

Destination Identification: A Unifying Conceptualization and Operationalization

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Abstract

Tourists' identification with a destination is a central topic in tourism research because of its usefulness to understand tourists' predispositions toward destinations. However, the usability of the destination identification construct for academics and managers is hampered by three shortcomings. Firstly, the current literature often makes no distinction between the resident's and tourist's perspectives of destination identification. Secondly, there is no consensus on the nature and definition of destination identification. Thirdly, the operationalization and measurement of the construct is lacking in construct validity. This study reviews extant literature on destination identification and proposes a new conceptualization and operationalization of the construct. The review proposes a hierarchical destination identification framework consisting of a holistic identification construct and four drivers thereof: self-verification, self-enhancement, life meaning and need for belonging.

Keywords: *identification; attachment; identity*

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