marketing has been defined as top-of-mind awareness (ToMA), referring to a brand or product that first comes to mind measured by unaided recall. Kotler (1994), however combined an awareness and familiarity scale: "never heard of, only heard of, know a little bit, know a fair amount, know very well". In their study Milman and Pizam (1995) operationalized awareness of Central Florida as a destination by asking the participants whether they recognized the name of the destination of have heard of it. Awareness is a necessary element before a person builds a desire and eventually buys the product. Therefore, the role of advertising, to which other types of marketing communications may be added, is two-fold. First, it provides necessary information to the consumer about the product. Second, it is persuasive in nature, i.e. it is geared towards enticing people to buy a product they have never used before.

Ehrenberg also emphasized sometimes an individual may become familiar with a brand only after a purchase. This is probably the case for low cost everyday products and may not apply to tourism. According to the AIDA theory, customers cannot desire and purchase something they do not know about and are not aware of. At the beginning of the 20th century Sheldon (1911) added a fifth term –"secure satisfaction". The persuasive hierarchy models that later developed from the AIDA model were presented by Kotler (1994, p. 602) as Response Hierarchy Models. The hierarchy-of-effects model is attributed to Lavidge and Steiner (1961), innovation-adoption model by Rogers (1962), and the communications model developed from various sources were also a part of Kotler's (1994) model. Lavidge and Steiner introduced a sequential six-step model: Awareness $\rightarrow$ Knowledge $\rightarrow$ Liking $\rightarrow$ Preference $\rightarrow$ Conviction $\rightarrow$ Purchase. The process starts with the cognitive components, then goes through the affective stage and finally the conative (behavioral). The innovation-adoption model by Rogers (1962) has five similar stages: Awareness $\rightarrow$ Interest $\rightarrow$ Evaluation $\rightarrow$ Trial $\rightarrow$ Adoption. This model was developed for adoption of innovations (products or services). For high elaboration products and services such as travel, where risk is high, strongly held (higher order) beliefs are formed. However, these beliefs are not based exclusively on advertising. Other factors such as word of mouth, news, newspaper or magazine articles and prior experience form those beliefs. This is consistent with the so called persuasive hierarchy (CA) models (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). "C" is cognition and referred to the "thinking" component of one's response and "A" refers to affect, i.e. "feeling' component. This group of models is called persuasive because advertising not only informs but persuades in order to increase sales. The sequence is Cognition $\rightarrow$ Affect $\rightarrow$ Behavior (CA). Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) and Rogers' (1962) models are persuasive hierarchy models, which are also hierarchy-of-effects models. These models are called

hierarchy of effects models because there is a sequential progression. The hierarchy sets out the preconditions that are necessary to occur first.

Ehrenberg (1974) is credited with criticizing the conventional Awareness → Attitudes → Behavior models such as those described above. He pointed to instances when an opposite link is applicable and behavior may affect attitudes. For example, greater awareness may result after a purchase. In addition, a behavior may lead to additional search for information and subsequent attitude change. In the use of everyday products this may be the case. However, in purchasing travel, which is relatively risky and expensive, the traditional model may be more applicable, where extensive information search, knowledge is acquired, and attitude formation occur before the behavior. Ehrenberg suggested in his hierarchy-of-effects model the following: Awareness → Trial → Reinforcement. This is consistent with his position in that after awareness an initial purchase is made, which is influenced by various factors. A repeat purchase may occur, which is ultimately what a marketer is hoping for. He argued "The critical factor is experience of the brand and no other influences seem to be needed" (p. 31). According to this model advertising has a particular role at each stage, which is similar to Fakeye and Crompton's (1991) proposition that informative promotion would be best for non-visitors, persuasive advertising is to target first-time visitors, and finally, reminding promotion is for repeat visitors.

Ehrenberg's model belongs to the group of low-involvement hierarchy models (CEA) which are based on the cognition → experience → affect sequence. According to Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) empirical studies show that experience has greater effect on beliefs, attitudes, and behavior than advertising. This is important in terms of travel. Personal experience, which some have defined as familiarity, or one dimension of familiarity (Baloglu, 2001; Milman & Pizam,

1995; Prentice, 2004), has been shown to be a key element influencing destination image and therefore, may have a greater effect on beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behavior.

In addition to intention, awareness and other cognitive and affective processes that occur during travel, the current study examined the influence of several other factors on familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to travel to a destination are discussed in the section to follow.

Socio-demographic Factors, Tourist Role and Travel Experience

Central to destination decision-making models and subsequent tourist behavior are the individual's characteristics such as socio-demographics, psychological factors, preferences, attitudes, motivation, needs, information search, destination attributes, awareness, and destination images (Crompton, 1979a; Goodrich, 1978; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1997; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Moutinho, 1987; Pearce, 1982b; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Therefore, a review of key scholarly works relating to tourist behavior, intent and awareness is necessary to begin to understand the forces at play in the destination decision making process. In addition, several socio-demographic factors have been shown to influence travel behavior and in turn tourists' preference for certain tourist roles they assume while traveling.

A tourist role is a collection of behaviors and preferences an individual may have while traveling. Since the 1970s several tourist role typologies have been developed and preference for the different types of roles has been examined in relation to socio-demographics, previous travel experiences, motivations, and perception of risk among others (Cohen, 1972; Lepp & Gibson, 2003, Pearce, 1985; Smith, 1977, Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). For example, studies by several authors (Gibson, 1989; Pearce, 1982b, 1985; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1988) have shown the significance of age (life stage), gender, and level of education on preference for certain tourist roles. Gibson and Yiannakis, (2002), also found that life stage among other variables is central to the tourist role preference of individuals. According to Gibson and Yiannakis tourist role

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preference is influenced by a number of processes and institutions as they relate to life stage, marriage, presence of children, as well as individual's psychological needs. The authors suggested that tourist role preference is a function of the psychological needs individuals have, which in turn are a function of their life stage.

Levinson's work (Levinson et al., 1978; Levinson, 1996) has been used in leisure and tourism studies to explain behavior from the perspective of an individual's life stage. According to Levinson's theory in general young adults are more likely to be free from family obligations as many are single and have the freedom to travel. He suggested that exploration is a common characteristic in early adulthood and that this in turn may surface in the travel behavior of young adults. Such travelers are expected to have a drive for exploration, adventure, experimentation and at the same time not ready to choose one option (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). Such behaviors may be more likely to be exhibited by explorers and drifters according to Cohen's (1972) tourist role typology. Gibson and Yiannakis also suggested that there are gender differences in tourist role preference which they explain are due to the different expectations accorded to men and women by society.

The supposition that tourist roles are related to familiarity, awareness and destination image is based on Cohen's (1972) and Yiannakis and Gibson's (1992) ideas that underlying each of the tourist roles are dimensions related to the degree of familiarity or strangeness a tourist prefers in a destination or the level of stimulation or tranquility he/she is seeking. Thus, conceivably destinations perceived as unfamiliar or too stimulating to some tourists might be evaluated as either attractive or be rejected as unsuitable for their vacations.

Studies that have focused on levels of familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to travel also have explored the influence of socio-demographic variables on these factors (Beerli &

Martín, 2004; Javalgi, Thomas, and Rao, 1992; Pike, 2002). Moreover, one might hypothesize based on Baloglu's (2001) results that the respondents who were well educated and older also had international travel experience, higher levels of knowledge, familiarity and awareness of destinations and as a result may have been more inclined to visit new destinations. The interrelationships among variables such as individual preferences, needs, goals, socio-demographics, upbringing, prior travel experience may shape the tourist role preferences of individuals as well as their knowledge, familiarity, awareness and future travel intentions.

The current study examined the awareness, familiarity, images, and intent to travel to the lesser known country of Bulgaria by using several theories as the theoretical framework: theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior and through the marketing models of Awareness – Interest – Desire - Action and Awareness – Trial – Reinforcement and how these variables were influenced by prior travel experience, preference for tourist roles and gender.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the level of familiarity with and knowledge about Bulgaria, awareness, destination image, and intent to travel to Bulgaria among U.S. college students, who have never visited the country. Specifically, a pre-post test design was used to assess the level of knowledge, familiarity, awareness and organic images that U.S. college students have of Bulgaria as a tourist destination and their interest in traveling to Bulgaria. Following an intervention in the form of an informational media presentation about Bulgaria, the level of familiarity, awareness, induced images and intent to travel were assessed again. Variables found in the literature to influence familiarity, awareness, destination image, and intent to travel such as previous international travel experience, tourist role preference, and gender were examined. Education level in this study was held constant as the participants were all undergraduate students enrolled at the same university. In addition, their ages and income level

were similar. Such variables may be included in further research with a more diverse sample across groups with various age, income, and education levels, for example.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions.

Pre-test Research Question 1

1a. What is the level of awareness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination among U.S. college students?

1b. Does the level of awareness vary by previous international travel experience?

1c. Does the level of awareness vary by tourist role preference?

1d. Does the level of awareness differ by gender?

Pre-test Research Question 2

2a. What is the level of familiarity with Bulgaria among U.S. college students?

2b. Does familiarity vary by previous international travel experience?

2c. Does familiarity vary by tourist role preference?

2d. Does familiarity vary by gender?

Post-test Research Question 2

2e. Following the intervention, what is the participants' level of familiarity and is it different from familiarity before the intervention?

2f. What influence does previous international experience have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

2g. What influence does tourist role preference have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

2h. What influence does gender have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

Pre-test Research Question 3

3a. What organic and overall images of Bulgaria do U.S. college students hold?

3b. Does the overall organic image vary by previous international travel experience?

3c. Does the overall organic image vary by tourist role preference?

3d. Does the overall organic image vary by gender?

Post-test Research Question 3

3e. Following the intervention, do the induced and overall induced images held by U.S. college students vary from their organic images?

3f. Does the induced overall image vary by previous international travel experience?

3g. Does the induced overall image vary by tourist role preference?

3h. Does the induced overall image vary by gender?

Research Question 4

4a. What are the travel intentions of U.S. college students towards Bulgaria as a vacation destination after the intervention?

4b. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by previous international travel experience?

4c. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by tourist role preference?

4d. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by gender?

Research Question 5

5a. Following the intervention, what is the relationship among overall induced image of Bulgaria among U.S. college students, their familiarity level (both self-rated and knowledge-based) and intent to travel in the next five years?

The variables in the above research questions were discussed in detail in the literature review that follows and how they relate to the theoretical basis of the present study. Definitions of terms will be offered also.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATIRE

This chapter is divided into six sections: destination familiarity, destination awareness, destination image, intention to travel, prior travel experience and tourist roles. First, familiarity is discussed in terms of definitions and relationships with the other related variables. Next, destination awareness is examined in terms of its definitions, the relationship between awareness and familiarity, image, and travel intention. In addition, the influence of socio-demographics is discussed. The third part focuses on destination image, its definitions, how it is related to awareness, how it is formed, its components and how destination image is related to socio-demographics. The fourth section focuses on intention to travel, its definition, how it is related to awareness, familiarity, and image and lastly, how it is related to socio-demographics. The fifth section focuses on the previous travel experience. The last section discuses tourist roles.

Destination Familiarity

First, a definition of the term destination is necessary. *Destination* has been defined by Holloway (1986, p.64) as a place to which tourists go, in which they may stay overnight, and is the primary object of their visit. Buhalis (2000) explained that a destination can be thought of as a place that is comprised of products, services, and experiences provided locally. Another term that needs definition is tourist and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute has adopted the definition recommended by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and defines an international tourist as "…any person who travels to a country other than his/her permanent residence, for a period not greater than 1 year and whose main purpose is not doing any activity for payment." (National Statistical Institute, n.d.)

Familiarity is a concept widely used in the marketing and consumer behavior literature. It is often associated with products and brands consumers use daily. Therefore, research has

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focused on the consumers' familiarity with either more expensive and durable goods or those of everyday life. The focus of this study is to analyze the familiarity construct as it relates to tourists and destinations, namely Bulgaria. Familiarity in this study is discussed as a concept used in terms of brand familiarity and product familiarity and how it applies to tourist destinations.

In the field of marketing, Johnson and Russo (1984) conceptualized and operationalized familiarity as knowledge but did not include experience gained from using a product. Baker, Hutchinson, Moore, and Nedungadi (1986) described familiarity as unidimensional and defined it as "…directly related to the amount of time that has been spent processing information about the brand, regardless of the type or content of the processing that was involved" (p. 637). In other words, familiarity is presented as a form of knowledge about the product according to the authors who in essence agree with Johnson and Russo's definition. Familiarity may be associated with low or high product involvement according to Baker et al. Baker and his colleagues presented two ways in which brand familiarity influenced choice and which involve the evoked set. The concept of an evoked set was first developed by Howard and Sheth (1969) and it can be defined as products a consumer is considering for his/her next purchase. Baker et al. first posited that the more one is familiar with a product, the greater the likelihood this product will be included in the evoked set. Second, as a result familiarity contributes to preference. Baker and his colleagues also proposed that general product familiarity has less of an influence in placing a product in the evoked set compared to specific situations. In terms of tourism, this would mean that a particular destination has a better chance of being included in the evoked set if it is thought to meet the traveler's needs at that moment (e.g. choosing a family summer vacation destination where mom and dad can relax).

Similar to Baker et al., Alba and Hutchinson (1987) discussed product familiarity and referred to it as part of knowledge. They explained that prior knowledge consists of familiarity and expertise. Thus they defined product familiarity as a number of product-related experiences, which include exposure to advertising, information search, choice, and product use. Therefore, Alba and Hutchinson described the construct as multidimensional in contrast to some earlier studies by Johnson and Russo (1984) and Baker et al. (1986), which considered familiarity as unidimensional. Therefore, a consumer learns and becomes more familiar with a product as he/she uses the product or is exposed to advertising and word-of-mouth.

Goodrich (1978), for example, emphasized the importance of familiarity with a product in the preference and choice processes in several fields including psychology, sociology, marketing, and in terms of tourist destinations. Knowledge about a product or destination has an important influence on the individual's preference for that product. Goodrich continued to explain that "The more favorable the perception, the greater the likelihood of choice from among similar alternatives" (p.8). In the tourism field several studies have operationalized familiarity as knowledge about the destination obtained from visiting it (i.e. prior travel) (Chon, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Phelps, 1986). In other studies familiarity was seen as including both previous visits to the destination and knowledge about it (Tideswell & Faulkner, 1999).

In contrast to some earlier studies, Baloglu (2001) suggested that familiarity is a multidimentional construct. The author argued that there is another component to familiarity, which has to do with the amount of information and knowledge an individual has about the destination in absence of visitation. Therefore, he operationalized familiarity as two-dimensional – consisting of the amount of information a traveler has about a destination and previous visits to

the destination. He also discussed another way of operationalizing familiarity through individuals self-reporting their level of familiarity with a destination; however, he criticized the subjectivity of this measurement. Prentice (2004) agreed that familiarity is more than visiting a destination. Working from Baloglu's two types he proposed five types of familiarity: 1) informational (information used); 2) experiential (result of visit to the destination); 3) proximate (associated with national stereotypes and country of residence); 4) self-described (self-rated is redefined as self-described); and 5) educational (formed as a result of formal or informal learning about the destination). Therefore, both Baloglu (2001) and Prentice (2004) suggested familiarity should be examined in studies as a multidimensional construct. Familiarity has also been shown in various studies to play a role in forming positive perceptions/images of a destination and foster more accurate information about destination attributes (Ahmed, 1996; Fridgen, 1984. Likewise, Kim and Pennington-Gray (2004) operationalized familiarity as a multidimensional construct consisting of two components: knowledge and prior experience (visitation). They examined the relationship between familiarity and image held by non-visitors from Florida towards South Korea. Their results suggested that those who were more familiar with South Korea had more positive images of the country based on the four identified image domains: diverse activities and attractions; communication and accommodation; sports and events; and accessibility.

Prior Knowledge: Prior knowledge is also a concept discussed in the context of familiarity. Baker et al. (1986) considered (prior) knowledge the most basic form of familiarity, that is, familiarity is expressed as knowledge about the product. In addition, the authors hypothesized that brands individuals recognize on the shelf in a store (stimulus influence) or

brands recalled from memory (choice based on memory) may be brands that have the potential to become a part of the evoked set.

In terms of tourism related choices, the level of information about a destination is expressed through the prior knowledge an individual has about it and may include internal information (i.e. information accessed from memory) or external information (gathered from a number of sources) (Crotts, 1999). More recently, Kerstetter and Cho (2004) reported how prior knowledge, credibility of sources, and information search are related. The authors observed that prior knowledge is an ambiguous concept. Thus, they operationalized prior knowledge as consisting of familiarity, expertise and past experience. However, their analysis revealed that prior knowledge should be treated as a two-dimensional construct consisting of past experience and familiarity/expertise. Their results showed a high correlation between familiarity and expertise; therefore, they combined them into one dimension.

Thus, is appears that familiarity and prior knowledge are defined in different ways, and frequently they are used to define each other. Some scholars, mainly those in the marketing field, consider familiarity a component of prior knowledge (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Baker et al., 1986). Whereas, scholars in the tourism field consider prior knowledge to be a component of familiarity (Baloglu, 2001; Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2003; Prentice, 2004). In this study familiarity is conceptualized as how well a person considers him/herself to be familiar with a destination, in this case Bulgaria. Prior knowledge is conceptualized as information individuals have about Bulgaria.

Destination Awareness

Central to the travel and tourism industry has been the question of 'why do people go to certain destinations and not others'? These and other questions have been the focus of not only tourism research but also of environmental psychology, and geography among others. As was

already discussed, familiarity is an important component in choosing a vacation destination. Awareness is closely related to familiarity. Awareness is one of those components that helps researchers understand the processes of decision making, information search and future intentions.

Definitions of Awareness

Even though familiarity and awareness are closely related constructs, they are not the same. Top-of-mind awareness is a term commonly used in the consumer behavior literature. This is referred to as the brand or product that first comes to mind measured by unaided recall. Wilson's (1981) study confirmed that the higher a product is in the consumer's mind (ToMA measured by unaided recall), the higher the purchase intention and the higher the last reported purchase of the brand. According to Woodside and Wilson (1985) the higher the position of a product in the consumer's mind, the higher the product preference. In other words, ToMA is related positively to brand preference. By using this line of thinking, Woodside and Lysonski (1989) created a model of destination choice and awareness where ToMA was one of its major components. They defined awareness as "…unaided recall from long-term memory and aided recognitions" (p.8). In another tourism based study, Milman and Pizam (1995) operationalized awareness as whether an individual had heard of or recognized a destination by name. Similarly, Pike (2002) referred to ToMA in a tourism context as the destination that first comes to mind when an individual is considering taking a trip. Taking a lead from Milman and Pizam in this study awareness was defined as whether an individual had heard of the destination.

In the destination choice process one of the groups or sets of destinations that are considered by a traveler is the awareness set. This set is made up of all destinations that come to the mind of a potential tourist when he/she thinks of vacation travel (Crotts, 1999). The awareness set can be quite large. It consists of three subcategories – the evoked, inept and inert

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sets (Narayana & Markin, 1975; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). An evoked set consists of all destinations which an individual can potentially choose to visit (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Um & Crompton, 1990). An inept set consists of the rejected destinations that an individual will not visit because he/she has negative information about them or has had unpleasant experiences (Narayana & Markin (1975). The places in the inert set are those destinations about which an individual has neither positive nor negative information; therefore, he/she needs more information to evaluate these destinations further.

Motivations, also referred to as motives, are considered important psycho-social needs that initiate the process of wanting to take a vacation. Therefore, a brand is selected on the basis of how well it can meet that need (Howard & Sheth, 1969). However, even though motives are present, an individual needs to have information as to what opportunities are available, or in other words he/she needs to be aware of those opportunities (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Availability of information and credibility of the source are critical to creating awareness of destinations in general and making travelers aware of the facilities and services in those destinations according to the two authors. The importance of information sources; therefore, is discussed further.

Awareness and Familiarity

As can be seen from the previous discussion about familiarity, prior knowledge, and awareness, the marketing literature often uses one concept to define the other. Thus, a close relationship among those concepts is inevitable. However, caution needs to be exercised when defining and using these concepts as operational definitions often vary among studies.

Familiarity with destinations is related to awareness and destination image, and therefore, influences the destination choice process. Some travelers are familiar with a destination more than others because they have accumulated more information about that destination. Familiarity

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may include previous travel to that destination, but also knowledge about it in the absence of a visit. Awareness on the other hand, has been operationalized as whether an individual has heard of the destination and as the destination that first comes to mind when he/she is considering potential vacation destinations (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Pike, 2002).

Ahmed's (1991) study showed that those who had visited Utah had a more positive overall image about the state compared to non-visitors. In their Central Florida study, Milman and Pizam (1995) found that those who were familiar with (visited previously) the destination had a higher interest in visiting it, and were more likely to visit it (intent) in the next two years than those who were aware (but never visited), and those who were not aware (have not heard of it). Respondents who were aware did not have a greater interest or likelihood of visiting that destination. In addition, according to Milman and Pizam those who were familiar with, i.e. had visited Central Florida had more positive images of that destination compared to those who were aware (without visiting). In addition, those who were familiar had a greater geographical accuracy and more knowledge about the attractions and about the destination in general.

The results from Baloglu's (2001) study showed that those individuals who had higher levels of familiarity had a more positive image of Turkey on most dimensions, including overall image. The existence of a strong positive relationship between familiarity level and perceptions/image has been supported in the literature over the years (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004). Therefore, one can expect as a result that higher levels of awareness and familiarity with a destination may lead to more positive images of a destination.

Awareness and Destination Image

An important variable to understanding destination image is awareness. Gartner (1993) who evaluated Goodall's (1991) model of destination choice process stated that "awareness implies that an image of the destination exists in the mind(s) of the decision makers" (p.192-

193). Gunn (1972) suggested that potential travelers who are aware of (have heard of but have not visited) a destination may have formed images of that place from information received through movies, news reports, and books. He described this perception as the organic image. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) proposed that images of non-visitors, first-time visitors, and repeat visitors change from organic to induced images and finally to complex images. They explained that a potential visitor has organic images of a number of destinations in his/her awareness set that he/she has not visited. The authors suggested that informative promotion will be more effective at this stage. Informative communications are used to make travelers aware of a destination and its various facilities, attractions, and others. Once he/she has decided to travel the individual will engage in an active information search and an induced image will be formed at this stage. Persuasive information is more appropriate at this stage with a goal to persuade the consumer to buy. A complex image is formed after a visit to the destination and reminding promotion is used to keep the destination at the forefront of the consumer's mind to encourage repeat visits.

More recently, Beerli and Martín (2004) found that a particular type of induced source (travel agency staff) had a significant influence on one cognitive image dimension (sun and sand) for Lanzarote (The Canary Islands, Spain). Information sources that may take the form of induced sources are important image formation agents (Gartner, 1993). Information sources and communications related to destinations play an important role in the travel decision process, and have an important influence on image formation (Capella & Greco, 1987; Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003; Crotts, 1999; Fesenmaier et al., 1993; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Vogt, Stewart, & Fesenmaier, 1998).

Awareness and Intention

Intention was defined by Moutinho (1987) as the likelihood to buy or readiness-to-buy concept. In the early 1980s, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) presented a model outlining the relationship between forming of attitudes, intent to travel, and the travel decision selection process. Their model drew upon the Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein (1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992) and focused on the influence of information and social factors in the forming of personal beliefs and opinions, feelings, and predispositions, all of which form an individual's attitudes. These attitudes, which are predispositions to act according to Mayo and Jarvis are necessary in the forming of preferences/intentions, which are antecedents of behavior.

The awareness, trial and repeat behavior (reinforcement) (ATR) theory is based on the idea that a trial of a product cannot occur without awareness (Ehrenberg, 1974). According to Ehrenberg, trial is dependent on awareness. Repeat trial may occur only after an initial purchase. Awareness in the best scenario may result in curiosity that can lead to trial (Foxall, 1990; Milman & Pizam, 1995). It may be concluded the trial is associated with intention to buy. Repeat buying behavior may or may not occur, which will depend on the outcome of the trial, i.e. the experience and satisfaction. Referring to Ehrenberg's model, Milman and Pizam suggested that "Applying this model to a tourism destination, we may conclude that the image of a destination is reflected in the awareness that potential tourists have of it" (p. 22), which is consistent with Gartner's (1993) position that an image is formed based on the awareness an individual has of a destination. Indeed, Wilson (1981) proposed that the intent to purchase is higher when the position of the brand in the mind of the consumer is higher.

In a tourism context, destination awareness is linked to intent to travel according to the destination choice model of Woodside and Lysonski (1989). Intent to visit a destination is influenced by the preferences formed by an individual. Milman and Pizam showed that those

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who were aware of Central Florida as a destination but were not familiar (i.e. knew about it but have never visited it) did not have a greater interest or likelihood in visiting it compared to those who were not aware of it (never heard). In other words, their findings showed that awareness may not necessarily lead to intent, contrary to their hypothesis. This finding has support in the literature. For example, when Michie (1986) examined the influence of awareness (cognitive) on travel behavior, he concluded that awareness is a necessary but not sufficient element leading to increased travel. Similarly, according to Fesenmaier, Vogt, and Stewart (1993) information obtained from a welcome center influenced the travel behavior of most visitors to Indiana, which stresses the key role of information sources as a source of knowledge about a destination. This knowledge in turn builds greater awareness of destinations and their attributes. Therefore, it can be concluded that information sources are an important component to the decision making process and travel intentions, which is consistent with Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) model.

Awareness and Socio-demographics

In terms of understanding awareness further, Baloglu (2001) did not find a significant relationship between demographics such as age, education, and familiarity, even though he hypothesized that these demographic factors might influence familiarity with a destination. A majority of Baloglu's respondents were highly educated, 50 or older, married and had higher income. He acknowledged that the sampling method used, by including individuals who had requested information about Turkey, is a limitation to his study and, therefore, may have contributed to the demographic homogeneity of the respondents. Therefore, the study participants were aware of Turkey already and may have had some knowledge about the country. Conceivably, one might expect that such respondents already have international travel experience, are more familiar and aware of foreign destinations, and may be more likely to visit

new destinations. It will be of interest to examine samples in which the respondents are not so alike in terms of their socio-demographics.

In a study of Auckland's (New Zealand) residents, Pike (2002) examined the relationship between ToMA and intent to visit destinations on a short break. He reported that the respondents were older, many with higher education and had strong intention to visit several destinations. The destinations listed as top-of-the-mind were significantly more likely to be visited. An unaided ToMA question resulted in the destination of Rotorua being selected as a top destination for a visit by 24% of the respondents. Nationality has also been shown to influence awareness and image. For example, Ritchie and Smith (1991) found that Europeans showed higher awareness levels of European and non-U.S. Olympic Games sites compared to U.S. respondents.

Information Sources, Familiarity, Awareness, Image and Choice

The previous discussion on familiarity and awareness mentioned the importance of information obtained through various forms of communication – promotion and advertising through various forms of media, Internet, and word of mouth. Information that creates knowledge is critical to creating awareness of and familiarity with places.

Gitelson and Crompton (1983) found that travelers who take longer trips and travel further tend to plan their trip further in advance. As a result, this may have implications for international travel and destinations that are less familiar and known to the individual traveler. This and other studies (e.g. Capella & Greco, 1987) have shown that information obtained from friends and relatives is of great importance. Moreover, Gitelson and Crompton identified three reasons and characteristics of the tourism product, which play a role in tourism advertising and may influence the processing of and search for information during the destination decision making process: 1) purchase of vacation involves high-risk due to investment of both time and money; 2) a vacation cannot be sampled unlike many consumer products; also the consumer cannot see exactly what

he/she is purchasing; 3) travelers usually visit new destinations when they travel. According to Manfredo, Bright, and Haas (1992), due to the nature of the tourist product, information seeking is expected to be quite extensive.

Capella and Greco (1987) examined the information search behavior of older travelers (over 60 years of age) and the influence of individuals' socio-demographics (education, social class, gender, income, etc.) and psychographic characteristics (opinion leadership, wide horizons, community mindedness and others) on that behavior in relation to destination choice. When they examined the relationship among information sources, socio-demographic factors, and psychographics they found that generally socio-demographics explained the role of information sources in vacation planning more compared to psychographics of older adults. Specifically, word of mouth (information passed on by family and friends) was found be the most influential information source among these older travelers. Past experience, magazines, and newspapers were also among the important sources. In contrast, radio and travel agents were least important. Credibility of sources was examined by Kerstetter and Cho (2004) who studied the relationships among prior knowledge, credibility of sources and information search. However, their results showed no significant relationship between prior knowledge and the information search process (amount of time spent searching and number of sources), which may be contrary to some scholars' propositions.

MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997) examined the influence of promotional visuals on the destination image of a National Park in Manitoba, Canada. Results from their study showed that familiarity levels affected perceptions of respondents along the four image dimensions: activity, familiarity, holiday, and atmosphere. Those who were more familiar with the park viewed "…the visuals as casting a familiar image" (p. 558). Individuals with higher familiarity with the

park had an image of the destination as being family-oriented, full of activity and excitement. In addition, those more familiar with the park had affective evaluations of the visuals, whereas, those who were less familiar tended to hold cognitive evaluations.

Vogt, Stewart, and Fesenmaier (1998) focused on the search behavior of individuals who have not been to an individually named destination in the U.S. Midwest. Their research showed a positive relationship between self-rated familiarity and the likelihood of using certain information sources such as own travel files, listening to radio, magazine articles and others. In addition, they investigated the relationship between use of information sources and intent to visit that destination. About 40% said that they were somewhat likely to visit in the next two years and 12% were extremely likely. In terms of the relationship between intent and the use of sources of travel information, the highest positive correlation was between intent and the how likely the individual was to use their own travel files, followed by magazine advertisement, then newspaper advertisements, television and others.

Kim and Richardson (2003) used an experimental design to study the influence of a motion picture on images and familiarity with a destination. The authors emphasized that movies can serve as a tool to familiarize audiences with places. Their results showed that cognitive images in particular differed among those who had watched the movie about Vienna, Austria compared with those who did not. They also found that those who watched the movie showed a higher interest in visiting Vienna compared to the control group. However, contrary to the authors' expectations, level of familiarity was not significantly different between the two groups. The authors suggested that perhaps a short movie about a place may not be enough to create higher levels of familiarity with that destination. Nonetheless, their study made an important contribution to the understanding of destination image and factors that might shape image such

as autonomous agents like movies, since there has been limited empirical work on the influence of motion pictures upon image and on the decision making process as a whole.

To summarize, information sources are an important element of the destination decision making process. Various information sources supply knowledge about destinations, which in turn shapes familiarity and images of places. As such information sources may be influential in creating intent and an initial purchase.

Destination Image

According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) image is an important component in choosing a destination and studies of image have aided scholars in the study of tourism behavior. With increasing opportunities offered to travelers, individuals are faced with choosing among vacation destinations in an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace. Destination marketers, therefore, need to position their destination in the travelers' minds (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Key to this process is creating and communicating a favorable image to the potential tourist in his/her home country (Goodall & Ashworth, 1988).

A significant amount of literature in the field has examined the concept of image, including its formation (Gartner, 1993; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Jenkins, 1999; Stern & Krakover, 1993), conceptualization (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) and methodology and measurement of image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Jenkins, 1999), and influence of image on destination choice (Gartner 1993, 1996; Goodall, 1991; Hunt, 1975). Other researchers have focused on familiarity and image associated with previous visit to the location (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Gallarza, Gil, and Calderón (2002) conceptualized and explored measurement of image. They proposed a theoretical model of image, which included four components. The first one is that image has a complex nature and at the same time it has an analytical dimension. The second is that image has a multidimensional nature,

including an action (dynamic) component. The third characteristic of image is that the construct

is relativistic in that it is associated with subjectivity. Due to this characteristic, destination

image can be used as a strategic tool in terms of positioning and segmentation. The fourth

characteristic is that image is dynamic; image changes across time and space. In this sense,

destination image is a tactical variable. Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) suggested image

marketing as one of four strategies in marketing a community. In addition, an image should be

valid and communicated through various channels.

Destination Image Definitions

Tuan (1975), a leading geographer who was one of the first to extensively delve into

concepts such as image and sense of place, defined image in a variety of ways. He explained

that image can be thought of as an artificial portrayal of an object, a perception as a result of

sensory input, a picture in one's mind from memory, or the result of indirect information about a

place. Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) defined image as the expression of knowledge,

impressions, prejudice, imagination and emotional thoughts an individual holds of a place.

Crompton (1979a), defined image "…as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person

has of a destination" (p.18). Perception according to Whynne-Hammond (1985) influences a

variety of human behaviors – social, political and economic.   He defined perception of the

environment referring to what a person thinks the environment is like. Perception in this sense is

represented by image, which is an approach Baloglu (1997) adopted. Whynne-Hammond

pointed out "…perceptions of foreign countries and their inhabitants may be wildly inaccurate"

(p. 9). These perceptions or images depend on the value judgments and attitudes of individuals,

which are shaped by personality characteristics, culture, temperament, experiences, and

prejudice. Therefore, in this study images and perceptions were used interchangeably as the

literature has used them in this way. Further investigations may draw upon existing literature in tourism and other disciplines to better define and distinguish those terms.

Moutinho (1987) presented image as "total thoughts" about a product/destination accumulated after processing of information and consisting of negative, positive or neutral thoughts. According to Goodall and Ashworth (1988) "mental images are the basis of the evaluation or selection process" (p. 3). Thus, image has been defined in different ways, however, the consensus tends to be that image is a multidimensional construct. In the present study destination image using Crompton's (1979a) and Moutinho's (1987) definitions is defined as the beliefs, ideas and impressions that an individual has of a destination, including overarching thoughts about it.

Image Components

Gunn (1972) was one of the first tourism scholars to conceptualize image. He described two types of images: organic and induced. The organic image is formed as a result of communication sources not disseminated by the destination through reports such as news, newspaper articles, geography and history courses, books of fiction and nonfiction, and the like. Induced image, on the other hand, is the result of conscious promotional efforts by the destination and formed by advertising, promotion, and publicity. Similar to Gunn, Relph (1976) and Goodrich (1978) presented two types of images. Relph, for example, distinguished between individual and mass image, where the individual image is shaped by memory, experiences, emotions, and imagination. The mass images are obtained through the mass media and other secondary sources. Goodrich's two types of images were primary (resulting from visit to the destination) and secondary (as a result of information obtained from external to the individual resources). Fakeye and Crompton (1991) added a third image – complex, which results from visiting the destination.

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) proposed a three-dimensional model of image components. In one dimension were the attribute and holistic components. These components are comprised of tangible or functional characteristics, and intangible or psychological characteristics creating the second dimension. The third dimension, on the one hand, consists of 'common' traits, which are functional or psychological, and on the other, unique events, attractions, or feelings. Image, they suggested, is not only based on destination attributes, but also on intangible features such as the atmosphere of a place. In addition, they noted the neglect of the common and unique dimensions in past studies, thus, Echtner and Ritchie's conceptualization also allows for capturing the unique and specific features of each destination. Stern and Krakover (1993) have suggested that the composite or global image is formed by the two components designative (cognitive) and appraisive (affective) components.

Gartner (1993) examined in detail the components of image formation in relation to destination choice process. He concluded that once an individual has decided to take a vacation image becomes an important component in the decision making process as to which destination to select. The three components presented are: cognitive, affective and conative. The cognitive component is represented by the attitudes and beliefs about a product or object forming a picture of its attributes. External stimuli are most important in forming the cognitive image. Since the tourism product is not tangible, images stem from perceptions rather than reality according to Gartner. The affective component is manifested through the emotional evaluations of destinations and is related to the motivations and to the benefits desired by the traveler from a destination. Finally, the conative image is equivalent to the action/behavioral element. The conative component is represented by choosing one travel destination after information is processed and evaluations from alternatives are made.

Milman and Pizam (1995) also examined three components of image of tourist destinations: 1) the product (e.g. attractions, price, category of users); 2) the attitude and behavior of employees interacting with visitors; and 3) the environment (weather, landscape, quality of facilities). Attributes of the destination related to the above categories can then form the cognitive and affective images and ultimately the traveler will select one destination. More recently, Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) discussed the perceptual/cognitive evaluations resulting from knowledge about a destination's attributes and the affective evaluations associated with feelings toward the destination. They suggested that the overall image is formed as a result of both the perceptual/cognitive and the affective images of a place. Using path analysis they showed that perceptual/cognitive evaluations influenced the affective evaluations on three factors: quality of experience, attractions and value/environment. In addition, the perceptual/cognitive evaluations significantly influenced overall image. Affective evaluation also significantly influenced overall image.

Image Formation

Gunn (1972) focused on the influence of "push" and "pull" components of image formation. Internal stimuli such as motivations, beliefs, and perceptions comprise the push factors and the external stimuli (destination attributes, costs, etc.) are related to the pull factors (Crompton, 1979a; Gartner, 1993; Goodall, 1991; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Gartner described the image formation process as a continuum of eight agents and when combined they form the unique image each traveler holds of a destination. The first agent is what he calls Overt Induced I and is comprised of intentional promotional efforts of a destination via television, radio, brochures, and others and directed towards inducing a specific image. This element is characterized by low credibility. Individuals receive many advertising messages throughout their lifetime. They also may realize that these messages may portray destinations in a certain way

and the created image does not necessarily correspond to reality. Therefore, such forms of destination advertising may have low credibility. The second image creating agent is called Overt Induced II. This group is comprised of information produced and received by tour operators, wholesale operators, and so on. The role of these agencies is to create favorable images of destinations for which they offer tours (Lapage & Cormier, 1977). The next agent is called Covert Induced I and involves the use of a celebrity spokesperson and is used to counteract the low credibility stemming from promotions of the Overt Induced I agent. The fourth element, Covert Induced II is comprised of articles, news and other reports about a place that have been influenced by the destination marketers, however, the visitor is not likely to be aware of this. The fifth element is comprised of the Autonomous image agents such as independent movies, reports, articles, and documentaries. The marketers of a destination have no control over these autonomous agents. Gartner explained that news reports are generally considered unbiased, and therefore, have substantial influence on image formation. Due to the power of image formation of autonomous agents they may be useful in changing an image in a relatively short period of time. The sixth element, Unsolicited Organic agents consists of information received that has not been requested by the individual. Due to the fact that this information has not been sought, the retention level is low. However, according to Crotts (1999), information obtained from friends and relatives has great influence on travelers. In other words, word of mouth is an important opinion forming source; therefore, this agent can be an important image formation source. Indeed, the seventh group of agents is the Solicited Organic, which is represented by information provided by friends or relatives who have visited the destination; however, the difference between the Overt Induced II (such as tour operators) and the Solicited Organic source is that the latter is not vested in the outcome of the decision.

Finally, the eighth group of agents is the Organic, which consists of personal experience from a visit to the destination.

Gartner (1993) criticized the research on image as piecemeal and lacking a theoretical basis and as a result noted that the efforts in the destination formation process have been limited. Studies have shown the importance of destination image in the travel decision making process. Image has shown to be a determining factor whether a destination should be considered further or eliminated as an alternative by a potential visitor. Just as the right marketing mix of the four elements (product, price, place, and promotion) is important in the marketing of products and services, he suggested the right mix of image agents is critical to the formation and change of the desired image. Gartner provided some guidance regarding which image forming agents the destinations should use. However, the changing of an image begins with a thorough understanding of the current image in the minds of potential travelers.

The present study attempts to gain an understanding of the current image of Bulgaria and compare it to the image formed as a result of showing a travel DVD falling into the category of a Covert Induced II agent. Gartner could not have been more direct in expressing the importance of implementing an image development strategy: "Destination promoters without an image formation strategy will find it increasingly difficult to maintain, increase, or develop their unique share of the tourism market" (p. 209). Gartner also provided a link between awareness and image, when he stated that the presence of awareness of a destination means that an image of that place exists in the mind's eye of the traveler.

Image and Awareness

Millman and Pizam (1995) focused on the role of awareness in the process of consumer buying behavior. According to the authors awareness is essential to forming an image. Therefore, they argued that awareness of a destination must precede a positive image if that

destination is to be successful. Likewise, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) showed that image

differed on every dimension for non-visitors to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas compared to the

first-time and repeat visitors who were already familiar with the destination.

Image and Sociodemographics

More recently, Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) proposed a model of image formation

developed from relevant literature in different fields and they tested their model using path

analysis. Working from an extensive review of literature, they found that image is influenced by

two major groups of factors: personal factors (including motivations, perceptions, socio-

demographics, etc.) and stimulus factors related to the tourism product, information about the

product, and personal experience (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Goodall, 1991; Goodall &

Ashworth, 1988). These two major groups correspond to the supply and demand factors critical

to tourism development and destination image formation described by several authors (Goodall

& Ashworth, 1988; Gunn, 1972).

According to Husbands (1989), education is the most important variable related to

difference in perception of tourism. He explored perception of tourism among the resident

population of a town in Zambia in terms of its importance to the residents and related to their

employment in tourism or outside of the tourism industry. He also explored the influence of age,

monthly income and profession, but these demographics did not influence perception. Javalgi et

al. (1992) found that level of education did not influence travel behavior, although higher income

played a role in the selection of a European destination by U.S. outbound travelers. Age also

appeared to be influential in the four studied European destinations in that the destinations

tended to attract those over 45 years old, whereas, Southern Europe showed the highest appeal

among the other destinations for younger adults. Stern and Krakover (1993) similarly concluded

that level of education was one of the most important variables in shaping a composite urban

image as a result of the interrelationships between cognitive and affective components. Baloglu (1997) investigated the images of the U.S.A. held by West German visitors. He found no significant differences in terms of gender, income and education, although age, marital status, and occupation did account for significant differences in image.

Chen and Kerstetter (1999) studied differences in rural tourism images among international students in the U.S. due to socio-demographic factors and travel behavior. Their results revealed differences in image dimensions in four of six socio-demographic variables – gender, household status (living with children and/or relatives), home country, and class standing. Men and women differed significantly on two image dimensions – tourism infrastructure dimension and natural amenity dimension. Women were more likely to agree with the items in these two factors. Chen and Kerstetter found that more positive and images that were neutral or negative emerged in terms of rural tourism in Pennsylvania. Therefore, they suggested that the promotional materials should emphasize the positive elements.

More recently, Beerli and Martín (2004) found significant but more moderate gender differences for first-time tourists and cognitive image components of general and tourist infrastructure and natural and cultural resources in Lanzarote, Spain. Repeat women visitors significantly differed on the sun and sand component. First-time women visitors significantly differed on the affective image by having a more favorable image toward the destination compared to men. Significant differences in image by age were apparent for the social setting/environment component for both first-timers and repeat visitors. Older tourists viewed the destination generally in a more positive way on this dimension. In terms of education, the affective image was lower when education levels were higher. Results showed that first-time tourists had a negative association with the cognitive image dimension of natural/cultural

resources. Furthermore, respondents with higher social class rated the destination lower on this dimension. Significant differences for first-timers and repeaters in three out of five cognitive image categories as well as for the affective dimension were also apparent by country of origin. Deslandes (2006) found that there were gender differences in destination image among visitors to St. Lucia. Women tended to rate St. Lucia more favorably on all image attributes than men. Thus, overall there does not seem to be a lot of consensus in the literature regarding the influence of socio-demographics on destination image.

Intent to travel

A number of factors have been found to influence the decision making process when selecting a destination. Those components are awareness, image, perceptions and beliefs, and information sources (Stern & Krakover, 1993). Intent is a component directly preceding destination choice in Woodside and Lysonski's model (1989).

Definition of Intention

Intent or intention was defined by Howard and Sheth (1969) "…as a cognitive state that reflects the buyer's plan to buy units of a particular brand in some specified time period" (p.132). The literature specifies that intention should be examined in terms of a specific time frame in which the purchase should occur. The decision making process can be conceptualized as a continuum: information can lead to awareness, generate interest, create desire, and result in action (refer to the AIDA sequence discussed in chapter 1); therefore, information influences preference and choice of destination (Court & Lupton, 1997). As a result, the image of a destination may also change due to information sources.

Relationships of Intention, Destination Familiarity, Awareness, and Image

Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) model of traveler choice consists of the following components: marketing variables (advertising, product design and others); traveler variables

(socio-demographics, lifestyle, and prior destination experience); destination awareness (categorization process); affective associations (positive or negative feelings); traveler destination preferences, intentions to visit; situational variables; and choice. Their discussion focused on several of the model components. Affective associations and categorization influence individual preferences for a destination. Affective associations that are positive, for example, would be toward destinations an individual is considering visiting and negative toward destinations that he/she will not visit. Woodside and Lysonski argued that the categorization process occurring in travelers' minds by dividing the destinations of which the traveler is aware into several categories: consideration set, unavailable/aware set, inert set, and inept set. When examining the image of Turkey among Americans Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002) assumed that travelers had ambiguous or unknown images toward Turkey. Therefore, one reason why tourism in Turkey had not reached its potential may be due to the unclear image of the destination among U.S. travelers. In other words, those negative images may be due to insufficient knowledge about the destination. Moreover, Hunt (1975) expressed the importance of image to the point: "Although a region may contain a wide spectrum and high quality of tourist-recreation resources, a distorted image may detract from realizing potential use or optimum economic development" (p. 1). On the other hand, a destination that has positive images is a destination about which travelers have sufficient information to determine that the destination will be able to meet their needs.

Kotler et al. (1993), for example, emphasized that places can have images that are positive, weak, negative, mixed, contradictory or overly attractive, which may ultimately influence intent to visit and a choice of a destination. The consideration set consists of those destinations that the traveler is considering visiting. The unavailable/aware set consists of destinations of which the

consumer is aware but for one reason or another (cost, distance) they are unavailable. These categorizations are influenced by information received (advertising), product design and variables related to the traveler (age, lifestyle, and others). In Woodside and Lysonski's model after a destination is categorized, affective associations form toward that destination. Woodside and Lysonski continued to explain how travelers construct preferences described as rankings of destinations from least to most liked. Such preferences are influenced by the awareness of the destination, affective associations and traveler variables. The next stage in their model is intent to visit, which is dependent on the formed preferences for a destination. Finally, choice of a destination is shown to be predicted by intent and situational variables. Results from their exploratory study showed that destinations in the consideration sets had positive associations compared to the associations for destinations in the other sets. Results also showed that destinations that were mentioned first had higher preferences. The hypothesis that intention to visit a destination is positively influenced by the preferences toward that destination was partially confirmed. Woodside and Lysonski's study has both important practical and theoretical implications to the study of the destination choice process.

Bigné, Sánchez, and Sánchez (2001) examined the influence of destination image on behavior intentions of visitors after their visit and on image and their evaluation of the stay and concluded that image is a necessary preceding factor in the intention to return and to recommend the destination to others. Thus, it appears that image may play an important role in the initial intent to visit. A number of studies have focused on the influence of image on the selection of a destination (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Goodall, 1991). Intent is associated with preferences of the traveler (Woodside & Carr, 1988; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Woodside and Lysonski's model of destination awareness and choice included preferences, which can be

described as rankings by the consumer of destinations he/she most likes to those he/she likes least. They found that awareness was strongly associated with preference toward destinations. Consumer research studies have shown that top-of-mind-awareness is a predictor of preference for brands and purchase (Axelrod, 1968) or intent to visit a destination (Woodside & Sherrell, 1977). Woodside and Sherrell reported higher scores of intent to visit destinations in the evoked set as a result of unaided awareness. However, according to Woodside and Sherrell since the number of destinations that an individual may consider can be quite large (awareness set), the individual will likely consider a more limited number of destinations for an extensive evaluation. Thus, the evoked set is a smaller set within the larger awareness set. When he and his colleagues examined events and how they are affected by event media, Chalip et al. (2003) found that event media did not influence directly the intent to visit the destination. The effect was through destination image acting as an intervening variable. The influence of image on intent to visit the Gold Coast of Australia was significant; however, there were differences in the significance of image dimensions between U.S. travelers and New Zealanders. In contrast, Deslandes (2006) found that the impact of destination image on the intent to return to St. Lucia was minimal.

Intention and Socio-demographics

Intent to visit a destination has not been examined extensively in the tourism literature. Some studies have examined the relationship between intention to revisit and past visits (Court & Lupton, 1997; George & George, 2004). Court and Lupton concluded from their study that when a destination has a more favorable image, respondents were more likely to visit the destination. Also, an individual was more likely to visit a destination due to several variables: distance to the destination, higher income, smaller household size, and prior visitation, among others. The authors also emphasized the importance of travel information. Results showed that travelers were likely to visit or revisit New Mexico if they were exposed to travel information and/or have

visited the destination. Travel information shapes travelers' preferences, images, contributes to greater awareness and may lead to greater levels of intent to visit and eventually to revisit the location.

Recently, Deslandes (2006) in his study of image, satisfaction, and behavioral intention among visitors to St. Lucia found that there were gender differences in terms of behavioral intent measured as intent to return. Males reported higher behavioral intentions to return than females. Lam and Hsu's (2006) study examined behavioral intention to visit a destination and the influence of attitude, perceived behavioral control, and past behavior by applying the theory of planned behavior. Their results showed that past behavior, perceived behavioral control and subjective norm had a direct influence on intention. Intention was measured as selecting Hong Kong as a travel destination by potential Taiwanese travelers. Attitude, however, did not influence intention. The study recognized that previous literature has noted differences in behavior of Western and Eastern tourists. Thus, the literature suggests that there are no consistencies as to the influence of socio-demographics on intent to visit a destination.

Prior Travel Experience

Prior travel experience is an important component influencing tourist behavior, participation in activities at a destination, likelihood to visit a destination, and information search behavior (Lehto, Kim, & Morrison, 2006; Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Weaver, Weber, & McCleary, 2007). In addition, the images and familiarity with places are influenced by travelers' prior travel experiences (Baloglu, 2001; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Milman & Pizam; 1995).

Mazursky (1989), for example, suggested that personal travel experiences may be more critical in the travel decision making process than information obtained from external sources such as travel brochures, magazines, television, and others. In relation to destination image

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Fakeye and Crompton (1991) found that images of a destination in Texas held by non visitors (people who have not visited a destination) differed from the images of first-time or repeat visitors. As a result, marketing and promotional efforts of destinations will be affected by such findings.

In terms of likelihood to visit Milman and Pizam (1995) found that those who were familiar with (have visited) Central Florida were more inclined to visit that destination again. The authors' propensity to travel index consisting of number of trips taken in the past five years, destination's location, and length of time spent at that destination did not reveal any significant differences among the three groups of travelers: not aware (never heard of Central Florida- CF); aware (never visited CF); and familiar (have visited CF). The authors' explanation for this result was that Central Florida may not be suitable as a destination for travelers with limited travel experience. Similarly, Sönmez and Graefe (1998)found support for their first hypothesis that prior travel to a region increases the likelihood that an individual will travel in the future to that region as part of his/her next international vacation. Risk and safety were also found to influence future travel intentions. Their results also showed that individuals who have previously traveled to risky regions (e.g. Africa, Middle East and others) were not as likely to avoid travel to those places compared to travelers with no travel experience to the same regions.

In a study of tourist roles (using Cohen's [1972] four types), international travel and perceived risk among college students Lepp and Gibson (2003) found that organized mass tourists who had traveled most internationally had a higher perception of cultural barriers in terms of risk compared to travelers who have traveled less (i.e. less experience). This was also true for drifters. This seemed an unlikely finding, which the authors explained may have been the result of the following hypothesis that greater contact with different cultures may lead to

travelers being more cautious. This was not true in the case of explorers and independent mass

tourists, though. However, it can also be concluded based on the previous discussion of

familiarity and awareness that more experience contributes to greater awareness of such risks.

In terms of activity participation at a destination, Lehto, O'Leary, and Morrison (2004)

found that prior experience influenced activity participation negatively. The more experience

UK travelers to the U.S. had, the less they participated in activities and the less they visited

various places during their vacation. In another study Lehto, Kim and Morrison. (2006) found

that prior experience with a destination significantly affected the degree of internet search (i.e.

hours of internet use for trip planning and length of trip planning such as days, weeks, etc.).

Travelers with no previous experience to the destination engaged in a more extensive internet

search, which was expected by the researchers.

Weaver, Weber, and McCleary (2007) found that prior travel experience (i.e. the more

countries they have visited) had a positive association with service quality of Hong Kong as a

destination. However, there was a negative correlation between previous travel experience

(number of countries visited) and the likelihood of visiting Hong Kong.

Tourist Roles

The literature on tourist behavior and roles travelers assume when they travel can shed

light on why tourists assume such roles. In other words, researchers have examined factors such

as socio-demographics, the environment in which an individual was brought up, motivations,

preferences, needs, past travel experience and others that can help tourism marketers and tourism

sociologists understand why travelers identify with one type of tourist role rather than another.

The discussion that follows will examine the concept of tourist role preference.

International tourists can be classified into several types according to the degree of

familiarity and novelty they seek (Cohen, 1972). Cohen introduced the familiarity - novelty

continuum and he proposed four types of international tourists that differed in the degree of familiarity they sought while traveling: the organized mass tourist (OMT), the individual mass tourist (IMT), the explorer (EXP), and the drifter (DTR). The organized mass tourist prefers most familiarity, goes on guided tours and prefers to stay in his/her "environmental bubble" of the familiar environments. The organized mass tourist is comfortable in destinations similar to his/her own or destinations that can provide comfortable accommodations and are safe. Such tourists may not be likely to explore the destination on their own. The individual mass tourist on the other hand prefers to travel independently; however, he/she prefers familiarity. This type of tourist is more inclined than the previous type to have a more flexible schedule and he/she is not tied to a group tour. Therefore, he/she may explore the host country by visiting certain attractions, but his/her trip has been arranged by a travel agent. The explorer, on the other hand, prefers even more independence, arranges his/her own trip, seeks a good degree of novelty, and immerses more in the local environment. The explorer, according to Cohen, ventures off the beaten track. He or she may, therefore, visit remote natural and cultural areas. However, he/she may still choose comfortable accommodations. Finally, the drifter has no time schedule, he/she tries to fully immerse in the local culture and even work to support himself/herself while traveling. The drifter interacts with locals so perhaps the language barrier may not be considered as critical. In addition, novelty is at its highest for the drifter. Such a tourist may enjoy undeveloped and remote areas of interest to him/her that are far away from the established tourist areas.

Tourism research in recent decades has emphasized the importance of image, destination awareness, and tourist roles among other factors in the destination choice process (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Stabler, 1988; Goodall, 1991; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). In addition,

studies show that as tourists differ in types of vacations they choose according to their needs, motivations, preferences, and novelty tolerance travelers may differ by the level of prior knowledge they have about them, by the way they perceive destinations, and therefore, their familiarity, awareness with and images of those places may differ as well (Crompton, 1979a; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Plog, 1974, 2001). For example, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) emphasized the influence of psychological factors such as perception, learning, and motivation on individual's attitudes and, therefore his/her behavior. In other words, these psychological factors may affect the type of destination he/she chooses.

However, other studies do not support the view that socio-demographics may determine to a large extent what type of vacation he/she will choose and the type of role he/she will play as a tourist (Graburn, 1977). Graburn, for example, indirectly supported the position that income may not be as influential as many think it is in determining the likelihood that individuals will travel. He suggested education may be a more powerful predictor. Graburn explained that education is linked to cultural self-confidence and as such influences what type of vacations individuals take, in particularly Americans (Graburn, 1983). Cultural self-confidence refers to the extent to which a traveler is inclined to explore the unexpected and unknown and ready to get out of his/her "environmental bubble" as Cohen put it (1972). Lack of such confidence also relates to Plog's (1974, 2001, 2004) tourist types based on psychographics (study of individuals' personality characteristics) and in particular matches the *psychocentrics (dependables)* category, which is discussed in more detail later. Graburn argued that cultural self-confidence related to travel is influenced more by education rather than income. Based on Graburn's work one might conclude that an individual's environment and upbringing and particularly his/her educational background influences the type of vacations he/she takes, including the roles he/she assumes as a

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traveler. As a consequence to Graburn's work, which emphasized the significance of cultural self-confidence, social class and other factors, such as an individual's familiarity, awareness and images of a destination are expected to be different. Campbell (1978) cited by Graburn described the American affluent working class as one lacking self-cultural confidence to travel outside of their "environmental bubble" and as a consequence not readily willing to try different accommodations, speak different languages, etc. According to Campbell, the educational background of many working class people does not instill in them the confidence to explore cultures that are different than their own.

Plog (2001) also questioned the explanatory power of demographic segmentation used by so many in the tourism industry. Plog (1974) proposed a model of personality travel types based on psychographics in relation to a destination's life cycle. His continuum ranges from *psychocentrics*, whom later he called *dependables* on one end to *allocentrics* or *venturers* on the other. The majority of travelers fall in the middle section of the model as *mid-centrics*. Plog's *dependables* prefer well-known product brands, are not after new ideas and experiences, and have low activity levels, for example. They can be compared to those who are most comfortable in their "environmental bubble" (Cohen, 1972) and those lacking cultural self-confidence (Graburn, 1983). *Venturers*, on the other hand are curious intellectually, self-confident, and relatively active, for example.

Smith (1977) is also credited with presenting seven tourist roles: explorer, elite, off-beat, unusual, incipient mass, mass, and charter. The explorer's purpose for travel is that of discovery. The elite travelers have their trips arranged by a travel agent and purchase expensive trips to experience a unique South American Indian way of life, for example. The off-beat tourist either travels to get away from the crowds or do something unconventional. The unusual traveler is

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likely to take a chartered tour and feels safer if eating the food he/she is used to, even though he/she wants to have a glimpse of the host culture. The incipient mass tourist may travel individually or in groups and looks for Western travel comforts. The mass tourist is seen in great numbers and tends to come from Northern Europe, for example seeking warm vacation destinations such as Spain and the Mediterranean (although this is beginning to change as individuals from the Asia-Pacific countries are beginning to travel more). Charter tourists belong to tour groups with highly structured itineraries. Smith's typology supports the ideas, which were put forward by Cohen (1972) and Plog (1974), that tourists differ in their tolerance for novelty. As an anthropologist her main concern in differentiating these tourist types was the impact that the mass tourists had on the destinations they visited.

Pearce (1985) built upon Cohen (1974), Smith (1977) and others and identified fifteen tourist roles based on fuzzy-set theory: tourist, traveler, holidaymaker, jet-setter, businessman, migrant, conservationist, explorer, missionary, overseas student, anthropologist, hippie, international athlete, overseas journalist, and religious pilgrim. His categories were based upon behaviors a traveler exhibits categorized along twenty behavioral dimensions (whether he/she takes photos, buys souvenirs, etc.). Pearce used multidimensional scaling to examine how the roles are interrelated and as a result five clusters emerged: "spiritual" consisting of religious pilgrim, hippie and missionary; "environmental" consisting of anthropologist, conservationist and explorer; "high contact" consisting of traveler, overseas student and overseas journalist; "pleasure first" made up of tourist, holidaymaker and the final cluster "exploitative" consisting of businessman, where jet-setter overlaps into the last two categories. The migrant and international athlete types did not fit into any of the five clusters; however, he explained that their location on the grid in relation to the other clusters is "broadly consistent" (p.36).

Following both Cohen (1972) and Pearce (1985), Yiannakis and Gibson (1992), further delineated Pearce's fifteen traveler roles and focused on leisure-based tourist roles. Beginning in 1986, Yiannakis identified eight tourist roles and in subsequent work with Gibson, they developed the tourist role preference scale that measures thirteen tourist roles (Gibson, 1989, 1994; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). Using multidimensional scaling they identified three dimensions underlying each of the roles (Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992) (two additional roles were added by Gibson, 1994). These were: stimulation-tranquility, familiarity-strangeness, and structure-independence. The first dimension reflects the level of tranquility that one seeks in a vacation versus the stimulation of activities, sights, etc. The second axis represents the continuum of a familiar environment versus the novel and less known environments and experiences. The last dimension represents how structured one's vacation is and the level of pre-planning and rigidity involved. The authors proposed that while "Psychological needs (which serve as push factors) motivate individuals to select and enact tourist roles in destinations that are perceived to provide an optimal balance of stimulation-tranquility, familiarity-strangeness, and structure-independence" (p. 300), socio-cultural variables such as gender, life stage, and social class shaped the choice of tourist role (Gibson, 1989, 1994; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1988; 1992)

In the same vein as Yiannakis and Gibson's work, Mo, Howard, and Havitz (1993) and Mo, Havitz, and Howard (1994) developed a twenty-item scale to operationalize Cohen's (1972) tourist roles. The resulting International Tourism Role Scale (ITR) was used to identify different types of tourists on the three travel dimensions and demographics: destination-orientation dimension (DOD); travel services dimension (TSD); and social contact dimension (SCD). The authors identified four types of tourist, the High Novelty Seekers (HNS), the High Familiarity Seekers (HFS), Destination Novelty Seekers (DNS), and Social Contact Seekers (SCS). High

Novelty Seekers (HNS) corresponded most closely to Cohen's drifter and explorer types. Next, the DNS type corresponded most closely to the Organized Mass Tourist. The SCS corresponded to Cohen's types of Independent Mass Tourist and Explorer. The HFS referred to those tourists who seek security in their experience and who prefer familiar destinations.

Mo et al. found that the different tourist types differed by marital status, age and education. They also found that SCS cluster was comprised primarily of college students, most of whom were young and single. Fifty-seven percent of the DNS travelers were alumni who were older, half of whom were married and more than half had a college degree. In terms of past international travel experience, tourist types were also significantly different. For example, the High Novelty Seekers had higher scores on statements related to novelty experiences on their latest trip, which were not present in the U.S. and had more contact with locals. HNS tourists tended to be in their 40s, college educated and single. In addition, HNS and DNS tourists had traveled more frequently internationally compared to the SCS and HFS tourists.

Similarly, Gibson and Yiannakis (2002) found that tourists classified by their fifteen tourist roles tended to vary by age or life stage and gender. For example, they found preference for some roles such as the Action Seeker, Drifter and Thrill Seeker tended to decline with age, whereas, others such as the Organized Mass Tourist increased with age. There were also differences by gender, for example, younger women preferred culturally-oriented types of roles such as the Anthropologist compared to their male counterparts who showed more interest in thrill seeking in their 20s. Thus, in the tourist role literature there seem to be some consistencies especially as they relate to Cohen's (1974) argument that there is not just one type of tourist but many types. Specifically, for this study it appears that some tourists were attracted to novel destinations that they know little about whereas, others preferred more familiar destinations.

Moreover, is also appears that these preferences might be further explained by gender, life stage, income and level of education.

Lepp and Gibson (2003) used Cohen's (1972) tourist role typology to understand how different types of tourists perceive the level of familiarity and difference associated with various destinations. They found that familiarity seekers, i.e. organized and independent mass tourists were more likely to perceive more risk associated with destinations they perceived as more different or less familiar than the U.S. Thus, images held of a destination were linked to different types of tourist role. Specifically, Lepp and Gibson found that preference of tourists for novelty is associated with perceived travel risk. In other words, a tourist's psychological and personal characteristics, culture, and environment may help determine what type of vacations he/she will be seeking. This in turn may determine what type of travel information the traveler will seek, which may likely influence knowledge and awareness of travel destinations around the world. The position that a certain level of awareness as a result of the information sources used may form specific images of destinations has been supported by Gunn (1972) and others (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chalip et al., 2003; Gartner, 1993).

In summary, prior travel experience as a dimension of prior knowledge (Kerstetter & Cho, 2004) influences the vacation decision making process. It may also influence the individual's travel behavior and tourist role he/she assumes as well as the level of awareness and images he/she has of a destination, and the likelihood of visiting that destination.

Summary

Tourism destination choice studies have focused both on psychological variables such as motivations, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes on one hand and on non-psychological variables such as cost of travel, time, attributes of the destination, traveler characteristics, etc. on the other that influence traveler's selection of a destination (Goodall, 1991; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

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The present study's focus was to examine the interrelationships among destination familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to travel to a specific destination – the less known country of Bulgaria - by U.S. college students. This study builds upon Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) work by including familiarity and prior knowledge as important variables to the destination choice model. In addition, the various tourist roles an individual assumes, his/her prior travel experience and socio-demographic characteristics have been shown to influence an individual's travel behavior and choice of destinations as a result of traveler images and awareness.

Destination familiarity, awareness, image, and intent are important variables influencing tourist behavior and many studies have examined the complex relationships among them (Chalip, et al., 2003; Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Moreover, socio-demographic factors, prior travel experiences and tourist role preferences have been shown to influence the level of awareness, image and intent to travel (Ahmed, 1991; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Boo & Busser, 2005; Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Deslandes, 2006; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Pike, 2002). Tourists choosing specific tourist roles may look for destinations that will fit those roles influenced by the degree of familiarity and novelty they seek in a destination.

The theoretical framework consisting of three theories: the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior, and theories linking awareness and purchase behavior can be used to predict intention to visit and actual behavior with the latter being beyond the scope of this study. It is important for marketers of emerging tourist destinations to understand the level of awareness, images, and attitudes their destinations evoke in the tourists' minds, which in turn

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will aid in the targeted design of promotional materials, the effective market segmentation and

branding and positioning of the destination.

CHAPTER 3
METHODS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to visit Bulgaria among a sample of U.S. college students. This chapter explains the instrumentation, procedures used to collect data and the statistical analyses used to answer the research questions. According to the statistical procedures performed destination awareness, familiarity, image, and intent to visit Bulgaria were used as dependent variables. Gender, tourist role preference, and previous international travel experience were independent variables.

Data Collection

The study used a one group pre-test post-test pre-experimental design. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were assured of confidentiality at the beginning of the study. Participants were asked three screening questions before the instrument was administered. The first question asked participants if they were a U.S. citizen born in the United States. The next question inquired whether they had ever visited Bulgaria. The last question asked if they had accessed travel-related information about Bulgaria, such as searching the Internet, seen advertising about the country, travel brochures and others. Only participants who were U.S. citizens born in the U.S. were surveyed. The last two questions controlled for the forming of complex image and induced images, in other words if individuals answered "yes" (i.e. they did visit) they were not included in the study. Studies show that the image of destination is influenced by a visit to the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995). In addition, the stimulus was a source for the formation of induced images about Bulgaria.

For the pre-test participants were asked to fill out the first part of the questionnaire. When they had completed this task, a geographical map of Bulgaria was shown to the students prior to the showing of the video. They were also told that Bulgaria is located in Eastern Europe on the

Balkan Peninsula and which countries shared a border with Bulgaria. Students then viewed a DVD with two presentations about Bulgaria. The first one showed excerpts of *Surprising Bulgaria* by *Rick Steves' Eastern Europe (2000-2007)* presenting various aspects of Bulgaria including cultural attractions, exploring of towns and rural areas, and others. The second showed excerpts of a promotional video *Bulgaria* by the Bulgarian State Tourism Agency. The DVDs can be categorized according to Gartner's (1993) image agents as a combination of Covert Induced II (which along with articles, news reports and other sources constitutes an important information source influencing travel behavior) and Autonomous image agents and as such, along with the map the DVDs served as the intervention for the study. The video by Rick Steves was chosen as it represented Bulgaria well in a popular format. Rick Steves is known to many Americans with his travel shows about places near and far. This video focused on the fact that Bulgaria is now a democracy, adapting to cater to the needs to the foreign traveler, even though slowly at times, however also offering unique opportunity for experiencing primarily cultural and religious sights. It also showcased the agricultural roots of the country, friendliness and hospitality of Bulgarians, its cuisine, and ethnic diversity. The second video complemented the Rick Steves' video by showcasing Bulgaria as a sun and sea and winter destination, resort entertainment, whitewater rafting, cold and warm mineral water springs, Bulgarian wine, and its rich cultural and archaeological heritage. Both videos (together with the questionnaire) were first pilot-tested with undergraduate students in the summer of 2007. Due to their comments the excerpts from the two videos were modified to create the length and content finally used in the study. Following the intervention in the summer and fall of 2007, the participants were asked to complete the remainder of the questionnaire.

Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of thirteen parts (Appendix). The first part contained one question asking participants if they had heard of the country Bulgaria. Part two consisted of three open-ended questions to gain an understanding of what images first came to the mind of the travelers when thinking about vacationing in Bulgaria, what unique tourist attractions and others associations they had with the country, and atmosphere they would expect to experience in Bulgaria. These questions were developed from Echtner and Ritchie (1993, p.5) who used open-ended questions to measure the holistic and unique elements of image and also Prentice and Andersen (2000, p. 504) for their contribution to association elicitation. Such free elicitation of image according to Prentice and Andersen allows participants to describe the destination using their own words. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of three questions regarding familiarity, whether participants had taken educational classes that have covered some information about Bulgaria and finally, their past use of resources to learn about Bulgaria.

Operationalization of Variables

The first question measuring familiarity was operationalized not as a previous visit but as a self-rated response to the question: "How familiar/knowledgeable do you consider yourself to be with Bulgaria?", where the responses were measured on a five point Likert-type scale (1=not at all familiar, 2=slightly familiar, 3=fairly familiar, 4=quite familiar, 5=very familiar) based on Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002, p. 189). The second question measured whether students have taken any history, geography or other classes in which they learned about Bulgaria with a "yes" "no" response. The third question measured what type of information sources the students have used to learn about Bulgaria including movies, friends/relatives and others.

Part four included seventeen statements measuring the participants' level of knowledge about Bulgaria. This scale and questions were developed from prior studies (Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004). Three response categories "True", "False" and "Don't know" were available.

Part five consisted of 36 image items measuring the image of Bulgaria as a tourist destination on a five point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree) with an added 9 = Don't know category due to the anticipated low familiarity/knowledge about Bulgaria. These items were developed by using Beerli and Martín's (2004, p. 659) and Echtner and Ritchie's (1993, p. 6 and p.9) lists of dimensions and items. In addition, several travel brochures by the Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism were reviewed while items were compiled. In addition, another question measured the overall image of Bulgaria. These questions constituted the pre-test questionnaire. The post-test sections start at the sixth part of the questionnaire and consisted of one question about the self-rated familiarity level of participants after watching the videos. Part seven measured their knowledge about Bulgaria with the seventeen statements discussed previously. Part eight consisted of one open-ended question asking what characteristics came to mind when thinking about going on vacation to Bulgaria. Part nine consisted of the 36 image items measuring the image of Bulgaria among U.S. college students discussed above. These items were followed by a question asking about the overall image of Bulgaria.

Part ten consisted of six questions measuring past travel experiences and future travel intentions, which were followed by five questions measuring the perceived behavioral control in terms of travel to Bulgaria. The first question in part ten measured past international travel experience by asking the students how many times they have traveled internationally. They were also asked to list, which countries they have visited. Similar questions asked participants about

travel to Europe. The third question asked about the likelihood of choosing Bulgaria as the respondents' next vacation destination. The fourth question measured intent to travel to Bulgaria within the next five years. The fifth and sixth questions asked about intended travel abroad and to Europe in the next five years. The scale used was a Likert-type five point scale (1=very unlikely, 2=unlikely, 3=somewhat likely, 4=likely, 5=very likely) measuring intent. These questions were developed by using Sönmez and Sirakaya's scale (2002, pp. 188-189) and from the literature on intent to travel. Such questions include a specific time frame within which travel to occur, which is considered a necessary component of measurement of behavioral intent. Question seven was in the form of a statement: "If I wanted I could easily visit Bulgaria within the next five years" where the responses ranged from strongly disagree =1 to strongly agree =5. The next statement measured how possible=5 or impossible=1 would it be for the respondent to visit Bulgaria. Question nine was a statement measuring whether the respondent believed he/she has the resources to visit Bulgaria in the next five years. The tenth statement measured whether visiting Bulgaria is expensive. Question eleven was a statement measuring whether the cost to travel to Bulgaria would influence the respondent's decision to visit Bulgaria. The last three questions used a Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree). These questions were developed by using Ajzen's scale (Ajzen, 2002, rev. 2006). Part eleven consisted of one question using a fixed choice format asking the type of information resources respondents typically use to plan their travel. Part twelve contained four statements developed by Lepp and Gibson (2003) describing the behaviors associated with Cohen's (1972) four tourist types – the organized mass tourist (OMT), the independent mass tourist (IMT), the explorer (EXP), and the drifter (DTR). Participants chose one statement that described their travel patterns best. Part thirteen contained questions related

to the participants' gender, marital status, age, annual family income, class standing, and racial background. The questions were presented in a fixed choice format, except for the question about the age of the participants, which asked them to write the year they were born.

Participants

The face and content validity of the instrument were established using an undergraduate research methods class during Summer A 2007. Changes in the wording and general usability of the questionnaire were made. The students also previewed the DVDs and made suggestions on the intervention that were subsequently incorporated into the data collection protocol.

The sample used was a convenient sample. The participants were college students ages 18 years and over at a large Southeastern University. The sample size was 82 college students. These were students enrolled in two Summer B classes 2007 and two Fall 2007 classes.

Participants were asked the following pre-screening questions: 1) Are you a U.S. citizen born in the United States? 2) Have you ever been to Bulgaria? and 2) Have you accessed any travel brochures or come in contact with other tourist advertising information of Bulgaria? When a respondent answered "no" to question one he/she was thanked and the participant was precluded from taking part in the study as several students were foreign-born. No students responded that they saw promotional material of Bulgaria or that visited the country. These questions allowed the researcher to control for familiarity from personal experience and for the formation of an induced image from promotional materials prior to this study.   A prior visit to the destination has been argued that influences and modifies an individual's image of that destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Millman & Pizam, 1995).

Of the 82 participants 15 were males (18.3%) and 67 females (81.7%). Demographics and tourist role experiences are presented in Table 3-1 at the end of the chapter. As expected 64.7% of the students were between the ages of 18 and 21, 31.7% were between 22 and 24 and 3.6%

were between 25 and 33 years old. In terms of family income (including their parents') 14.6% reported that their family income was below $25,000 a year, 8.5% reported it was between $25,001 and $50,000, 11% reported $50,001 and $75,000, 22% reported $75,001 and $100,000, 8.5% between $100,001 and $125,000, 6.1% between $125,001 and $150,000 and 25.6% reported family income over $125,001. Only one student reported that he/she was married or partnered and the rest were single. The racial breakdown of the sample was as follows: 68.3% were white of non-Hispanic origin, 13.4% were Hispanic; 8.5% black, 4.9% other (including multi-racial), 3.7% were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1.2% Native American. In terms of the students' class standing seniors constituted the largest group 67.1%, followed by juniors 19.5%, freshman 7.3%, graduate students 4.9% and 1.2% sophomores.

In terms of travel experience 25.6% (n = 21) have never traveled internationally, 41.5 % (n = 34) traveled one to two times, 19.5% (n = 16) have traveled three to four times and 13.44% n = 11) have traveled five or more times. In terms of travel to Europe 63.4% (n = 52) have never traveled to Europe, 26.8% (n = 22) have been one-two times, 7.3% (n = 6) have been three to four times and 2.4% (n = 2) have been five or more times. In terms of students' tourist roles those who were classified as explorers had the highest percentage 42.7%, followed by the independent mass tourist 30.5%, the organized mass tourist 19.5% and finally the drifter 4.9%.

Data Analysis

Participants' Demographics, Travel Experiences, and Tourist Roles and Information Sources

Descriptive statistics were used on all of the variables to gain an overall picture of the data. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.

Analysis of the Research Questions

The following statistics were used: Cronbach's alpha, independent samples t-test, paired difference t-test, cross-tabulation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and multiple regression. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the image items and scale.

Pre-test Research Question 1

1a. What is the level of awareness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination among U.S. college students?

Descriptive statistics and frequencies were reported on awareness of Bulgaria as a destination.

1b. Does the level of awareness vary by previous international travel experience?

Cross-tabulation was used to analyze differences in awareness in terms of (i) previous international travel experience and (ii) previous travel to Europe.

1c. Does the level of awareness vary by tourist role preference?

Crosstabulation was used to assess differences in awareness according to tourist role preference.

1d. Does level of awareness vary by gender?

Crosstabulation was used to determine differences in awareness according to gender.

Pre-test Research Question 2

2a. What is the level of familiarity with Bulgaria among U.S. college students?

Descriptive statistics were used to attain the familiarity level of students. Familiarity was operationalized in two ways: (i) examining the response to the question "How familiar/knowledgeable do you consider yourself to be with Bulgaria?"; and (ii) in terms of the responses to the 17 knowledge items related to knowledge about Bulgaria. The students who answered correctly to a knowledge statement were assigned one point, those who answered incorrectly were assigned zero and those who did not know the answer were counted as missing.

A sum score was calculated with a possible range between 0 and 17. A higher score would mean the student has a higher level of familiarity based on knowledge of Bulgaria.

2b. Does familiarity vary by previous international travel experience?

Frequencies were reported on familiarity and past travel experience – both international and specifically to Europe. Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the influence of (i) past international travel experience on self-rated familiarity and (ii) influence of previous travel to Europe on self-rated familiarity. In addition, non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests were performed to further examine these influences. Independent samples t-tests were also used to examine (i) the influence of prior international travel experience and (ii) travel to Europe on the total familiarity/knowledge score based on the 17 knowledge items. Mann-Whitney tests wee also used.

2c. Does familiarity vary by tourist role preference?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the relationship between (i) tourist role preference and self-rated familiarity and (ii) sum knowledge score. A non-parametric test Kruskal-Wallis test, equivalent to ANOVA, was also used to examine the relationship.

2d. Does familiarity differ by gender?

Independent t-tests were used to examine the effect of gender on (i) self-rated familiarity and (ii) knowledge sum scores. Mann-Whitney tests were used due to violation of some assumptions.

Post-test Research Question 2

2e. Following the intervention, what is the participants' level of familiarity and is it different from familiarity before the intervention?

Descriptives were reported on self-rated familiarity and familiarity based on the 17 knowledge items after the intervention. In addition, paired t-tests were used to measure differences on both the self-rated familiarity and familiarity based on the knowledge items pre-test and post-test.

2f. What influence does previous international experience have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the influence of (i) previous international travel experience and (ii) previous travel to Europe on the self-rated familiarity. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests were used also. Independent samples t-tests were used to examine differences in familiarity based on the knowledge items according to (i) prior international travel experience and (ii) prior travel to Europe. Again, Mann-Whitney tests were used.

2g. What influence does tourist role preference have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

ANOVA was used to examine (i) differences in self-rated familiarity among the four tourist roles and again to examine (ii) differences in the sum knowledge score among these tourist roles. A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to examine differences.

2h. What influence does gender have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effect of gender on (i) self-rated familiarity and (ii) sum knowledge score. Mann-Whitney tests were used to further examine the effect of gender on familiarity.

Pre-test Research Question 3

3a. What organic images of Bulgaria do U.S. college students hold?

Descriptive statistics were generated for the 36 image items and overall image of Bulgaria. Factor analysis of the items and Cronbach's alpha (a measure of the internal consistency of the items and the scale) were not used as the data contained missing values due to the use of "don't know" category. Instead, five image categories were created based on the literature. Descriptive statistics of the categories were reported.

3b. Does the overall organic image vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the influence of previous international travel experience and travel to Europe on the overall image. In addition, Mann-Whitney tests were used.

3c. Does the overall organic image vary by tourist role preference?

ANOVA was used to examine the influence of tourist role preference on the overall organic image. A Kruskal-Wallis test was also used due to a violation of the normality assumption.

3d. Does the overall organic image vary by gender?

An independent samples t-test was used to examine gender differences organic image. In addition, a Mann-Whitney test was used.

Post-test Research Question 3

3e. Following the intervention, do the induced and overall images held by U.S. college students vary from their organic images?

Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the image scale and the five image categories. Paired t-tests were used to test differences in the 36 image items, the five image categories, and the overall image before and after intervention.

3f. Does the induced overall image vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine (i) differences in the overall image according to prior international travel experience and (ii) prior travel to Europe. Mann-Whitney tests were used due to violation of the normality assumption.

3g. Does the induced overall image vary by tourist role preference?

ANOVA was used to examine the difference in overall image among the four tourist roles. A Kruskal-Wallis test followed due to the normality assumption violation.

3h. Does the induced overall image vary by gender?

An independent samples t-test was used to examine difference in the overall image between males and females. A Mann-Whitney test was also used.

Research Question 4

4a. What are the travel intentions of U.S. college students towards Bulgaria as a vacation destination after the intervention?

Frequencies and descriptives were reported to answer this question.

4b. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine differences in intentions to visit according to (i) prior international travel experience and (ii) prior travel to Europe. Mann-Whitney tests were used.

4c. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by tourist role preference? ANOVA was used to examine differences in intent to visit Bulgaria in the next five years according to tourist role preference. A Kruskal-Wallis test were also used to examine differences.

4d. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by gender?

An independent samples t-test was used to examine differences in intent to visit among males and females. A Mann-Whitney test was used also.

Research Question 5

Following the intervention, what is the relationship among the overall induced image of Bulgaria among U.S. college students, their familiarity levels (both self-rated and knowledge-based) and intent to travel in the next five years?

Standard multiple regression was used to examine this relationship and predict intent to travel to

Bulgaria. Predictors in the analysis were overall image, self-rated familiarity and knowledge-

based familiarity, where intent to visit was predicted.

The following chapter reports the results of this analysis.

Table 3-1. Participants' demographic characteristics and tourist role preference (N=82)

Characteristic	n	%
Age		
18-21	53	64.7
22-24	26	31.7
25-33	3	3.6
Class Standing		
Freshman	6	7.3
Sophomore	1	1.2
Junior	16	19.5
Senior	55	67.1
Graduate student	4	4.9
Gender		
Female	67	81.7
Male	15	18.3
Annual family income ($)		
25,000 or less	12	15.2
25,001-50,000	7	8.9
50,001-75,000	9	11.4
75,001-100,000	18	22.8
100,001-125,000	7	8.9
125,001-150,000	5	6.3
150,001 or more	21	26.6
Racial background		
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	3.7
Black non-Hispanic	7	8.5
White non-Hispanic	56	68.3
Hispanic	11	13.4
Native American/ American Indian	1	1.2
Tourist role preference		
Organized mass tourist	16	19.5
Independent mass tourist	25	30.5
Explorer	35	42.7
Drifter	4	4.9

Note. Percentages may not equal to 100 due to missing data.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study and is organized according to each of the research questions. The findings before and after exposure to the stimulus pertaining to 1) awareness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination; 2) familiarity with Bulgaria; 3) image of Bulgaria; and 4) intent to travel to Bulgaria are presented.

Awareness

Pre-test Research Question 1

1a. What is the level of awareness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination among U.S. college students?

Respondents were asked if they had heard of Bulgaria and those who had were considered as being aware of the country. Out of a total sample of 82 students, 89% (n = 73) had heard of Bulgaria and 11% (n = 9) had not. When asked what types of resources they had used to learn about Bulgaria, 52.4% (n = 43) reported that they had not used any resources, followed by 15.9% (n = 13) who had taken a related history or geography class, 12.2% (n = 10) reported movies, and 11% (n = 9) of students reported their source as news programs.

1b. Does the level of awareness vary by previous international travel experience?

In terms of previous international travel experience 25.6% (n = 21) reported they have never been abroad, 41.5% (n = 34) have traveled one-two times, 19.5% (n = 16) have traveled three-four times and 13.4% (n = 11) have traveled five or more times.

Cross-tabulation was used to analyze such differences in awareness. Due to small expected counts when all responses for previous international travel experience were considered from never traveled to traveled five or more times, the respondents were grouped in two categories: never traveled internationally (n = 21) and traveled internationally one or more times (n = 61). Frequencies were examined to compare percentages of those who have heard of

Bulgaria and their international travel experience. Out of those who have heard of Bulgaria 72.6% (n = 53) had traveled internationally one or more times and 27.4% (n = 20) had not traveled internationally. Out of those who had not heard of Bulgaria, 88.9% (n = 8) had traveled abroad and 11.1% (n = 1) had not. In other words, it was more likely for those who have traveled internationally to have heard of Bulgaria but also it was more likely for such a person to not have heard of Bulgaria. Therefore, it can be concluded that prior international travel somewhat influenced an individual's level of awareness.

The chi-square test of significance for these participants was invalid due to the occurrence of an expected value of less than five in one of the cells of the 2x2 table. Instead, the use of Fisher's exact test is suggested by several authors (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, & Barrett, 2004; Sirkin, 1999). The Fisher's test yielded p = .44 for a two-sided test. The cut-off significance level for this test was p ≤ .05 so it can be concluded that the observed distribution of awareness and international travel experience cannot be said to be significantly different from a distribution obtained by chance (Garson, n.d.a).

In terms of prior travel to Europe, 63.4% (n = 52) of the students reported they have never been to Europe, 26.8% (n = 22) have traveled one-two times, 7.3% (n = 6) have been three-four times and 2.4% (n = 2) have traveled five or more times. Crosstabulation was used to examine differences in awareness according to prior travel to Europe. Results indicated that 36.6% (n = 30) have traveled one or more times to Europe and 63.4% (n = 52) have not. Out of those who have heard of Bulgaria 60.3% (n = 44) had not traveled to Europe previously and 39.7% (n = 29) have traveled to Europe one or more times. In addition, out of those not aware of Bulgaria a high percentage – 88.9% (n = 8) have not traveled to Europe and only 11.1% (n = 1) reported they have traveled to Europe. Therefore, these percentages reveal that travel to Europe

did not influence the level of awareness of students with Bulgaria. Due to low expected

frequencies, the Fisher's exact test is reported, $p = .15$ for a two-sided test. Thus, it could not be

established that travel to Europe had a significant influence on awareness. However, as shown in

Table 4-1 the results show that a higher percentage of respondents who were not aware of

Bulgaria have never been to Europe compared to those who have traveled to Europe. To

examine this relationship further the odds ratio was calculated (Field, 2005; Howell, 2002). The

odds ratio is calculated by dividing the odds of those who have traveled to Europe and have

heard of Bulgaria by the odds that those who have never traveled to Europe have not heard of

Bulgaria (Table 4-2). The resulting odds ratio of 5.3 suggests that if someone had visited Europe

he/she was 5.3 times more likely to have heard (or were aware)of Bulgaria.

1c. Does the level of awareness vary by tourist role preference?

The distribution of the four tourist roles across the sample was: 42.7% (n = 35) of the

respondents classified themselves as explorers (EXP), 30.5% (n = 25) were independent mass

tourists (IMT), 19.5% (n = 16) were organized mass tourists (OMT) and 4.9% (n = 4) were

drifters (DTR) (Table 3-1). This distribution is consistent with the one found by Qi (2005) and

Lepp and Gibson (2003) using the same questionnaire item with similar samples of

undergraduates from the same university. Crosstabulation was used to examine differences in

awareness according to tourist role preference (four roles) in a 2x4 table. Due to the low

expected frequencies (less than 5) in several cells chi-square was not valid. When examining the

statistics in Table 4-3 the following can be observed. The percentage of those who have heard of

Bulgaria within each role decreased as the travelers' desire for familiarity increased, where the

highest level of awareness was among the OMT 93.8% (n = 15), followed by the IMT 92% (n =

23), the EXP 85.7% (n = 30) and the lowest was among the DTR 75% (n = 3).   A similar pattern

was observed among those who have not heard of the country within the roles in an ascending

pattern. Out of those who have not heard of the country 6.3% (n = 1) were OMT, 8% (n = 2) were IMT, 14.3% (n = 5) were EXP and 25% (n= 1) were DTR.

According to Morgan et al. (2004), the coefficient Phi (for 2x2 tables) or Cramer's V (for larger tables) are appropriate measures of association between the two categorical variables. In larger tables and in this case in a 2x4 table Phi and Cramer's V are the same, ($\varphi = 0.15$, $p = 0.63$) (Table 4-3). However, due to the small expected values in the table, interpretation of Phi should be used with caution. In this case the strength of the association and therefore, the effect size is about 15%, which is small according to Cohen (1977) (over 10% and up to 30% constitutes a small effect size). This can be interpreted that the type of tourist role had little effect on whether individuals were aware of Bulgaria.

1d. Does level of awareness differ by gender?

Crosstabulation was used to examine difference in awareness by gender. When percentages of whether an individual had heard of Bulgaria or not were compared within each gender category a higher percent of males had heard of the country 93.3% (n = 14) compared to females 88.1% (n = 59). In addition, a higher percent of females 11.9% (n = 8) had not heard of the country compared to males 6.7% (n = 1). A look at the odds ratio represents well the relationship between awareness and gender. The odds of a male being aware were 14 and the odds of a female being aware were 7.38. This gives a resulting odds ratio of 14 to 7.38, which equals to 1.9. This means that males were 1.9 times more likely to have heard (or were aware)of Bulgaria. After running the analysis due to the occurrence of an expected count of less than five it was determined that chi-square was invalid. The Fisher's exact test yielded $p = 1$, which does not provide useful information about the relationship between the variables.

Familiarity

Pre-test Research Question 2

2a. What is the level of familiarity with Bulgaria among U.S. college students?

Level of familiarity with Bulgaria was measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked to rate their level of familiarity with Bulgaria on a five-point Likert-type scale (1=not at all familiar, 2=slightly familiar, 3=fairly familiar, 4=quite familiar, 5=very familiar). Before the intervention out of the total sample of 82 students 87.8% (n = 72) reported they were not at all familiar with Bulgaria, 9.8% (n=8) responded they were slightly familiar, and 1.2% (n = 1) reported they were fairly familiar and 1.2% (n = 1) also reported they were very familiar with the destination (Table 4-4).

Second, familiarity with Bulgaria was measured using 17 knowledge items (Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004). Knowledge of Bulgaria was expressed by the sum of responses to the 17 knowledge items. Respondents received one point for each correctly given answer. They received zero points for incorrect answers or answering "Don't know". Those who had an incorrect answer or did not know the answer were counted as missing, which comprised 28% (n = 23) of respondents. No student responded correctly to all 17 statements. The range of responses was between 0 and 14 (M = 4.68, SD = 3.46). Only 1.2% (n = 1) of the respondents scored 14 and 3.7% (n = 3) scored zero points.

2b. Does familiarity vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effects of prior international travel and travel to Europe on self-rated familiarity and the familiarity sum score based on the 17 knowledge items. First, an independent samples t-test tested the effect of prior international travel experience on self-rated familiarity. The equality of variance assumption was not violated, however, the two sample sizes were unequal (n = 21 never traveled internationally and n = 61

traveled internationally), and the normality assumption was violated. Those who had traveled internationally were not more familiar with Bulgaria (M = 1.16, SD = 0.52) compared to those with no international travel experience (M = 1.14, SD = 0.36). The test was not significant t(80) = -0.17, p = .86, thus previous international travel experience had no effect on self-rated familiarity (Table 4-5). According to Cohen (1977) moderate violations of the parametric tests assumptions have minor influence on Type I (α-level, probability of having effect in the population, when actually there is no effect) and Type II error (β, probability of not having an effect when actually there is an effect). However, due to the violation of normality a non-parametric – Mann-Whitney test was performed, which also showed no significance U = 625.50, p = .78.

An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the influence of prior travel to Europe on self-rated familiarity level. The groups were of unequal sizes and equality of variances and normality assumptions were violated. Those who have never been to Europe had a slightly higher familiarity level (M = 1.21, SD = 0.57) compared to those who have traveled to Europe one or more times (M = 1.07, SD = 0.25), however, those differences were not large enough to be significant t(76.15) = 1.58, p = 0.12 (Table 4-6). In addition, a Mann-Whitney test was used, which resulted in a non-significant outcome, U = 710.00, p = .24.

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effect of international travel and travel to Europe on the total familiarity/knowledge score based on the 17 knowledge items. In terms of international travel those who have previously traveled had a slightly higher knowledge score (M = 4.83, SD = 3.67) compared to those who have not traveled internationally (M = 4.00, SD = 2.32). However, the difference was not large enough to be significant, t(57) = -0.72, p = .48 (Table 4-5). The sample sizes were different and the normality assumption was violated for

those who have traveled abroad more than once, however, the equality of variances assumption was not violated. A Mann-Whitney test was also performed U = 245.00, p = .71, however, no significance of previous international travel on the familiarity score was observed.

When an independent t-test was performed to examine the influence of travel to Europe on the sum familiarity score the normality assumption was violated for those who have been to Europe, however, equality of variances was not violated. Those who have traveled to Europe had a slightly higher knowledge score (M = 4.77, SD = 3.66) compared to those who have never been to Europe (M = 4.62, SD =3.39). Results showed no significant difference of previous travel to Europe on the familiarity score t(57) = -0.16, p = .87 (Table 4-6). A Mann-Whitney test was performed, which also indicated no significance, U = 399.50, p = .91.

Therefore, it appears that self-rated familiarity and familiarity based on the knowledge score did not significantly differ according to prior international travel experience or previous travel to Europe.

2c. Does familiarity vary by tourist role preference?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the relationship between tourist role preference and self-rated familiarity. The independent variable tourist role had four categories: OMT, IMT, EXP and DTR. The dependent variable was self-rated familiarity. The normality assumption was violated in addition to the unequal sample sizes, however, the homogeneity of variances assumption was not violated. The ANOVA did not indicate significant differences in self-rated familiarity across the four tourist roles, F(3, 76) = 0.53, p = .66 (Table 4-7). Due to the deviation from the normal distribution of familiarity among the four roles a non-parametric alternative to ANOVA – the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Results showed that familiarity was not significantly affected by the type of tourist role H(3) = 1.26, p = .74.

Familiarity differences among the four roles were also examined in terms of the sum of the 17 knowledge items. Normality of the sum score was assessed among the four groups with the Shapiro-Wilk statistic, which indicated violation of the assumption for the explorer role, however, for the drifter due to the small sample ($n = 3$) the normality statistic was deemed not reliable. The homogeneity of variances assumption was not violated and ANOVA indicated no significant difference at the $p \leq .05$ level among the four roles in the familiarity score, $F(3, 54) = 2.29$, $p = .09$ (Table 4-7). In addition, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. Results showed that familiarity based on the knowledge items was not significantly influenced by the preference for the four roles, $H(3) = 5.38$, $p = .15$.

2d. Does familiarity differ by gender?

First, an independent-samples t-test was used to test the effect of gender on self-rated familiarity. The equality of variance assumption was not violated, although the two groups were of unequal sizes and the normality assumption was violated. The familiarity level of females ($M = 1.16$, $SD = 0.51$) was similar to that of the males ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.35$). Results indicated that males and females were not significantly different on self-rated familiarity, $t(80) = -0.22$, $p = .83$. A Mann-Whitney test was also conducted, indicating no significant influence of gender on self-rated familiarity, $U = 497.50$, $p = .92$.

In terms of gender differences in the sum of knowledge items the result of the independent t-test showed that males and females did not differ significantly in their knowledge score, $t(57) = 0.17$, $p = .86$. However, males on average had a slightly higher knowledge score ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 3.48$) compared to females ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 3.49$). It should be noted that the normality assumption was violated for males only. Both groups were of unequal sizes, however, there was equality of variances. A Mann-Whitney test was also conducted and resulted in a non significant statistic $U = 192.00$, $p = .79$.

Post-test Research Question 2

2e. Following the intervention, what is the participants' level of familiarity and is it different from familiarity before the intervention?

In terms of self-rated familiarity 46.3 % (n = 38) of the respondents were slightly familiar with Bulgaria, 39% (n = 32) were fairly familiar, 13.4 (n = 11) were quite familiar and 1.2% (n = 1) were very familiar. When compared with familiarity levels before the intervention when 87.8% (n = 72) considered themselves not at all familiar, after the intervention 85.3% (n = 70) considered themselves slightly or fairly familiar (Table 4-4). In terms of familiarity based on the sum of the 17 knowledge items, the students' responses ranged from 5 to 14 (indicating correct) answers (M = 9.00, SD = 2.22).

Familiarity levels before and after the intervention were examined using paired t-tests. First, a paired t-test was used to measure difference in the pre and post self-rated familiarity levels. Results showed that familiarity levels after stimulus exposure (M = 2.70, SD = 0.75) were significantly higher than familiarity before the intervention (M = 1.16, SD = 0.48), t(81) = -16.12, p < .001 (Table 4-8). The effect size d was calculated as follows: d = M/SD and equaled to -1.78. According to Green and Salkind (2003) a value of d above 0.8 regardless of sign is considered a large effect size. The effect size in this case indicates the degree to which the mean of the difference scores veers from zero in standard deviation units. In other words, there was a great variance in the sum score before and after the intervention.

A paired difference t-test was used to examine difference in knowledge-based sum familiarity scores pre- and post-test. Out of the 82 respondents 59 responses were used in the analysis (all those who answered "don't know" were counted as missing data). Results showed that the mean sum score of the post-test familiarity (M = 9.0, SD = 2.22) was significantly higher than the pre-test score (M = 4.68, SD = 3.46), t(58) = -10.20, p<.001 (Table 4-8). The effect size

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index d = -1.33, indicating a large effect attesting to the large difference in the mean scores before and after the intervention. Therefore, self-rated familiarity and familiarity based on the knowledge score were significantly higher after exposure to the stimulus.

2f. What influence does previous international experience have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

An independent samples t-test was used to evaluate whether there were significant differences in the post-test self-rated familiarity levels among those who have never traveled internationally and those who have. The normality assumption was violated and the two samples were unequal, however, variances were equal. Results indicated that those who have traveled internationally were on average slightly more familiar with Bulgaria (M = 2.72, SD = 0.78) compared to those who have not traveled internationally (M = 2.62, SD = 0.67), however, the difference was not significant t(80) = -0.54, p = .59 (Table 4-9). A Mann-Whitney test was used due to the violation of the normality assumption. This test also resulted in non-significant influence of international travel on self-rated familiarity, U = 606.50, p = .69.

An independent samples t-test was used to examine differences in self-rated familiarity among those who have traveled to Europe and those who have not. The test statistic was calculated similarly to that outlined above in regards to meeting of the assumptions. Those who have not traveled to Europe were slightly more familiar with Bulgaria (M = 2.73, SD = 0.77) compared to those who have traveled to Europe (M = 2.63, SD = 0.72). The difference; however, was not significant t(80) = 0.57, p = .57 (Table 4-10). A Mann-Whitney test was also used resulting in non-significant differences among those who have and have not been to Europe, U = 731.00, p = .61.

Similar analyses were used to examine how familiarity based on the 17 knowledge items was influenced by both international travel and travel to Europe. For both, the normality

assumption was violated and the sample sizes were unequal, however, the variances were equal.

Results from the independent samples t-test examining differences according to international

travel indicated that those who have traveled internationally had a slightly higher knowledge

score (M = 8.87, SD = 2.32) compared to those with no international travel experience (M =

8.29, SD = 1.87). No significance was observed t(80) = -1.04, p = .30 (Table 4-9). A Mann-

Whitney test was used due to the violation of the normality assumption. No significant

difference was observed among those who have traveled and those who have not traveled

internationally, U = 544.50, p = .30.

In terms of travel to Europe the average knowledge score of those who have traveled to

Europe was slightly higher (M = 8.83, SD = 2.45) than the score of those who have not been to

Europe (M = 8.65, SD = 2.09). However, the difference between the two groups was not

significant, t(80) = -0.35, p = .73 (Table 4-10). The Mann-Whitney test also showed no

significance, U = 762.50, p = .87. Overall, there were no differences in the self-rated familiarity

and familiarity based on the knowledge score among the groups of students based on their prior

international travel experience and specifically travel to Europe.

2g. What influence does tourist role preference have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

ANOVA was used to examine the relationship between the tourist roles and familiarity. In

terms of self-rated familiarity, the sample sizes were unequal and the normality assumption was

violated; however, the homogeneity of variances was not violated. ANOVA indicated no

significant differences among the four tourist roles in self-rated familiarity following the

intervention, F(3,76) = 0.35, p = .79 (Table 4-11). Due to violation of the normality assumption

the Kruskal-Wallis – a non-parametric test was conducted; however, the influence of the four

roles on self-rated familiarity was non-significant, H(3) = 1.2, p = .75.

In terms of familiarity based on the sum of the knowledge items, homogeneity of variances assumption was violated and the normality assumption was violated for the EXP. The normality test for the DTR was also violated; however, this result is not reliable because of the small sample (n = 4). When variances are not homogenous Field (2005) suggested that researchers report the Welch F-ratio, which indicated a significant difference among the four roles on the familiarity sum score after the intervention, $F(3, 27.69) = 19.40$, $p < .001$, $\omega = .20$, where ω is the effect size used as an accurate measure of the effect. In this case this is a large effect according to Cohen, 1977) (Table 4-12). A Games-Howell post-hoc test, appropriate when there is a violation of homogeneity of variances (Field, 2005), revealed the differences among the four tourist roles. The drifter differed significantly from the other three groups: OMT, IMT, and EXP, $p < .001$. A look at the means confirms that the means for OMT, IMT and EXP are very similar and different from the DTR mean (Table 4-13). In addition, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed, however, the significance was at a higher level of Type I error $p = 0.1$, $H(3) = 6.46$, $p = .09$. Overall, there were differences in familiarity with Bulgaria among the respondents classifying themselves as drifters. They tended to know more about Bulgaria as assessed by the knowledge score. However, there were no differences among respondents classifying themselves according to the four tourist roles and their self-rated familiarity with Bulgaria following the intervention.

2h. What influence does gender have on the level of familiarity following the intervention?

An independent sample t-test was used to examine the effect of gender on self-rated familiarity after the intervention. The group sizes for males and females were unequal and the normality assumption was violated, although equality of variances was achieved. Familiarity was slightly higher among females (M = 2.76, SD = 0.76) compared to males (M = 2.40, SD =

0.63), however, no significant differences were found t(80) = -1.71, p = .09 at α = .05. Results

from the Mann-Whitney test were also not significant, U = 369.00, p = .80.

An independent-samples t-test was used to examine differences between males and

females on the familiarity sum score after the intervention. The normality assumption was

violated for the females only and equality of variances assumption was not violated. After the

intervention females reported a slightly higher familiarity level (M = 8.76, SD = 2.24) than the

males (M = 8.53, SD = 2.17) where t(80) = -0.36, p = .72 was not significant. In addition, results

from the Mann-Whitney test showed no significance among males and females on the familiarity

sum score, U = 471.50, p = .71.

Image

Pre-test Research Question 3

3a. What organic and overall images of Bulgaria do U.S. college students hold?

Thirty-six items were used to examine the organic images of Bulgaria among the

participants. Due to substantial missing data, the internal consistency of the scale could not be

established with Cronbach's alpha (valid listwise n = 7). The mean scores and frequencies for

each image item pre and post intervention are displayed in Table 4-14. Before the intervention

the five items associated with the most positive image of Bulgaria were items related to culture:

"offers good opportunity to increase my knowledge about a different culture" (M = 4.35, SD =

0.64), "has rich cultural heritage" (M = 4.27, SD = 0.59), "ornate churches and monasteries" (M

= 4.24, SD = 0.50) and so on. The least positive images were associated with "has good

beaches" (M = 2.57, SD = 1.04) and "has quality roads and airports" (M = 2.57, SD = 0.94).

Before the intervention the overall image of Bulgaria was not very positive (M = 3.34, SD =

0.78).

Factor analysis could not performed due to the large number of missing values, where missing data were items students did not give a response to or items they answered as "don't know". Therefore, for further analysis five conceptual image categories were created. The selection of items in each category was agreed upon by two researchers to achieve inter-rater reliability. The placement of each item was based on Beerli and Martín's (2004) dimensions and is a conceptual grouping rather than one based on statistics due to the limitation with data already discussed. A similar process was used by Lepp and Gibson (2003) to conceptually group risk related images. The following categories were created: Culture, History and Art (M = 4.10, SD = 0.29); Tourist Attributes (M = 3.38, 0.55); Atmosphere (M = 3.38, 0.42); Natural Resources and Environment (M = 3.25, SD = 0.54); and Infrastructure (M = 3.11, SD = 0.77) (Table 4-14). Missing data before the intervention also precluded the use of Cronbach's alpha with each of the conceptual image categories.

3b. Does the overall organic image vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the influence of previous international travel and previous travel to Europe on the overall image of Bulgaria before the intervention. In terms of international travel experience, sub-sample sizes were unequal, normality was violated, however, the equality of variances assumption was met. The overall image was similar among those who have traveled internationally (M = 3.33, SD = 0.85) and those who have not (M = 3.29, SD = 0.61) and t-test revealed non-significant difference, t(58) = -0.17, p = .87 (Table 4-15). In addition, a Mann-Whitney test was also used and resulted in non significance, U = 318.50, p = .95.

An independent samples t-test was used to examine the effect of previous travel to Europe on overall image. Results were similar to the results for international travel and the meeting of assumptions was similar. The overall image among those who have traveled to Europe was very

similar (M= 3.35, SD = 0.83) to the image of those who have not been to Europe, (M = 3.30, SD = 0.78) and the t-test confirmed this non-significant difference, t(58) = -0.24, p = .81 (Table 4-16). A Mann-Whitney test was also used, resulting in a not significant outcome, U = 414.50, p = .86.

3c. Does the overall organic image vary by tourist role preference?

The relationship between tourist role preference (four tourist roles) and overall organic image was examined using ANOVA. The sample sizes were unequal, however, the homogeneity of variances assumption was met. In terms of the normality assumption, the Shapiro-Wilk test statistic indicated no violation only for the organized mass tourist, however, the size of this group was small (n = 5), therefore this result is not reliable. ANOVA resulted in no significant differences among the four tourist roles with regards to overall image, F(3, 54) = 1.20, p = .32 (Table 4-17). Overall image was least positive among the organized mass tourist and it became more positive with each role and it was highest among the drifter. Due to the violation of the normality assumption, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test for differences among the four groups and resulted in no significance, H(3) = 3.87, p = .28.

3d. Does the overall organic image vary by gender?

To test the influence of gender on the overall organic image an independent samples t-test was used. In this case sample sizes were unequal, the normality assumption was violated, however, the equality of variances was met. Males had a slightly more positive image of Bulgaria (M = 3.50, SD = 0.54) compared to females (M = 3.29, SD = 0.83), however, this was not a significant difference, t(58) = 0.70, p= .49. Due to the violation of the normality assumption a Mann-Whitney test was conducted achieving a non-significant result, U = 172.00, p = .40.

Post-test Research Question 3

3e. Following the intervention, do the induced and overall induced images held by U.S. college students vary from their organic images?

Paired difference t-tests were used for all 36 image items and five image categories to compare the change of the images held of Bulgaria before and after exposure to the stimulus (Table 4-14). After the intervention, reliability analysis was used and Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the items in each category and the scale: Culture, History and Art category (α = .83, M = 4.40, SD = 0.39); Infrastructure category (α = .78, M = 3.72, SD = 0.61); Tourist Attributions category (α = .77, M = 4.14, SD = 0.42); Natural Resources and Environment category (α = .60, M = 4.08; SD = 0.46); and Atmosphere category (α = .53, M = 3.90, SD = 0.34) (Field, 2005; Green & Salkind, 2003). No reliability coefficient for the categories was below .5, which was deemed acceptable (Baumgartner & Jackson, 1999). The overall measure of reliability for all five categories was α = .82. This reliability analysis was possible after the intervention as the number of respondents who used the "don't know" category diminished significantly.

Results from the paired t-test on the 36 items showed that significant differences were evident for 28 items at p < .05 (Table 4-14). Significant differences were apparent on all items related to Culture, History and Art. Differences were not evident in the following: "national parks/wilderness", "offers good value for money", "has overcrowded areas" and others.

Paired difference t-tests were also used to examine differences pre- and post-test in the five image categories (Table 4-14). Significant differences were found for all clusters: Natural Resources and Environment t(11) = -7.29, p < .001; Culture, History and Art Cluster t(6) = -3.45, p = .014; Tourist Attributes Cluster t(6) = -3.96, p = .007; Atmosphere Cluster t(9) = -3.40, p = .008; Infrastructure Cluster t(9) = -3.44, p = .007.

In addition, a paired difference t-test was used to compare the overall image before exposure to the stimulus and after exposure (Table 4-18). Participants overall had a more positive image of Bulgaria after exposure to the stimulus (M = 4.17, SD = 0.75) compared to their image before exposure (M = 3.34, SD = 0.78). The difference was significant t(58) = -8.06, p <.001, d = -1.05 with a large effect. In other words, after the intervention the overall image was significantly more positive than the overall image held before the intervention.

3f. Does the induced overall image vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effects of previous international travel and previous travel to Europe on the overall induced image after the intervention (Table 4-19). In terms of international travel, those who have never traveled internationally had a slightly more positive image of Bulgaria (M = 4.33, SD = 0.58) compared to those who have traveled abroad (M = 4.15, SD = 0.72). In this case the samples were unequal and the normality assumption was violated, however, the equality of variances assumption was met. The test statistic t(78) = 1.04, p = .30 indicated no significant influence of previous international travel on overall image. Due to violation of the normality assumption a Mann-Whitney test was conducted with non-significant results, U = 543.50, p = .34.

In terms of previous travel to Europe, the meeting of assumptions was similar as the assumptions for international travel (Table 4-20). Those who have traveled to Europe had a slightly more positive image of Bulgaria (M = 4.32, SD = 0.55) compared to those who have not been to Europe (M = 4.13, SD = 0.74). These differences were not large enough to be significant, t(78) = -1.17, p = .25. Due to the normality violation a Mann-Whitney test was conducted also resulting in a non-significant effect, U = 642.00, p = .32.

3g. Does the induced overall image vary by tourist role preference?

ANOVA was used to evaluate the relationship between the four tourist role groups and the induced overall image. The differences among the means were slight and non-significant, $F(3,74) = 1.15$, p= .34 (Table 4-21 and Table 4-22) where the homogeneity of variances assumption was met, however, sample sizes were unequal among the four tourist roles and the normality assumption was violated. Due to the violation of the normality assumption, a Kruskal-Wallis procedure was performed, $H(3) = 3.87$, $p = .28$, indicating that there were no significant differences among the tourist role groups and participants' induced overall image.

3h. Does the induced overall image vary by gender?

An independent samples t-test was used to test the influence of gender on induced overall image after exposure to the stimulus. The normality assumption was violated, the samples were unequal, however, the equality of variance was met. Males had a slightly more positive image of Bulgaria overall (M = 4.43, SD = 0.51) compared to females (M = 4.15, SD = 0.71), however, the difference was not significant, $t(78) = 1.39$, $p = .17$. In addition, a Mann-Whitney test was completed showing no significant differences, $U = 369.00$, $p = .18$.

Overall, gender, tourist role and previous international travel and travel to Europe had no significant influence on overall induced image before and after the intervention. Overall image, however, differed before and after stimulus exposure. Additionally, 28 image items were rated significantly more positively after the intervention. All five image categories showed significant improvement post-test when means before and after intervention were compared.

Intent

Research Question 4

4a. What are the travel intentions of U.S. college students towards Bulgaria as a vacation destination after the intervention?

In terms of students' likelihood to travel to Bulgaria they were asked two questions after exposure to the stimulus: 1) How likely are you to choose Bulgaria as your next international vacation destination? and 2) Do you plan to travel to Bulgaria in the next five years for vacation purposes? The responses to both questions ranged from "very unlikely" = 1 to "very likely" = 5. To be able to compare these results with their travel plans students were also asked 3) Do you plan to travel abroad in the next five years for vacation purposes? And 4) Do you plan to travel to Europe in the next five years for vacation purposes? Reponses were based on the same Likert-type scale. Respondents they were "unlikely" to choose Bulgaria as their next vacation destination (M = 2.26, SD = 0.87). They were a little less likely to visit Bulgaria in the next five years (M = 2.17, SD = 0.99). Students were more likely to travel abroad during the next five years (M = 3.90, SD = 1.18) and students were also more likely to travel to Europe in the next five years (M = 3.80, SD = 1.19) (Table 4-23).

Thirty-nine percent (n = 32) of respondents said they were unlikely to choose Bulgaria as their next vacation destination, followed by 3.97% (n = 27) who responded "slightly likely". None of the respondents reported they were very likely to choose Bulgaria as their next international vacation destination. In terms of travel to Bulgaria in the next five years the distribution was as follows: 42.7% (n = 35) were "unlikely", followed by 26.8% (n = 22) – very unlikely. Only 1.2% (n = 1) responded he/she is very likely to travel to Bulgaria within five years (Table 4-23).

Respondents were, however, more likely to travel abroad and to Europe in the next five years. For example, 64.7% (n = 52) indicated they were "very likely" or "likely" to travel abroad, whereas, 59.8% (n =49) were "very likely" or "likely" to travel to Europe (Table 4-23).

4b. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria in the next five years vary by previous international travel experience?

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine the effect of international travel and travel to Europe on respondents' likelihood to travel to Bulgaria in the next five years. In terms of international travel, sample sizes were unequal, the normality assumption was violated, however, the equality of variance assumption was met. Those who have not traveled internationally had similar intent to travel to Bulgaria (M = 2.19, SD = 0.98) compared to those who have traveled internationally (M = 2.16, SD = 1.00) (Table 4-24). There were no significant differences between the two groups, t(80) = 0.11, p = .82. In addition, a Mann-Whitney test was performed, which was also non-significant, U = 628.50, p = .89.

An independent samples t-test was used to examine the influence of prior travel to Europe on the intent to visit Bulgaria in the next five years. The meeting of the assumptions was similar. The difference between the likelihood to visit Bulgaria in the next five years was minimally higher but non-significant among those who have traveled to Europe (M = 2.20, SD = 1.03) compared to those who have not traveled (M = 2.15, SD = 0.98), t(80) = -0.20, p = 0.37 (Table 4-25). Results from a Mann-Whitney test showed no significance of travel to Europe on intent, U = 758.50, p = .83.

4c. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria vary by tourist role preference?

ANOVA was used to examine the relationship between intentions and tourist role preference. Sample sizes were unequal, normality was violated for all except DTR, however, due to the low number of respondents in that category (n = 4) the normality test cannot be

considered reliable. In addition, the homogeneity of variances assumption was violated, therefore the Welch's F is reported, $F(3, 12.91) = 1.42$, $p = .28$ (Table 4-26). The resulting F statistic indicates no significant difference in intent to travel among the four tourist roles. In addition, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed, $H(3) = 4.27$, $p = .23$ also indicating no significant differences.

4d. Do these travel intentions to visit Bulgaria vary by gender?

An independent samples t-test was used to examine the effect of gender on intent. The distribution of intention was not normal and the sample sizes were unequal, however, the variances were equal. Females were more likely to travel to Bulgaria in the next five years ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.98$) compared to their male counterparts ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 1.03$), however, the differences were not significant, $t(80) = -1.03$, $p = .86$. In addition, a Mann-Whitney test confirmed the non-significant difference, $U = 408.00$, $p = .23$.

Overall, differences in past international travel, travel to Europe, tourist role preference, and gender did not significantly influence the intent of respondents to visit Bulgaria in the next five years.

Research Question 5

5a. Following the intervention, what is the relationship among overall induced image of Bulgaria among U.S. college students, their familiarity levels (both self-rated and knowledge-based) and intent to travel in the next five years?

Standard multiple regression analysis was used to predict intent to travel to Bulgaria for vacation purposes in the next five years. The predictors used were overall induced image, post-test self-rated familiarity, and knowledge-based familiarity (from 17 items obtained after the intervention). Other possible independent variables such as gender, prior international travel experience and tourist role were considerations for the model, however, the intent pre-test questions revealed no significant influence of these variables on intent, therefore, these variables

were not included in the model. In addition, their measurement level differed, i.e. nominal level and further transformation of the variables would have been necessary.

All three predictors were entered simultaneously, as studies have not concluded the order of image and familiarity's influence on intent. No multicollinearity was detected, which means that there was no interdependence of the predictors (Garson, n.d). One influential case was obtained after case diagnostics were assessed and it was determined that since there was only one case its influence was not investigated further. The assumption that the regression errors are independent has been met as the Durbin-Watson statistic equals to 1.88, which is close to 2 (Field, 2005). The three predictors overall image, self-rated familiarity and the familiarity sum score did not explain a sizeable portion of the variance, $R^2 = .08$, adjusted $R^2 = .04$, $F(3,76) = 2.08$, $p = .11$ (Table 4-27). In fact, overall image and the two types of familiarity account for only 8% of variation in intent to travel to Bulgaria. This model did not improve the ability to predict intent to visit Bulgaria. In terms of individual relationships between intent to visit and overall image, for example, when the other two variables are held constant ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .1$) image had a non-significant positive relationship with intent. Self-rated familiarity level had a non-significant positive relationship with intent to travel ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .28$). Familiarity level based on the sum knowledge score also had non–significant positive relationship with intent to visit Bulgaria ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .28$). Results indicated no significant relationship between intent and all three independent variables. It can be concluded that other variables have more pronounced influence on the intent to travel to Bulgaria and should be added to this model in future research.

Summary

This study sought to investigate the relationships between familiarity, awareness, image, and intent to travel and other independent variables (prior international travel experience, tourist

role preference, and gender) in relation to Bulgaria. Some results were contrary to the

researcher's expectations and others were confirmed. Most notable were the statistically

significant increases in self-rated familiarity, knowledge-based familiarity, and overall image and

the change of image in the five categories after exposure to the stimulus. Interpretation of the

results follows.

Table 4-1. International and European prior travel experience and awareness of Bulgaria

| Traveled Internationally | Heard of Bulgaria (% within heard of Bulgaria) | |
	Yes % (n)	No % (n)
Never traveled*	24.70% (20)	11.10% (1)
Traveled 1 or more times*	72.60% (53)	88.90% (8)
Traveled to Europe		
Never traveled to Europe**	60.30% (44)	88.90% (8)
Traveled to Europe 1 or more times**	39.70% (29)	11.10% (1)

*Fisher's exact test, p = 0.44
**Fisher's exact test, p = 0.15

Table 4-2. Odds ratio of an individual who was aware of Bulgaria and who has traveled to Europe

Odds $_{traveled\ to\ Europe\ and\ aware}$ = number that were aware & traveled/number that were aware & not traveled = 29/44 = .66

Odds $_{traveled\ to\ Europe\ and\ unaware}$ = number that were unaware & traveled/number that were unaware & not traveled = 1/8 = .13

Odds ratio = odds $_{traveled\ to\ Europe\ \&\ aware}$/odds $_{traveled\ to\ Europe\ \&\ unaware}$ = 0.659/0.125 = 5.27

Note. Calculations of odds and odds ratio obtained from Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Table 4-3. Percentage of students who were aware of Bulgaria according to tourist role preference

Tourist role preference	Heard of Bulgaria % within role (n)	
	Yes	No
OMT	93.8% (15)	6.3% (1)
IMT	92% (23)	8% (2)
EXP	85.7% (30)	14.3% (5)
DTR	75% (3)	25% (1)

$\varphi = 0.15$, $p = 0.63$

Table 4-4. Self-rated familiarity level before and after intervention

Familiarity	N	M	SD	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Fairly familiar	Quite familiar	Very familiar
Pre-test	82	1.16	0.48	87.8%	9.8%	1.2%	1.2%	-
Post-test	82	2.70	0.75	-	46.3%	39.0%	13.4%	1.2%

Note. Dash is reported when no responses were obtained. Percentages may not equal to 100 due to rounding error. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 = Very familiar.

Table 4-5. Familiarity differences and previous travel experience before the intervention

Familiarity	Never traveled internationally		Traveled internationally 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Self-rated[a]	1.14	0.36	1.16	0.52	80	-0.17	.86
Knowledge-based score on 17 items[b]	4.00	2.32	4.83	3.67	57	-0.72	.48

[a]Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 = Very familiar.

[b]Knowledge score calculated as sum ranging from 0-14, where 14 = most knowledge.

Table 4-6. Familiarity and previous European travel experience before the intervention

Familiarity	Never traveled to Europe		Traveled to Europe 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Self-rated[a]	1.21	0.57	1.07	0.25	76.15	1.58	.12
Knowledge-based score on 17 items[b]	4.62	3.39	4.77	3.66	57	-0.16	.87

[a]Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 =Very familiar.

[b]Knowledge score calculated as sum ranging from 0-14, where 14 = most knowledge.

Table 4-7. One-way analysis of variance for effects of tourist role on familiarity levels before intervention

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Self-rated familiarity					
Between groups	3	0.39	0.13	0.53	0.66
Within groups	76	18.50	0.24		
Knowledge-based score on 17 items					
Between groups	3	75.12	25.04	2.29	0.09
Within groups	54	590.94	10.94		

Table 4-8. Differences in familiarity levels before and after intervention

Familiarity level	Before intervention		After intervention				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Self-rated[a]	1.16	0.48	2.7	0.75	81	-16.12	.000
Knowledge-based score on 17 items[b]	4.68	3.46	9	2.22	58	-10.2	.000

[a]Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 = Very familiar.

[b]Knowledge score calculated as sum ranging from 0-14, where 14 = most knowledge.

Table 4-9. Familiarity levels and previous international travel experience after
           intervention

Familiarity	Never traveled internationally		Traveled internationally 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Self-rated[a]	2.62	0.67	2.72	0.78	80	-0.54	.59
Knowledge-based score on 17 items[b]	8.29	1.87	8.87	2.32	80	-1.04	.30

[a]Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 = Very familiar.

[b]Knowledge score calculated as sum ranging from 0-14, where 14 = most knowledge.

Table 4-10. Familiarity levels and previous European travel experience

Familiarity level	Never traveled to Europe		Traveled to Europe 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Self-rated[a]	2.73	0.77	2.63	0.72	80	0.57	.57
Knowledge-based score on 17 items[b]	8.65	2.09	8.83	2.45	80	-0.35	.73

[a]Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Not at all familiar, 5 = Very familiar.

[b]Knowledge score calculated as sum ranging from 0-14, where 14 = most knowledge.

Table 4-11. One-way analysis of variance for effects of tourist role on self-
           rated familiarity levels after intervention

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Self-rated familiarity					
Between groups	3	0.39	0.13	0.53	0.66
Within groups	76	18.50	0.24		

Table 4-12. One-way analysis of variance for effects of tourist role on knowledge-based familiarity levels after intervention

Variable and source	df	F	p
Knowledge-based score on 17 items			
Between groups	3	19.40[a]	.000
Within groups	27.69		

[a]Due to violation of homogeneity of variances Welch's F is reported.

Table 4-13. Comparisons of tourist role by familiarity level

Tourist role	M	SD
Organized Mass Tourist	8.13[a]	1.75
Independent Mass Tourist	8.76[a]	2.18
Explorer	8.69[a]	2.46
Drifter	11.25[b]	0.5

Note. Significant differences were found using Games-Howell post-hoc, b > a.
The knowledge mean score had range 0-14.

Table 4-14. Destination images of Bulgaria before and after intervention

Image categories and items	Pre-test M	SD	Post-test M	SD	df	paired t-value	p
Natural resources and environment	3.25	0.29	4.08	0.46	11	-7.29	.001*
Pleasant climate	3.20	0.76	4.17	0.75	34	-5.84	.000*
Good beaches	2.57	1.04	4.04	0.83	22	-5.28	.000*
Nat'l parks/wilderness	3.78	0.75	4.11	0.85	26	-1.52	.142
Beautiful scenery and Nature	4.08	0.55	4.75	0.44	35	-5.92	.000*
Clean country	2.89	0.96	3.56	0.71	17	-3.69	.002**
Tourist Attributes	3.38	0.55	4.14	0.42	6	-3.96	.007**
Many tourist attractions	3.19	0.97	4.16	0.81	31	-4.66	.000*
Good value for money	3.82	0.80	3.73	0.94	21	0.49	.628
Good shopping facilities	3.05	1.05	4.09	0.68	21	-4.69	.000*
Opportunities for hiking/ Mountaineering	4.00	0.48	4.56	0.51	26	-4.14	.000*
Open-air markets	4.08	0.64	4.32	0.56	24	-2.30	.031**
Good skiing	3.68	0.72	4.50	0.67	21	-3.65	.002**
Good quality of service	3.25	0.86	4.00	0.82	15	-2.32	.035**
Variety of recreation activities	3.73	0.60	4.38	0.57	25	-4.47	.000*
Nightlife/entertainment	3.42	0.90	4.00	0.43	11	-1.87	.089
Atmosphere	3.38	0.42	3.90	0.34	9	-3.40	.008**
Safe place to visit	3.04	1.25	4.23	0.59	25	-5.37	.000*
Overcrowded areas	3.67	0.91	3.44	0.71	17	1.07	.298
Place for relaxation	3.20	0.91	4.20	0.76	24	-5.48	.000*
Friendly local people	3.68	0.75	4.52	0.59	24	-4.94	.000*
Family-oriented	3.30	0.97	3.91	0.85	22	-3.28	.003**
Different language is a barrier	3.97	0.62	4.03	0.86	57	-0.59	.560
Fun and enjoyable	3.58	0.88	4.25	0.53	23	-4.29	.000*
Lacks commercialization	3.57	1.08	3.29	0.96	20	1.19	.249
Culture, History, Art	4.10	0.29	4.40	0.39	6	-3.45	.014**
Churches & monasteries	4.24	0.50	4.65	0.49	33	-4.31	.000*
Historical sites/museums	4.15	0.53	4.65	0.48	39	-5.28	.000*
Traditional handicraft	4.06	0.62	4.44	0.50	31	-3.00	.005**
Rich cultural heritage	4.27	0.59	4.71	0.51	40	-3.97	.000*
Archaeological treasures	3.57	0.81	4.24	0.70	20	-3.84	.001*
Tasty cuisine	3.57	1.03	4.38	0.74	20	-3.18	.005**

Table 4-14. (continued)

Image categories and items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired t-tests		
	M	SD	M	SD	df	paired t-value	p
Good wine	4.10	0.54	4.33	0.48	20	-1.75	.096
Rich in folk dance/song	4.12	0.67	4.60	0.58	24	-2.92	.008**
Offers to increase my cultural knowledge	4.35	0.64	4.63	0.49	47	-3.27	.002**
<u>Infrastructure</u>	3.11	0.77	3.72	0.61	9	-3.44	.007**
Convenient transport	3.35	0.99	3.85	0.88	19	-2.364	.029**
Quality roads/airports	2.57	0.94	3.36	1.15	13	-2.62	.021**
Easily get around the country	3.13	0.83	3.73	0.96	14	-1.79	.095
Quality accommodations	3.11	1.08	4.06	0.94	17	-3.45	.003**
Tourist information	3.81	0.63	4.17	0.66	41	-3.34	.002**

Note. The p values were calculated for a two-tailed test. *p < .05. ** p < .001. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 4-15. Overall image of Bulgaria and previous international travel experience
before intervention

Image	Never traveled internationally		Traveled internationally 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Overal image	3.29	0.61	3.33	0.85	58	-0.17	.87

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 4-16. Overall image of Bulgaria and previous European travel experience before
intervention

Image	Never traveled to Europe		Traveled to Europe 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Overall image	3.34	0.78	3.35	0.83	58	-0.24	0.81

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 4-17. One-way analysis of variance for effects of tourist role on
overall image before intervention

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Overall image					
Between groups	3	2.28	0.76	1.2	.32
Within groups	54	34.13	0.63		

Table 4-18. Overall image differences before and after intervention

Image	Pre-test		Post-test				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Overall image	3.34	0.78	4.17	0.75	58	-8.06	0.000

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

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Table 4-19. Overall image and previous international travel experience after
intervention

Image	Never traveled internationally		Traveled internationally 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Overall image	4.33	0.58	4.15	0.72	78	1.04	.30

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 4-20. Overall image and previous European travel experience after
intervention

Image	Never traveled to Europe		Traveled to Europe 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Overall image	4.13	0.74	4.32	0.55	78	-1.17	.25

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 4-21. One-way analysis of variance for effects of a tourist role on
overall image after intervention

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Overall image					
Between groups	3	1.58	0.53	1.15	.34
Within groups	74	33.91	0.46		

Table 4-22. Overall image among the four
tourist roles after intervention

Tourist role	Overall image		
	N	M	SD
Organized Mass Tourist	16	4.31	0.48
Independent Mass Tourist	24	4.25	0.53
Explorer	34	4.03	0.83
Drifter	4	4.50	0.58

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where

1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 4-23. Intent to travel after intervention

Intent item	N	M	SD	Very unlikely/Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely/Likely
Likely to choose BG as next international destination	82	2.26	0.87	59.70%	32.90%	7.30%
Plan to vacation in BG in the next 5 years	82	2.17	0.99	69.50%	18.30%	12.20%
Plan to vacation abroad in the next 5 years	82	3.90	1.18	12.20%	23.20%	64.70%
Plan to vacation in Europe in the next 5 years	81	3.80	1.19	13.40%	25.60%	59.80%

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely. Percentages may not
equal to 100 due to missing data or rounding error.

Table 4-24. Travel intentions and previous international travel experience after intervention

Intent	Never traveled internationally		Traveled internationally 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Likelihood to travel to Bulgaria in the next 5 years	2.19	0.98	2.16	1	80	0.11	.82

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Very unlikely, 5 =Very likely.

Table 4-25. Travel intentions and previous European travel experience after intervention

Intent	Never traveled to Europe		Traveled to Europe 1 or more times				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Likelihood to travel to Bulgaria in the next 5 years	2.15	0.98	2.2	1.03	80	-0.2	.37

Note. Measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = Very unlikely, 5 =Very likely.

Table 4-26. One-way analysis of variance for effects of tourist role on intent to travel after intervention

Variable and source	df	F	p
Intent to travel to Bulgaria in the next 5 years			
Between groups	3	1.42	.28
Within groups	12.91		

Due to violation of homogeneity of variances Welch's F is reported.

Table 4-27. Summary of regression analysis for variable
predicting intent to visit Bulgaria in the next 5 years
(N = 80)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Constant	0.17	0.83	
Self-rated familiarity	0.16	0.15	0.12
Knowledge-based familiarity	0.05	0.05	0.12
Overall image	0.27	0.16	0.19

Note. $R^2 = .08$, $p < .11$.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONLCUSION

This study explored several tourist-related variables related to Bulgaria as a destination. The researcher specifically examined the U.S. college students' awareness of Bulgaria and their familiarity with and images before exposure to a stimulus. Following the intervention the students' intent to visit Bulgaria was examined in addition to their familiarity and images of Bulgaria. Gender, prior travel experience, and tourist roles were examined in light of the variables above. Some results were contrary to the researcher's expectations and are discussed further in this chapter. This chapter draws upon the literature review and theoretical framework to explain the results of the study and draw conclusions. Implications of the results and future research directions are also discussed.

Familiarity

Familiarity may be measured in different ways. Two ways were used in this study. Based on Baloglu (2001) and Prentice's (2004) work one way is to measure self-rated familiarity. Prior to exposure to the stimulus most of the students were unfamiliar with Bulgaria. The other way of measuring familiarity is based on the sum of correct answers to knowledge statements associated with Bulgaria (Kim & Pennington-Gray, 2004). Many of the students did not know the answers and most had low familiarity levels with Bulgaria. Bulgaria is not a well known country to the Western traveler. For about 40 years it was a communist country and to a great degree closed to the Western world. Since the early 1990s, Bulgaria has increasingly been oriented toward the West and has increased its presence in the media as the country started its development as a democracy. Bulgaria became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004 and since January 2007 it is a member of the European Union. Over the last ten years it developed even more as a tourist destination attracting many international visitors, not just those

from the traditional Eastern European countries. However, U.S. visitors have been few, therefore, there is a potential for attracting more American tourists. The Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism (BSAT) launched advertisements on CNN in 2007. The agency also launched four 30-second advertisements for Russian national TV during February 2008. Twenty Russian cities are targeted in this campaign, and clips will be shown again in May. In addition, similar campaigns on CNN channels, Euronews and Eurosport will be launched (Sofia News Agency, 2008).

McKay and Fesenmaier (1997) postulated that a higher level of familiarity may make a destination more appealing to the traveler. However, based on this "butterfly curve" (based on Hebb, 1966) after a certain level of familiarity has been reached a destination may not be as attractive, after which an unfamiliar destination may be considered more attractive. This is one theory that could help explain attraction of a destination based on familiarity levels. One of the main findings of this study was that students were not familiar with Bulgaria initially. After stimulus exposure their familiarity increased, however, they were still not very familiar with the country. The video, therefore, was not enough to create a higher level of familiarity with the country, however, it served to dispel certain images and create new ones. This may be compared to the result of Kim and Richardson (2003) who found no significant differences in the level of familiarity with Vienna among those who viewed the movie about Vienna and the control group, which was contrary to their expectations. Their reasoning was that the movie may not have been enough to significantly alter an individual's images of a destination. The videos used in the current study were even shorter, and therefore, similar to Kim and Richardson's study the intervention may not have been sufficient to stimulate an interest in visiting and making it a more attractive destination.

In this study gender and other personal factors such as previous international travel experience and tourist role preference did not affect the level of self-rated familiarity and the familiarity sum score before and after the intervention. The only significant differences were found among the four tourist roles after stimulus exposure on the sum familiarity score, which is further explained.

The largest group in the sample considered themselves explorers, followed by independent mass tourists, organized mass tourists and drifters, which was confirmed by Qi (2005). Gibson and Yiannakis (2002) reported that young individuals in their 20s are likely to assume the traveler roles of EXP and DTR as they are characterized as travelers drawn to novel experiences to a certain extent, are likely to be single with no family responsibilities which enables them to visit more rustic places and forego certain necessities unlike the OMT and IMT (Cohen, 1972, 1973). There were no significant differences before the intervention, even though the DTR's mean was higher than the mean score of the other three roles. One explanation might be that the drifter may have a greater international travel experience, which coupled with the information in the presentation about Bulgaria led to a higher level of retention of the information and displayed knowledge. Individuals have varied levels of retention of information based on a variety of factors internal and external to the individual such as relevance or salience (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). It may be that with a larger sample, a significant result may be obtained before the intervention. Another explanation may be due the nature of the intervention. Different tourist types may use and prefer different types of information sources. For example, Kerstetter and Cho (2004) made an important conclusion after examining the relationships between prior knowledge (which consisted of past experience and familiarity/expertise) and the source credibility. The authors stressed the importance of the information sources, which are used to

inform, educate, and entice individuals to visit or revisit. Internal search (own past experiences) turned out to be the most important variable in relation to prior knowledge. It may be that more experienced travelers and those who belong to the explorer and drifter categories may rely more on internal sources compared to the other traveler groups. In addition, research has shown that individuals who are less familiar with a destination tend to rely more on external information sources (Snepenger, Meged, Snelling, & Worrall, 1990; Vogt, Stewart, & Fesenmaier, 1998), which was not confirmed by Kerstetter and Cho (2004). According to Kerstetter and Cho level of involvement in the decision making process may be the explanation. Personal experiences may have been enough for highly familiar individuals who saw no need to use other external resources. There were significant differences in familiarity among the tourist roles after the intervention. A post-hoc test revealed the drifter's significantly higher level of knowledge based on the 17 knowledge items after the intervention than individuals categorizing themselves as one of the other three roles. In the case of the current study this external information source led to a higher knowledge level of the DTR. The combination of the videos and his/her prior experiences may explain the higher level of knowledge compared to the other roles. This may be explained by a comparison of the prior international travel experiences of students among the four tourist roles. Even though that DTR was a small group all of the students in that group had traveled internationally and they were followed by the EXP which made up the next largest group. Organized mass tourists had the least international travel experience. In terms of travel to Europe, a little different pattern was observed where the IMT was the largest group which had traveled to Europe, followed by the EXP, and finally, the DTR and OTM with the same percentages. Therefore, a higher overall level of international travel experience of the DTR may explain why they had a higher knowledge level of Bulgaria.

In terms of demographics Baloglu (2001) did not find significant effects on familiarity. Graburn (1983) pointed out that education may determine to a large extent what types of vacations individuals seek. The sample in this study consisted of college students and did not allow for any comparison among groups with various education levels in awareness, familiarity, image of Bulgaria and intent to travel. Further studies should consider examining such differences. This sample consisted of students who are middle and upper-middle class, college educated and, therefore, with theoretically a higher level of cultural self-confidence (Graburn, 1983). Graburn stressed the importance of cultural self-confidence and how it might affect an individual's travel destination choice. He claimed that such self-confidence is determined more by an individual's social class and educational and other experiences rather than income. Therefore, individuals such as the EXP and DTR who are more culturally self- confident may be more likely to travel more internationally and to visit novel and less known destinations with the former partially confirmed by this study.

Some similarities of the present study can be found with the research of Sirakaya et al. (2001), which focused on the images of Turkey. Turkey is a well known destination in Europe and other parts of the world but little known in the U.S. where their sample of college students was based. Indeed, they found that most of the students surveyed indicated they were "not at all familiar" with Turkey. They also found that familiarity did not affect intent to travel to Turkey and three out of eight image factors influenced intent. The implication here is that familiarity may have an indirect influence on intent to travel by first influencing individual's perceptions of a destination. Similarly, Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002) found that more than half of the participants who have either traveled internationally or were interested in such travel were not at

all or slightly familiar with Turkey. Thus, previous international travel experience in this case does not seem to influence familiarity with a country not visited previously.

Kim and Richardson (2003) examined the effects of a motion picture on undergraduate students' perceptions of Vienna and the movie's effects on familiarity. As movies familiarize audiences with places their hypothesis was that viewing a movie about a destination can lead to a higher familiarity with that destination, however, this hypothesis was disproved when the control group was compared to those who saw the movie. Thus, movies based in destinations may not be as influential in raising familiarity levels with a destination as many in the tourism industry may think (Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998).

In contrast to Kim and Richardson's experimental design, the current study did not use a control group instead a one group pre-test post-test design with an intervention was used, which is an innovative technique in tourism research. Although, a future study employing a true experimental design may provide the ability to isolate the effect of the intervention more accurately. Nonetheless, significant differences were found in self-rated familiarity and the familiarity sum score when the mean scores before and after the intervention were compared using paired t-tests. Therefore, a video presentation tailored by the tourism industry appears to be influential in increasing students' familiarity of a little known destination such as Bulgaria. To understand further their familiarity levels, students were asked to list the European countries they had visited, however, this study did not look into which students were more familiar before and after the intervention with Bulgaria based on which specific counties they have visited. Several students indicated they had been to Central and Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, for example. Would students who have been to Eastern Europe have higher knowledge and familiarity and different images than those who have not

been to this part of the world? This and similar questions may form a further investigation into familiarity with, and images of Bulgaria.

According to McQueen and Miller (1985) first-time visitors to a destination need to be enticed and persuaded the most to visit the destination. Perhaps as Kim and Richardson (2003) suggested potential visitors may need to have an increased exposure to a variety of sources, rather than the more general images shown in movies to influence images, intent to visit and make destinations more popular (Kim & Richardson, 2003; Riley et al., 1998; Tooke & Baker, 1996). The exposure effect from advertising (Zajonc, 1968) also comes into play in such situations, according to which as an individual is exposed more and more to a product or brand he/she will start to like that same product increasingly.

The construct of familiarity in a tourism context has not been given much attention compared to the fields of marketing and consumer behavior. However, important findings have been reported by Baloglu (2001), Kerstetter and Cho (2004), Kim and Richardson (2003), McKay and Fesenmaier (1997), and Prentice (2004) among others. Nevertheless, further studies are needed to examine what differences exist between various travel segments based on different socio-demographics and other personal variables such as prior travel experience and tourist roles. How would familiarity interact with intent to visit when constraints to travel are considered? Answers to this and other questions may provide a greater understanding and may contribute to more targeted marketing efforts of destination managers by effectively channeling different campaigns to familiar and not familiar travelers whose travel and information needs may be different. Goodall (1988, 1991), Mathieson and Wall (1982), Mayo and Jarvis (1981), Moutinho (1978), Stabler (1988), Woodside and Lysonski (1989) provided an important framework to further the understanding of the travel decision making process and the importance of tourist

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images and the interplay of other factors including, awareness, personal characteristics and marketing factors. Familiarity should be considered as an important component of such models even though it has not received as much attention as destination image about which a large body of knowledge has amassed over the last 35 years (Taschi & Gartner, 2007).

Awareness

Past travel experience, gender and tourist role preference did not influence the level of awareness of Bulgaria. The researcher's expectation was that those with more international travel experience and those who preferred more novel forms of tourism would exhibit a higher level of awareness of Bulgaria. Unfortunately, a more in-depth analysis of these variables on awareness was hindered by the lack of adequate numbers in each of the cells for the crosstabulations. Thus, for future studies a larger more diverse sample is recommended. Nearly 90% of the students had heard of Bulgaria, however, more than half reported they had not used any information sources to learn about the country. The most common source was a history or geography class that students have taken to learn about the country. In terms of differences among those who have taken a history/geography class to learn about Bulgaria within each gender category a higher percentage of males have taken such a class compared to females. This was also so for movies as a source, however, more females reported their source of knowledge as news programs. Also, more females compared to males reported they have not used any sources to learn about Bulgaria.

This lack of familiarity of the country (and other countries) is linked to the limited geographical education U.S. students receive from early childhood to the high school years. Later, while in college students may elect courses in geography, history or political science that may focus on Eastern Europe, however, such classes are selected and not required for all students regardless of major. In this study, a higher percentage among those who were not aware

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of Bulgaria had traveled one or more times internationally compared to those who were aware of Bulgaria. This seems a surprising finding, which may have other causes. The result may be due to the travel destinations that students have visited. For example, a majority of students who have traveled internationally reported visiting nearby destinations in the Western Hemisphere – Caribbean, Canada, and South America. Many also reported visiting Asia and Western Europe. Only a few students had visited Central and Eastern European countries, including Russia. The most visited destinations were in closer proximity to the U.S. such as the Caribbean, Canada or Mexico. One can only speculate that students may have visited Mexico and the Caribbean, for example, while on a cruise. On the other hand, even though the University offers study abroad programs, including to Europe very few if any may have taken advantage of that. Eastern Europe and perhaps certain parts of it such as countries in the Balkans unfortunately have not been perceived as attractive destinations for a variety of reasons, including political instability and war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and into the 21st century, lower economic conditions of the population, limited services and facilities there compared to Western European destinations and even the more Western counterparts- such as the Czech Republic (Ooi, Kristensen, & Pedersen, 2004), Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, and Slovakia. In addition, Bulgaria has traditionally been a sun, sand and sea destination for travelers from the Eastern Bloc and other Western European countries. For Americans such destinations can be found in a much closer proximity – at home in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Mexico or the Caribbean, for example, which are for many Americans just a couple of hours away driving or by airplane.

In terms of linking awareness and familiarity Milman and Pizam (1995) reported that almost half of those who had heard of Central Florida as a destination had visited (were familiar with) the area. In this study none of the participants had visited Bulgaria, which was part of the

criteria to participate. Milman and Pizam also investigated the relationship between awareness, familiarity and images of the destination. They found that the images of those who were not aware or were aware of the destination were less positive than the images of those who were familiar (i.e. have visited) with the destination. Moreover, participants who were aware of Central Florida did not have more positive images than those who were not aware. The two authors also found that awareness did not influence intent to travel. In fact those with low levels of awareness were more likely to visit the destination. In linking familiarity and awareness in the current study, it is interesting that three students were not aware of Bulgaria and at the same time in the pre-test they reported a sum familiarity score of seven and nine. One explanation may be that at first they thought they have never heard of the country, but once presented with some statements related to Bulgaria's history, geography and other information from their memory surfaced.

Awareness is an important construct that links familiarity, use of information sources, preferences for destinations, images and ultimately intent to travel. According to several authors the place of a destination in the awareness set may determine preferences and ultimately influence the choice of travel to that destination (Crompton, 1992; Narayana & Markin, 1975; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Woodside & Wilson, 1985). Bulgaria clearly is not in the evoked set of destinations for the U.S. college students in this sample. The Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism and other destination management and marketing entities may need to engage in more targeted efforts in their promotions that will be informational in nature and at the same time spark an interest in travelers to entice them to make a first visit. Opening a North-American or United States Regional BSAT office that will be charged with the marketing and promotion of Bulgaria to the region is recommended. Extensive contacts and

reach through the media –newspapers, television, magazines and other media is also recommended.

Image

Previous international travel experience, tourist role preference, and gender did not affect overall image of Bulgaria held by students before and after the intervention contrary to the researcher's expectations. The image items presented to the students dealt with destination attributes and as such were cognitive. Five conceptual image categories were created with the Culture, History and Art images rated as most positive. This may be explained in that some students assumed that since Bulgaria is in Europe it will have a different cultural heritage than their own and a long history and traditions. The least positive images were attributed to items related to its beaches and quality of roads and airports before the intervention. Many U.S. travelers, including these students may not be aware of the fact that Bulgaria's border to the East is the Black Sea, which is a popular beach destination not only for Bulgarians and travelers from Central and Eastern Europe, but increasingly from Western Europe and beyond. However, the participants of this study did not associate Bulgaria with good beaches. To these students the good beaches are in a closer proximity from one and a half hours drive to a couple of hours by plane to reach popular Florida, Caribbean or Mexican destinations. This may be true for the U.S. traveler in general as well. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) emphasized the importance of the types of images, which they conceived as belonging to three continua: attribute-holistic, common-unique and functional characteristics-psychological characteristics. Therefore, modeled after Echtner and Ritchie's three open-ended questions were used to gain insight into the more holistic, unique and psychological images of the destination held by the students. Some of the results here were surprising. For example, students' responses on these open-ended questions about the image of Bulgaria pointed to the fact that many do not know much about Bulgaria and

have inaccurate information in terms of climate and its location on the map.   Sirakaya et al.

(2001) also found that college students had low levels of familiarity with Turkey. They also

reported that students' images of Turkey showed significant differences from a neutral 3.5 score

on seven out of eight factors: cognitive evaluation of attractiveness, socio-economic and cultural

similarity, tourist services and attractions, cultural attraction, reassuring/safe/calming,

comforting/relaxing, and the perceived cost of vacation factor. All of these with the exception of

cultural similarity reflected positive images. In Sirakaya et al.'s study Turkey was perceived as

having different cultural and social conditions. However, the authors emphasized that these

results did not necessarily translate into a negative image. In reality, they suggested some

travelers are attracted to novel destinations, which according to Cohen's (1972) tourist role

typology would be exemplified in the explorer and drifter. In addition, those more familiar with

Turkey had more positive images on three out of all eight factors. This relationship, however,

was not included as a research question in this study. One can only speculate that cultural and

possibly other categories may have been perceived in a more positive light among those with

higher levels of familiarity and as such can be addressed in future analysis of the data.

Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002) similarly examined the images of, familiarity with, and intent

to travel to Turkey among potential travelers. Overall, in terms of the cognitive and affective

images Turkey was not perceived in a very positive way, which is similar to the way Bulgaria

was perceived before the intervention. After the pre-test students were shown a map of Bulgaria

showing its location as part of the Balkan Peninsula, after which they were shown two videos.

Results from the post-test showed that 28 out of 36 image items' means differed significantly

from the pre-test. Paired t-tests showed significant improvement in all five image categories.

The overall image also improved significantly. The information source classified by Gartner

(1993) as Covert Induced II in combination with Overt Induced I did improve the familiarity of participants, their knowledge of Bulgaria and one can speculate that as a result their images became more positive. However, post-test the overall image again did not significantly differ according to international travel experience, tourist role preference or gender. When examining gender, males had a more positive overall image of Bulgaria than females pre- and post-test. Males also had a slightly higher knowledge score before the intervention, which showed higher accuracy in terms of facts related to Bulgaria and hence higher familiarity. This may have contributed to the more positive image of Bulgaria. Females had a higher self-rated familiarity and familiarity sum score after the intervention. This possibly may be explained in that females have a different learning style than their male counterparts and they were able to retain the information in the video that translated into a higher sum familiarity/knowledge score. In contrast, Chen and Kerstetter (1999) found that females held more positive images of rural Pennsylvania on some factors than males. The non-significant differences between males and females in the overall image of Bulgaria in this study may be explained by the fact that the students were U.S. born citizens, whereas Chen and Kerstetter study's respondents were international students. The samples of both studies were homogenous in terms of education as they were students at two large universities. However, upbringing, past education, popular culture and media, and other experiences of the students may have lead to such differences in gender based familiarity levels among U.S. and foreign students. When Baloglu (2001) examined the interaction between demographics and images he only found significant relationship between age and perceptions of attractions. Therefore, studies are not consistent in terms of whether being a male or female may lead to different images of destinations. Various other factors may contribute to image variations between male and females. Therefore, further

analysis, which is beyond the scope of this study, considering variables such as difference of international travel experience or information sources used to learn about the destination across gender may shed more light on gender image differences.

MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997) found that two image dimensions: atmosphere and holiday were influenced by gender. Also, familiarity played a role as an intervening variable in all four image dimensions of the destination (park in Canada). They also confirmed Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) theory that image has three dimensions: psychological-functional, attribute-holistic and common-unique, which were also utilized in the current study. Individuals more familiar (majority off park users were repeat visitors) with the park perceived the destination in a way that was more psychological, holistic, and unique and those not familiar related to the functional, attribute, and common aspects of the destination image. Those unfamiliar evaluated the pictorial elements based on cognitive criteria in contrast to the familiar visitors who evaluated the images based on affective elements. Personal experience with the destination, which is another component of familiarity, influences an individual's perceptions of that destination. This parallels Fakeye and Crompton's (1991) proposition that a complex image forms as a result of a visit to the destination. MacKay and Fesenmaier's (1997) study had important implications. Travelers with higher levels of familiarity relate to those destination characteristics that are salient to them and perceive the destination in more psychological, holistic, and unique ways compared to those less familiar.

In the current study before the intervention students had very little knowledge of the country, some basic images and in some cases inaccurate perceptions of Bulgaria. After exposure to information sources as part of the intervention, their knowledge increased and images changed, thus creating induced images. In addition, students were asked unprompted to

list characteristics and images of Bulgaria that came to mind after the intervention and such responses were influenced by their personal characteristics, preferences, and salient destination attributes where some responses mentioned skiing, mountains, cultural attractions, welcoming atmosphere and others. Such influences on image formation have been confirmed by much research (Crompton, 1979a; Goodall, 1988, 1991; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981, Moutinho, 1987; Stabler, 1988; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989 among others). It may be that those more familiar held more affective images and psychological, holistic, and unique rather than functional, attribute and common that may be in the minds of less familiar respondents. Such investigation was not a part of this study. Therefore, a further study of the images, satisfaction and intent to revisit Bulgaria may shed additional light on how well the needs of the visitors were met and how their modified complex images differed from the organic or induced images. Such investigation will aid destination marketers with the branding, positioning and competitiveness of the country on the world tourism arena.

Chalip et al. (2003) found that the advertisement of Australia's Gold Coast significantly influenced five out of nine image factors, where four factors were positively influenced (value, safety, climate, and family environment) and one, sightseeing opportunities, was negatively perceived. Furthermore, the advertisement for the Honda Indy 300 race event lead to a decreased perception of the natural environment but enhanced the perception of novelty and safety.   A telecast of the race improved environment, climate and novelty image dimensions. The current study's results are consistent with those of Chalip et al. In this study participants were exposed to two 10-minute videos. After the intervention the images of Bulgaria improved. This may have been related to their increased levels of familiarity with Bulgaria. At the study's onset the level of familiarity based on the sum knowledge score was significantly lower than the

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level after the intervention. This is where the use of a control group may be able to isolate more accurately the effects of the intervention in future studies.

Kim and Richardson (2003) found that the movie about Vienna influenced positively the cognitive image of the destination on two factors: cultural/natural attractions and community characteristics/infrastructure and affected negatively the basic needs/comfort image dimension. Only one (relaxing-distressing) of the four affective image dimensions was rated significantly in a more favorable way. The other three arousing-sleepy, exciting-gloomy, and pleasant-unpleasant dimensions did not differ among those who saw and did not see the movie. Similarly, the intervention in this study led to more positive images in all five image categories.

A recent study (Hughes & Allen, 2008) investigated the holistic images through qualitative analysis of 15 Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries among British visitors and non-visitors to these countries, including Bulgaria. Non-visitors were those who have not been to any of the 15 destinations. Non-visitor studies have been lacking compared to visitors studies, including those of Eastern European destinations. Understanding the images of less known countries is even more imperative and necessary as these countries design and implement tourism development strategies. Their images can serve as an invaluable tool in the in the design of marketing and promotional campaigns (Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Hughes and Allen found that non-visitors considered poverty as a prevalent characteristic among all CEE countries. Some counties were considered underdeveloped by visitors and Bulgaria and Romania were viewed as "more of the grimmer type" (p. 32). Similarly, the participants in the current study viewed the mood of the CEE countries negatively. The CEE was perceived in general as a cultural destination, where an individual would go for sightseeing, rather than for the sun, however, non-visitors mentioned Bulgaria as a destination of the latter category more than the

visitors. Comparable to the current research, non-visitors in Hughes and Allen's study found it difficult to point out unique features and attractions of CEE countries. This sample of U.S. college students showed little knowledge and familiarity with Bulgaria, its features, characteristics, and therefore both cognitive and holistic images. Bulgarian wine was the only unique attribute mentioned for that country by Hughes and Allen's respondents, which was mentioned by one participant in the current study. Of the 34 interviewees only two had traveled to Bulgaria and in contrast former Czechoslovakia (the Czech Republic and Slovakia) was the country most visited with nine respondents.

War and political instability was an image associated with the Eastern parts of the area (ex-Yugoslavia, including Macedonia, Albania and others) and culture was associated with the Western countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland). It is unfortunate that political and ethnic conflicts have cast a negative image on the region as a whole, which is likely affecting the image of Bulgaria as well. This is what is known as a generalization effect (Enders, Sandler & Parise, 1992). It is interesting that none of the respondents in either of the studies mentioned any cultural or archaeological treasures and attractions in Bulgaria, including the more than centuries-old churches and sites which are a part of the UNESCO's World Heritage List, for example. In the current study, after the intervention, culture was one of the predominant themes mentioned by students in additional to mountains, natural landscapes, and friendliness of locals. The newly redesigned website of the BSAT also prominently features on its front page cultural heritage tourism sights and towns in Bulgaria. Before the intervention, many negative images existed, including the mood and atmosphere. Many students said they did not know of any unique attractions and features or images of Bulgaria. Others pointed out, similarly to Hughes and Allen (2008) images of poverty, gloomy atmosphere, and underdevelopment. Interestingly,

in response to the open-ended question after the intervention asking participants to identify images first coming to mind Bulgaria was described in a positive way.

Once again the power of visual media to shape images is demonstrated (Chalip et al., 2003; Kim & Richardson, 2003) and is a significant finding of the current study. Several conclusions can be made based on this discussion. First, an intervention that involves showcasing elements of a destination, whether a movie or a travel show appears to significantly influence the image of the destination among those exposed to that form of media. Gartner emphasized their importance as the two Covert Induced II and Autonomous image agents as having more impact on image formation and being more credible compared to the Overt Induced I form, which includes advertisements by the destination through various media. This confirms the importance of information sources as tools that can be used by destinations to change or influence the image of that place. Second, more research needs to done that explores the influence of different types of source on the familiarity and images of destinations. Certainly, individuals with different familiarity levels seem to evaluate promotional materials differently, therefore, the elements different groups use in evaluation of those sources, which eventually form their images of the destination, need to be incorporated in marketing materials (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997).

Intent

Intent to travel has been explored as a component of the tourist decision making process. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) based their model on Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992). Mayo and Jarvis linked factors like attitudes, information sources, social factors, feelings and others. Attitudes in turn may determine an individual's preferences and intent to travel. A similar model was proposed by Woodside and Lysonski (1989) in which they linked intent and subsequently choice of a

destination with awareness, preferences, affective associations, traveler and marketing variables, and situational factors.

In the current study the relationships among intent to travel to Bulgaria for vacation purposes in the next five years, international travel experience, tourist role preference, and gender were examined separately. Intent was not influenced by these variables, which was contrary to the researcher's expectations. These results, however, are consistent with some studies and contradict others as it is seen from the discussion to follow. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said they were unlikely to choose Bulgaria as their next vacation destination and almost 43% were unlikely to travel to the country in the next five years. Similar results were obtained by Sirakaya in studies of Turkey's image, familiarity and intent to travel where more than half of the respondents were not at all or not very likely to visit the country (Sirakaya et al., 2001; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Past international experience in Sönmez and Sirakaya's study had a negative relationship with intent to visit, which may seem to be a surprising result. The authors did not provide information that could have helped to further explain this result such as the types of countries the participants had visited previously and the type of tourists they were. Based on Cohen (1972) one might only speculate that a more adventurous and culturally-oriented traveler may be the type interested and more likely to travel to Turkey.

The low levels of intent in this study may be explained by the fact that Bulgaria is a little known country among U.S. college students, and perhaps in general among U.S. travelers. Even though most students were aware of Bulgaria, they were not familiar with the country and many did not have a desire to visit an unfamiliar destination. This is consistent with the theoretical foundation of this study and the marketing models such as AIDA linking Awareness → Interest → Desire → Action (Ehrenberg, 1974; Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Strong, 1925). According to

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the model a certain level of awareness and, one may argue, familiarity with a destination, are necessary to spark an interest in visiting and finally lead to a decision and an act of travel to the destination. This parallels MacKay and Fesenmaier's (1997) proposition that when a destination is more familiar it becomes more appealing. It can be argued that the two 10-minute videos were not enough to make individuals familiar with a destination they had minimal knowledge about so that intent may be influenced. This shows the importance of a long-term and consistent promotional strategy for brand and image development or modification.

From the following discussion one can see how the results from this study compare to others. According to Bojanic (1991) advertising can be an important tool for improving a destination's image and increasing the likelihood of travelers to visit that country. For example, Court and Lupton (1997) found that the more the image of New Mexico was positive among individuals, the higher was the likelihood of choosing it as a destination to visit. Their results were not confirmed by the current study whereby none to the variables (self-rated familiarity, knowledge based familiarity and overall image) successfully predicted intent to visit Bulgaria, although the intervention did change images and familiarity (self-rated and knowledge-based). It might be that as the students were so unfamiliar with Bulgaria before the intervention, that even the positive gains in image and familiarity could not compete with other destinations that the students already had on their 'list of places to visit'. Court and Lupton also found that gender was not significantly related to intent. However, other socio-demographic variables such as household size, income, and distance to the destination were found to be significantly related to intent. In addition, they found that prior visit to the destination and prior exposure to tourist information about the destination were significantly related to intent. These variables were not included in this study, which are advisable to be considered in future research.

One of the shortcomings of the current study is that it examined intent after students were exposed to the stimulus, and therefore, a comparison cannot be made with intent before the intervention, whether the promotional material improved the likelihood of visiting Bulgaria. However, one may speculate that intent was higher after viewing the video as the knowledge and awareness levels of Bulgaria before the intervention were so low. It would be also interesting to find if the four tourist roles differed based on results from the pre and post-test, and it may very well be that EXP and DTR would be more likely to visit Bulgaria as these tourist types enjoy higher levels of novelty associated with visiting less known destinations and like to see off-the-beaten path attractions and sites. Certainly, George and George (2004) found that intent to visit two destinations in India was influenced by the relationships between past purchase and place attachment and the relationship between place attachment and intention where both relationships were moderated by novelty seeking. As seen in chapter 2 the concept of novelty seeking is related to the four tourist roles that were examined in this study (Cohen, 1972; Crompton, 1979a; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Plog, 1974, 2001), however, in this study type of tourist role did not influence intent to travel to Bulgaria.

Sirakaya et al. (2001) in their study of Turkey also found that most students did not intend to visit Turkey as their next vacation destination. Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002) found that five affective and one cognitive image factor, previous international travel experience, social/personal sources of information, and overall appeal influenced adults' intent to travel to Turkey in a multiple regression model in which some relationships were positive and some negative. Further and more sophisticated analyses of Bulgaria as a destination are recommended that may include multiple regression, path analysis or structural equation modeling in which variables discussed above found from previous research to influence intent to travel should be included.

Other researchers have investigated the influence of promotional materials and a motion picture influence on intent to visit a destination (Chalip et al., 2003; Kim & Richardson, 2003). Chalip and his colleagues examined the relationships between intent to visit the Gold Coast of Australia. They found that for both the residents of New Zealand and the U.S. several image dimensions influenced intent to visit, however, the actual image categories predicting intent differed among residents of the two countries. In an experimental design they further investigated the influence of promotions on intent to visit the Gold Coast. The effect was not significant for residents of either country. The significant effect on intent to travel was achieved through the effect of advertising on the image for that destination. This is consistent with various tourism models (Moutinho, 1987; Stabler, 1988; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). The present study however, did not test for the intermediate effect of familiarity or image on intent. Although, image and familiarity were significantly more positive after the intervention. Further studies may focus on such interrelationships and mediating effects. Chalip et al. made an important conclusion. To gage the effect of destination advertisements destination marketing entities should first test these advertisements with a sample of the targeted audience prior to launch of a campaign. Results of such pre-launch research may lead to further modification of the campaign that will more closely fit the needs, preferences, lifestyles, and travel patterns of potential travelers and even personalize such information sources with the assistance of available information technology.

Kim and Richardson (2003) found the opposite when a movie about Vienna was shown to individuals. They concluded that viewing of a motion picture about Vienna resulted in a higher interest in visiting the city when the researchers compared the two groups, i.e. those who viewed the movie and the control group. In other words, further analysis and studies may be needed to

further investigate the relationships between familiarity with a destination, images of and intent to visit that destination. Differences in the findings of such studies are likely also due to the different methods and study designs. It would be interesting to compare the outcome of several studies with a similar design and the influence of promotional materials/TV commercials on intent to visit a destination.

Intent to travel and variables thought to influence intention were explored by Qi (2005) in relation to travel to China and to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In contrast to the present study, she found that previous international travel significantly influenced the intent to travel to China in the next five years. Qi found differences among the four tourist roles where the DTR showed differences compared with OMT and IMT and the EXP showed differences compared to the IMT. In addition, the author concluded that whether an individual was a male or female did not significantly influence their intent to travel, consistent with this study's results. The influence of international travel experience on intent to travel in Qi's study and the conflicting result of this study may be explained by the fact that China may be considered more culturally and as a result more unique and more appealing to adventurous student travelers. Whereas, Bulgaria is in Europe with long history and traditions, which may be a little more similar to the Western civilization and culture and as such less appealing. In fact, unprompted several students pointed out that Bulgaria may be similar to destinations such as Germany, Russia, England, and the Middle East.

The multiple regression analysis produced a model that did not improve the ability to predict intent to visit Bulgaria from overall image, self-familiarity level, and the sum familiarity score. Certainly, a larger sample size would be needed if several variables are used in regression as predictors (Field, 2005). One explanation for the non-significant results might be that even

though image and familiarity improved as the result of video, the destination is not in the individuals' evoked sets. It may be placed in the inert set, where according to Narayana and Markin (1975) are destinations about which an individual does not have enough information and he or she might feel neutral about. Also, the individual "…does not perceive them [inert set products or destinations] as better than the brands in his evoked set" (p. 2). Awareness and familiarity (for the latter it can be argued to what extent) again are confirmed as necessary early components in the decision making process that may translate later into interest, desire and actual visit to the destination (Ehrenberg, 1974; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Individuals were more likely to visit Europe and even more likely to travel abroad in the next five years, however, the researcher did not ask the participants to list those destinations that they would visit by unaided recall. One conclusion can be made that it would take a great deal of persuasive advertising to entice individuals to visit Bulgaria in addition to a gradual increase in awareness. The respondents' level of familiarity was low in the beginning and various forms of promotion can be used to increase their level of familiarity and make individuals more comfortable with travel to Bulgaria. One of the main goals of advertising is to appeal to the needs of its target consumers and can be used to build an image of a place (Kotler, et al, 1993). In addition, those needs, lifestyles, and preferences vary across individuals, people of different race, religion, age, socio-economic status and their particular needs at that moment when an individual starts to plan a trip. Word of mouth has been an important and influential source when it comes to travel planning (Capella & Greco, 1987; Gartner, 1993; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1994; Vogt, et al., 1998). It is possible that advertising can include the personal testimonies of people of various ages and backgrounds. It might be interesting to see if a campaign where referring a friend to book a specific trip to Bulgaria and will result in a discount

to the person who provided the reference (e.g. half-off in hotel stay, a free excursion while in Bulgaria, etc.) will be effective.

In addition, researchers have established a link between intent and perceived risk (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a, b). When asked what characteristics first come to mind when thinking about going on vacation to Bulgaria about 15% of the respondents still thought about it as a communist country, underdeveloped, cold and unsafe. Several students said they have never thought about vacationing in Bulgaria or that it is not a country they would like to visit. Others, did not know where Bulgaria was located geographically or responded that it has a hot climate and is a tropical country. It may be that those perceiving Bulgaria as a "risky" country to visit in terms of health risks, political stability, and strange food may be the organized mass tourists as found by Lepp and Gibson (2003). Those risk factors in their study were higher among individuals who tend to seek familiarity rather than novelty. It may be that those individuals were also less likely to visit Bulgaria due to the perceptions of Bulgaria as an undeveloped and "third world" country. Lepp and Gibson also found that previous international travel experience influenced perception of risk associated with terrorism, health and food hazards. Those with more international experience perceived those risks to a lesser degree. Although, in the current study previous international travel experience did not influence intent, its importance as a valuable tourist variable is undisputed. Marketing professionals in Bulgaria would benefit in their advertising campaigns from such research linking intent and risk associated with a visit to Bulgaria. Results from the post-test showed no significant differences in intent based on different international travel experience and travel to Europe. According to Crompton (1992) destination may not become a part of the consideration set for a variety of reasons, including the perception of high risk, none

of the traveler's friends have been to the destination, it is thought that destination is not meeting the person's motives, and others.

Implications

This study examined the relationship between awareness, familiarity, image and intent and personal variables such as past international travel experience, tourist role preference and gender. The author is not aware of other studies that have examined all of these constructs together in regards to a destination. In this case the destination was Bulgaria – an Eastern European country. Bulgaria is now a part of the European Union and will continue to receive funds to develop various areas, including tourism. For example, money is designated for infrastructure enhancements, product development and marketing and promotions and others. Bulgaria recently received funding from the European Union to fund tourism.

This study offers several implications relevant to destination marketing, branding, positioning and image of Bulgaria. First, awareness is a necessary but not sufficient element in the destination decision making process (Crompton, 1992; Ehrenberg, 1974; Milman & Pizam, 1995). The majority of students were aware of Bulgaria, however, the likelihood of them visiting in the next five years was relatively low. Second, marketers of Bulgaria need to focus on increasing the familiarity and knowledge of Bulgaria among U.S. travelers. As Fishbein and Manfredo (1992) emphasized, behavior change may occur if underlying cognitive organization such as beliefs and attitudes are changed related to a destination. Third, the opening of a North American or U.S. BSAT office is recommended. Such an office could be responsible for promotions targeted specifically at the North American market and creating a familiarization campaign that should include articles and coverage in travel and related magazines such as *Condé Nast Traveler, Travel and Leisure, National Geographic* and other publications and media. Such travel magazines and travel guides have more credibility among consumers (Crotts,

1999, Gartner, 1993) due to their "neutrality" and are valuable tools to consumers and can be powerful tools in the hands of destination marketers. Crotts (1999) emphasized the importance of *neutral* sources of information such as travel guides and travel agents. However, he and other researchers (Gartner, 1993) have stressed that perhaps the most important and influential source of information is that obtained from friends and relatives (personal sources).

Crotts explained that according to where an individual is in the decision making process his/her travel information search behavior would vary. At earlier stages of the search process individuals begin by accessing information already acquired (internal information) resulting from past experiences with this or other destinations, or long-term memory. Information may also be passively obtained through external sources when the traveler has low involvement levels. Active information search form external sources would include information obtained first from personal sources, neutral, personal experience and sources controlled by marketers (CVB web sites, etc.). Marketer sources have been found to have a relatively small influences on consumers (Crotts, 1999, Gartner, 1993), nevertheless they are an important group of information sources that are usually used in combination with other sources (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983, Vogt et al., 1998). Crompton (1992) noted that various decision making studies and models (Mountiho, 1986; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989) ultimately point to decrease of use of passively acquired information and an increase of the actively obtained information as the decision making process progresses. It can be inferred that different promotional strategies should be used by marketers that will reach travelers at each stage of the search and decision process. Crompton concluded that a sign of successful marketing of a destination is when the destination is placed in the initial and then the late consideration set by an individual. A destination is selected out of that late consideration set. If a destination is not a part of the initial

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set, destination marketers should engage in creative and targeted promotion and advertising. If a destination is placed in the inert set then, he suggested comparative advertising may be employed as an effective strategy. Bulgaria is not placed in the late consideration set of most U.S. college students. It is doubtful if it is placed in the initial set. It appears that it is in the inert of reject (inept) set. Therefore, appropriate marketing strategies need to be employed to increase the likelihood of Bulgaria being shifted from these sets to the consideration set where the ultimate goal is for the destination to be chosen.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has made a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding destination image and related constructs such as awareness, familiarity, and intent and it draws upon work of prominent scholars in the field. However, research designs such as longitudinal studies, which detect changes in attitudes and behavior, are recommended. For example, if the participants of this study were interviewed in five or ten years from now, would any of them report they have traveled to Bulgaria? Could that behavior have been contributed to sparking an interest in Bulgaria through the exposure to the intervention? These and myriad other questions may be possible to investigate through longitudinal design. In terms of analysis, a future study may explore the interactions of the constructs and causality by using path analysis and include more variables, including socio-demographics and others such as motivation and constraints to visit the country. Another design would be to use structural equation modeling, which is similar but more powerful than multiple regression (Garson, n.d.). A future design should incorporate a control group where internal validity will be increased. In other words, the changes in perceptions or intent to travel to Bulgaria might be attributed to a larger extent to the intervention. Such a design again will have flaws, however, the goal of the researcher is to minimize the effects of other variables, including selection bias, equivalence of individuals who

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are assigned to control and experimental groups, and others (Mitchell & Jolley, 1988). A larger sample should be employed in future studies that undertake to study the images and intentions of potential tourists to Bulgaria. The current study examined non-visitors, i.e. students none of whom have been to the country. In addition, it may be interesting to study those who may be considered non-visitors who are not at all likely to visit the country and compare them to individuals who intend to visit or have been to Bulgaria. Moreover, would people who are more familiar have better images of Bulgaria and have a higher likelihood of visiting the country? A further study of Bulgaria's image may include assessment of the effectiveness of various types of advertising on travelers' perceptions and intent. Non-visitors are a category less studied in tourism and results from such research can be invaluable to tourism marketers.

Another possible study may focus on those who have been to Bulgaria already and examine their intent to return and their satisfaction. Studies have indicated that a destination's ability to continue to attract visitors largely depends on how well it has satisfied the needs of those visitors that may recommend the destination to others or return. Further research may include variables such as prior travel experience, tourist role preference, socio-demographic variables, information sources, level of involvement in selecting a destination among others (which were not included in the model in this study) but were emphasized in previous research (Goodall, 1991; Manfredo et al., 1992; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Vogt, Stewart, & Fesenmaier, 1998; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989) might also increase the ability to predict intent.

Limitations

Several drawbacks exist in the study. First, the time commitment involved in the study may have caused participant fatigue due to the administration of a pre-test, exposure to the intervention stimulus and a post-test questionnaire. However, fatigue may have been minimal due to the showing of the video, which gave participants an opportunity to pause answering the

questionnaire and divert their attention. A bigger problem may have been the participants'

limited familiarity with and awareness of Bulgaria as a destination at first, and therefore, it was

difficult for them to depict images of the country. Students were offered a choice of "don't

know" in several questions relating to the familiarity/knowledge statements and image. It can be

argued that this contributed to greatly increasing of the missing values since "don't know" all

responses were treated as missing values and some students use it to answer all or many

questions. In addition, students involved in the pilot-test of the study revealed that the voice of

the narrator in the second video was difficult to understand. The video was produced by the

Bulgarian State Agency for tourism narrated by a Bulgarian woman, who sometimes used

uncommonly used U.K. English phrases. The promotional material was geared more toward the

British market. A redesigned promotional material targeting the North American market may

have been more appropriate.

Delimitations

Several delimitations are associated with this study. Due to the nature of the sampling

procedure where students enrolled in summer B and fall 2007 classes participated and due to the

small sample size the generalizability of findings may be limited to populations with similar

characteristics. Therefore, caution may need to be exercised when applying results from this

study to other populations that have different characteristics such as education, age, and income.

Studies using more a diverse sample in terms of age, education and income may ensure that

results could be generalized to a wider population. Furthermore, different results may be

obtained from non-U.S. born respondents as socio-economic and cultural differences, different

life and travel experiences have been found to influence destination image (Beerli & Martín,

2004; Chalip, et al., 2003; Pearce, 1982a; Ritchie & Smith, 1991), choice of destination, intent to

travel and tourist styles (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; Berroll, 1981; Campbell, 1978; Chalip, et al.,

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2003; Cohen, 1972; Crompton, 1979a; Goodall, 1991, Gottlieb, 1982; Graburn, 1983; Moutinho, 1987; Pearce, 1982b; Plog, 1974, 2001; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), awareness (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Richards, 1994; Ritchie & Smith, 1991), and familiarity (Cohen, 1974; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004; Kim & Richardson, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997).

Conclusions

This study answered many important questions, even though they stemmed from unexpected results. For example, prior international travel experiences bore no influence on awareness, familiarity, image, and intent. Moreover, it was perceived based on literature that different travel styles and tourist roles would affect the individual's level of familiarity, image, and intent to travel. More questions were raised as a result. Is the success of a destination proportionate to the success of a promotional campaign? A similar question was raised by Lane (2007) about the effectiveness of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) web sites. Due to 40 years of isolation during the communist era, Bulgaria's small territory and other geopolitical and historical factors Bulgaria was not widely known as a travel destination beyond Europe, and especially not familiar to the North American traveler. The opening of its borders in 1989, the membership in the European Union and active participation on the world arena through international structures and organizations will lead to an increased awareness of the country and perhaps familiarity with its culture and people. This is where the role of organizations such as the Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism (BSAT), the Bulgarian Tourist Chamber (BTC), National Tourist Board (NTB), the Bulgaria Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tourism Board, Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT), Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism, (BARET), Local and Regional Tourist Organizations becomes important. The cooperation and coordination of activities of various stakeholders such as these organizations representing the government, private, and non-profit sectors not only directly

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related to tourism but also sectors such as transport and infrastructure, Ministry of Ecology and Water, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of the Economy and Energy, State Agency of Youth and Sport, National Institute for Statistics, Universities and other organizations is of utmost importance when it comes to creating tourist-related laws and regulations, tourism promotion, product development and diversification that is sustainable for generations to come. The website of the BSAT (http://www.bulgariatravel.org) was redesigned in 2006, and while being redesigned no web site was available to the potential visitor. During this process, a temporary or the older version of the web site should have been available to the international and domestic travel community. It was as if Bulgaria disappeared from the international tourism arena. Another, drawback is that a web site is available in English; however, no such web site is available to the domestic traveler in Bulgarian.

Consequently, well-thought of strategies would need to be implemented if Bulgaria is to take advantage of international tourist flows on a consistent basis and to encourage diversified tourist products and experiences. Woodside and Sherrell (1977) gave a number of recommendations to destinations in the unaware, inept or reject sets. They described accurately Bulgaria's position as a destination in the competitive marketplace when they suggested that a lack of communication about the destination may inhibit development of tourism of destinations which are available to tourists but who are unaware of them. In this case most students were aware of a country called Bulgaria, however, they have probably never thought about vacationing there. For inert destinations the authors suggested inclusion of promotional campaigns including sales or special packages. Placement in the inept (reject) set may require the implementation of an overall effective product strategy if a shifting in the destination's position into the evoked set is the goal (Woodside & Sherrell, 1977). A destination's image is

inevitably tied to such strategies. Dichter (1985) suggested that image "is a most powerful

influence in the way people perceive things, and should be a crucial concept in shaping our

marketing, advertising, and communications efforts" (p.75). He also emphasized the nature of

image as being not static but constantly changing. This is an important message to be taken by

destination marketers. The success of a product largely depends on the culture in which it is

marketed according to Dichter possibly as much as the qualities of the product. His words are

good news for marketers in knowing that images can be altered eventually. Moreover, now more

than ever marketing professionals can be equipped with the necessary tools, visuals, and

technologies to create promotions of destinations that can target even the smallest of market

segments and attract them to a destination.

APPENDIX
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

BULGARIA TRAVEL SURVEY

> This questionnaire asks you about your thoughts relating to travel to Bulgaria. When completing the questionnaire, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.
> Please answer questions number 1 through number 61. Then you will watch a video about Bulgaria. After the video please answer the remaining questions. Please do not refer to your earlier responses. The whole process will take approximately 60 minutes.
> Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right not to answer certain questions if you choose to do so. The information you provide will be grouped with other respondents' information to protect your identity.   If you have any questions please contact Kristina Ivanova Roberts at tel.: (352) 375-2423 or via e-mail: kirob@ufl.edu. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study!

Part I. This question asks you about your awareness of the country of Bulgaria. Please circle the number that matches your response.

1. Have you ever heard of the country Bulgaria prior to today?   1….Yes   2…..No

Part II. Please answer the following questions by writing in the space provided.

2. What images or characteristics first come to mind when thinking about going on vacation to Bulgaria? Please describe in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What distinctive or unique tourist attractions, areas, features, or associations with Bulgaria come to mind when you think of the country.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Bulgaria?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part III. The following questions ask you about your familiarity with and knowledge of Bulgaria. Please circle the number that matches your response.

5. How familiar/knowledgeable do you consider yourself to be with Bulgaria?

Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Fairly familiar	Quite familiar	Very familiar
1	2	3	4	5

6. Have you taken any history, geography, political science or other classes, which have covered information about Bulgaria? Please circle the number matching your response.
    1….Yes   2….No

7. What types of information sources prior to today have you used to learn about Bulgaria? Please circle all numbers that apply.

1….Friends/relatives	8….Movies
2….Parents' knowledge	9….News programs
3….Books	10…Documentaries
4….Travel channel	11…Programs in media
5….Classes in history/geography	12…Newspaper articles
6….Other classes _____	13…None
7….Magazine articles	14…Other _____

Part IV. The following statements reflect your knowledge about Bulgaria. Please use the scale below and circle the number that matches your response.

Item	True	False	Don't Know
8. Bulgaria has a temperate climate	1	2	3
9. Bulgaria is a peaceful nation	1	2	3
10. Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria	1	2	3
11. Bulgaria has several mountains	1	2	3
12. Bulgaria was founded in the 7th century	1	2	3
13. Bulgaria's population is 7.9 million	1	2	3
14. Bulgaria is a small nation, approximately the size of North Carolina	1	2	3
15. Bulgaria is a communist country	1	2	3
16. Bulgaria's landscape overall is relatively flat	1	2	3

Item	True	False	Don't Know
17. Bulgaria has interesting cultural attractions	1	2	3
18. Bulgaria is a Slavic nation	1	2	3
19. Bulgaria was under 500 years of Turkish rule until 1878	1	2	3
20. Saints Cyril and Methodius invented the Cyrillic alphabet	1	2	3
21. Yogurt originated in Bulgaria	1	2	3
22. Bulgaria's dominant religion is Christianity	1	2	3
23. Bulgaria uses the Cyrillic alphabet	1	2	3
24. Bulgaria is not a member of the European Union	1	2	3

Part V. The following statements reflect your perceptions/images of Bulgaria as a travel destination. Please use the scale below and circle the number that matches your response.

As a tourist destination Bulgaria:

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
25. Has pleasant climate	1	2	3	4	5	9
26. Has good beaches	1	2	3	4	5	9
27. Has many tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5	9
28. Has national parks/wilderness areas	1	2	3	4	5	9
29. Is a safe place to visit	1	2	3	4	5	9
30. Offers good value for the money	1	2	3	4	5	9
31. Has good shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5	9
32. Has ornate churches and monasteries	1	2	3	4	5	9
33. Has many historical sites and museums	1	2	3	4	5	9
34. Has traditional handicraft	1	2	3	4	5	9
35. Has convenient public and private transport	1	2	3	4	5	9
36. Has good opportunities for hiking/mountaineering	1	2	3	4	5	9
37. Has beautiful scenery and nature	1	2	3	4	5	9
38. Has rich cultural heritage	1	2	3	4	5	9
39. Has overcrowded areas	1	2	3	4	5	9

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
40. Has quality roads and airports	1	2	3	4	5	9
41. Is rich in archaeological treasures	1	2	3	4	5	9
42. Is a place for relaxation	1	2	3	4	5	9
43. Has friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5	9
44. Offers an opportunity to easily get around the country	1	2	3	4	5	9
45. Has quality hotels/accommodations	1	2	3	4	5	9
46. Has tasty cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	9
47. Is a family-oriented destination	1	2	3	4	5	9
48. Has a different language, which presents a language barrier	1	2	3	4	5	9
49. Has tourist information available	1	2	3	4	5	9
50. Is fun and enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	9
51. Has good wine	1	2	3	4	5	9
52. Has open air markets	1	2	3	4	5	9
53. Has good skiing opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	9
54. Is rich in folk dance and song	1	2	3	4	5	9
55. Has good quality of service	1	2	3	4	5	9
56. Offers a good opportunity to increase my knowledge about a different culture	1	2	3	4	5	9
57. Is a clean country	1	2	3	4	5	9
58. Lacks commercialization	1	2	3	4	5	9
59. Offers a variety of recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5	9
60. Has good nightlife and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	9

61. My overall image of Bulgaria is positive. (Please circle the number that best matches your response).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	9

Please stop filling out the questionnaire. Watch video, after which please finish the questionnaire. Please do not refer to your responses made before the video.

Part VI. The following question asks you about your familiarity with Bulgaria. Please use the scale below and circle the number that matches your response.

62. Now that you have more information about Bulgaria, how familiar/knowledgeable do you consider yourself to be with the country?

Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Fairly familiar	Quite familiar	Very familiar
1	2	3	4	5

Part VII. The following statements reflect your knowledge about Bulgaria. Please use the scale below and circle the number that matches your response.

Item	True	False	Don't Know
63. Bulgaria has a temperate climate	1	2	3
64. Bulgaria is a peaceful nation	1	2	3
65. Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria	1	2	3
66. Bulgaria has several mountains	1	2	3
67. Bulgaria was founded in the 7th century	1	2	3
68. Bulgaria's population is 7.9 million	1	2	3
69. Bulgaria is a small nation, approximately the size of North Carolina	1	2	3
70. Bulgaria is a communist country	1	2	3
71. Bulgaria's landscape overall is relatively flat	1	2	3
72. Bulgaria has interesting cultural attractions	1	2	3
73. Bulgaria is a Slavic nation	1	2	3
74. Bulgaria was under 500 years of Turkish rule until 1878	1	2	3
75. Saints Cyril and Methodius invented the Cyrillic alphabet	1	2	3
76. Yogurt originated in Bulgaria	1	2	3
77. Bulgaria's dominant religion is Christianity	1	2	3
78. Bulgaria uses the Cyrillic alphabet	1	2	3
79. Bulgaria is not a member of the European Union	1	2	3

Part VIII. Please answer the following questions by writing in the space provided.

80. What images or characteristics first come to mind when thinking about going on vacation to Bulgaria? Please describe in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

Part IX. The following statements reflect your perceptions/images of Bulgaria as a travel destination. Please use the scale below and circle the number that matches your response.

As a tourist destination Bulgaria:

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
81. Has pleasant climate	1	2	3	4	5	9
82. Has good beaches	1	2	3	4	5	9
83. Has many tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5	9
84. Has national parks/wilderness areas	1	2	3	4	5	9
85. Is a safe place to visit	1	2	3	4	5	9
86. Offers good value for the money	1	2	3	4	5	9
87. Has good shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5	9
88. Has ornate churches and monasteries	1	2	3	4	5	9
89. Has many historical sites and museums	1	2	3	4	5	9
90. Has traditional handicraft	1	2	3	4	5	9
91. Has convenient public and private transport	1	2	3	4	5	9
92. Has good opportunities for hiking/mountaineering	1	2	3	4	5	9
93. Has beautiful scenery and nature	1	2	3	4	5	9
94. Has rich cultural heritage	1	2	3	4	5	9

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
95. Has overcrowded areas	1	2	3	4	5	9
96. Has quality roads and airports	1	2	3	4	5	9
97. Is rich in archaeological treasures	1	2	3	4	5	9
98. Is a place for relaxation	1	2	3	4	5	9
99. Has friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5	9
100. Offers an opportunity to easily get around the country	1	2	3	4	5	9
101. Has quality hotels/accommodations	1	2	3	4	5	9
102. Has tasty cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	9
103. Is a family-oriented destination	1	2	3	4	5	9
104. Has a different language, which presents a language barrier	1	2	3	4	5	9
105. Has tourist information available	1	2	3	4	5	9
106. Is fun and enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	9
107. Has good wine	1	2	3	4	5	9
108. Has open air markets	1	2	3	4	5	9
109. Has good skiing opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	9
110. Is rich in folk dance and song	1	2	3	4	5	9
111. Has good quality of service	1	2	3	4	5	9
112. Offers a good opportunity to increase my knowledge about a different culture	1	2	3	4	5	9
113. Is a clean country	1	2	3	4	5	9
114. Lacks commercialization	1	2	3	4	5	9
115. Offers a variety of recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5	9
116. Has good nightlife and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	9

117. My overall image of Bulgaria is positive. (Please circle the number that best matches your response).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	9

Part X. The following questions relate to your past travel experiences and future intended travel. Please circle the number that most closely fits your experience or intent.

118. Have you ever traveled internationally?

Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
1	2	3	4

What countries have you visited? _____

119. How many times have you traveled to Europe?

Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
1	2	3	4

Which European countries have you visited? _____

120. How likely are you to choose Bulgaria as your next international vacation destination?

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

121. Do you plan to travel to Bulgaria in the next 5 years for vacation purposes?

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

122. Do you plan to travel abroad in the next 5 years for vacation purposes?

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

123. Do you plan to travel to Europe in the next 5 years for vacation purposes?

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

124. If I wanted I could easily visit Bulgaria within the next 5 years.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

125. For me to visit Bulgaria in the next 5 years would be

Impossible	_____	_____	_____	Possible
1	2	3	4	5

126. I believe I have the resources to travel to Bulgaria within the next 5 years.
    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree
           1   2   3   4   5

127. Visiting Bulgaria is expensive.
    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree
           1   2   3   4   5

128. The cost of travel to Bulgaria would influence my visiting decision.
    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree
           1   2   3   4   5

Part XI. Information sources

129. What types of information sources do you typically use when planning a vacation? Please circle all numbers that apply.

    1….Travel guide/tour books   6….Friends/relatives
    2….Own travel files   7….Official web site of destination
    3….Travel agent   8….Internet
    4….Travel magazines   9….Newspaper
    5….Travel club   10…Other _____

Part XII. Tourist Roles
130. From the following four descriptions please choose the one that describes your travel characteristics best when you typically travel.

____ I enjoy packaged tours with pre-planned itineraries. I enjoy traveling with a knowledgeable guide along with a group of friends, family or other Americans. Comfort is very important.

____ I travel independently of a tour but I appreciate the services of a travel agent who can plan parts of my trip. I enjoy traveling with friends and family, and together we visit the famous sites. Comfort is important.

____ I enjoy arranging the trip myself and traveling alone or with a few close friends. Meeting local people is important and I prefer to get off the beaten path; however, comfort and reliable transportation are important.

____ I enjoy engaging completely in a host country's culture. I enjoy the freedom of having no travel itinerary, timetable, or well-defined travel goals. I shun the beaten path. I will forgo comfort for economy and even work along the way to fund my travels.

Part XIII. Now a few questions to help us interpret your response. (Please circle one response.)

131. Are you: 1…. Male   2…..Female?

132. What is your current marital status?
    1…Single, never married   2…Married/Partnered   3…Widowed   4…Separated/Divorced

133. In what year were you born? _____ Year

134. Which statement best describes your TOTAL 2006 annual family (including your parents') income? (Please circle one response.)
    1….$25,000 or less   5….$100,001 - $125,000
    2….$25,001 - $50,000   6….$125,001 - $150,000
    3….$50,001 - $75,000   7….$150,001 or more
    4….$75,001 - $100,000

135. What will your class standing be in fall 2007? (Please circle one)
    1….Freshman   4….Senior
    2….Sophomore   5….Graduate student
    3….Junior

136. What is your racial or ethnic background?
    1….Black, not of Hispanic origin   4….Hispanic
    2….Asian or Pacific Islander   5….Native American or American Indian
    3….White, not of Hispanic origin   6….Pacific Islander
                                         7….Other _____

Thank you for your participation in this study!

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kristina Ivanova Roberts was born in Poland. However, she is Bulgarian, and now an American citizen. She grew up in Sofia, Bulgaria and has also lived in Prague, Czech Republic. She completed two years of her studies in geography at Sofia University, then completed a year in Business at the Anglo-American College in Prague. Eventually she transferred as a student to the University of Florida, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism (now Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management). She graduated with honors in 2000 with a Bachelor of Science in tourism. After graduation with a Master of Science degree in recreation, parks, and tourism she plans to work in tourism marketing.