RSAEM

RESEARCH SEMINAR IN APPLIED ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

IN COLLABORATION WITH

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UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCE OF A DESTINATION'S PERSONALITY AND GENDER: SEMIOTIC AND LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Tourist destinations are recognized as brand entities in their own right. For several decades, marketing researchers have been studying their brand image, and some have focused on the destination's brand personality. However, few have sought to understand how this personality takes shape in travelers' minds, and even fewer have examined the gender attribution of the destination, a strategic sub-dimension of brand personality. This seminar presents two complementary studies. First, a qualitative study (N = 14 semi-structured interviews) draws on Peirce's semiotics to establish an initial theoretical framework for understanding how a destination's personality and gender emerge in consumers' minds. Second, a quantitative study (N = 713) shows that the grammatical gender of a destination influences its gendered perception among speakers of a gendered language (French), but to a much lesser extent among speakers of a language without grammatical gender (English). This effect extends the theory of linguistique relativity to the field of destination marketing. Together, these findings enable destination management organizations to better understand the determinants of brand personality and offer them concrete strategies for shaping the gendered perception of their destination according to their targeted language markets.