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The impact of TV Series in Nation Brand Experience

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THE IMPACT OF TV SERIES IN NATION BRAND
EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to understand the impact of series on the brand experience of a nation. Along with the effect on the behavioral intentions of the audience, of visiting and living in the country and purchasing its products, on nation equity and on word-of-mouth (WOM).

Methodology: A quantitative approach was followed where the conceptual framework was built from existing literature and hypotheses were proposed to test the impact of series on Nation Brand Experience (NBE) and of NBE on consumer's behavioral intentions, on nation equity and on WOM. The data to test the hypotheses was collected using an online survey and tested via SmartPLS4.

Findings: Series offer the audience an experience of the nation brand when the environmental conditions and the social norms are represented. Nation equity benefits from the positive affective and intellectual experience, and the audience feels more prone to recommend it. Intentions of visiting, residing in the country and of purchasing its products are also affected positively by the series' portrayal.

Practical implications: This study offers destination management organizers (DMOs) and academics significant knowledge regarding the impact of the nation's portrayal in series on NBE and consequently on behavioral intentions, on nation equity and on recommendations. Having this knowledge, professionals are able make more informed decisions.

Originality: Literature is underdeveloped regarding the effects of series on the branding process. Series have been studied mostly through the lens of film tourism but there is a gap in terms of their contribution to the shaping and propagation of a nation brand. This research contributes to filling that gap. New avenues are open for understanding how narratives woven into popular series can shape perceptions of a nation's identity and help establish a global positioning.

Keywords: Nation brand experience, series, cinema, behavioral intentions, nation equity, word-of-mouth.

Resumo

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é compreender o impacto das séries na experiência de marca de uma nação. Assim como o seu efeito nas intenções comportamentais do público, de visitar e viver no país e comprar os seus produtos, no valor da marca nação e nas recomendações.

Metodologia: Foi seguida uma metodologia quantitativa com o desenvolvimento do modelo conceptual a partir da literatura existente e foram propostas hipóteses de investigação para testar o impacto das séries na Experiência de Marca Nação e desta no comportamento dos consumidores. Os dados para testar as hipóteses foram recolhidos através de um questionário online e testados via SmartPLS4.

Resultados: As séries oferecem ao público uma experiência da marca nação quando as condições ambientais e as normas sociais são representadas. O valor da marca nação beneficia da experiência afetiva e intelectual positiva, e o público fica mais propenso a recomendá-la. As intenções de visitar, residir no país e de comprar os seus produtos também são afetadas positivamente pelo retrato da série.

Implicações práticas: Este estudo oferece aos organizadores de gestão de destinos e académicos conhecimento sobre o impacto do retrato da nação em séries na experiência da marca, e consequentemente, nas intenções comportamentais, no valor da marca nação e nas recomendações. Tendo este conhecimento, os profissionais podem tomar decisões mais informadas.

Originalidade: A literatura está subdesenvolvida em termos dos efeitos das séries no processo de branding. Séries têm sido estudadas através do fenómeno do turismo cinematográfico, mas existe uma lacuna relacionada à sua contribuição na formação e propagação da marca nacional. Este estudo contribui para o seu preenchimento. Novos caminhos estão abertos para entender como as narrativas tecidas em séries populares podem moldar as perceções da identidade de uma nação e ajudar a estabelecer um posicionamento global.

Palavras-chave: Experiência da marca nação, séries, intenções comportamentais, valor da marca nação, recomendações.

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List of abbreviations

AVE- Average variance extracted

CBE- Country Brand Equity

CB-SEM- Covariance-based structural equation modeling

CE- Country Equity

CI- Country Image

CMB- Common-method bias

CSBI- Country Strength Brand Index

DMOs- Destination Management Organizers

HTMT- Heterotrait-monotrait ratio

NBE- Nation Brand Experience

NBI- Nation Brand Index

NBL- Nation Brand Love

NBLT- Nation Brand Loyalty

NE- Nation Equity

PCI- Product Country Image

PLS-SEM- Partial Least Square structural equation modeling

SEM- Structural Equation Model

TDI- Travel Destination Image

TPB- Theory of Planned Behavior

TRA- Theory of Reasoned Action

VIF- Variance Inflation Factor

WOM- Word of Mouth

1. Introduction

In a globalized world, countries need to differentiate from others to gain competitive advantage. One of the ways this can be accomplished is by strengthening their Nation Brand. The process of applying branding tools to a country to improve its image is known as Nation Branding. A nation brand can be defined as the perception that people, in hold of a country, across defining aspects, such as the political, social, economic, historical, environmental and cultural factors of a nation (Fetscherin, 2010). This concept can be seen as the offspring of country of origin, destination branding and national identity (Fan, 2006). A strong and well-defined nation brand contributes to the attraction of tourism, foreign investment, skilled and semi-skilled immigrants, while also differentiating a country's products and services (Rojas-Méndez, 2013).

All nations have a brand whether there have been efforts put into building one or not. However, they can be managed and there are certain methods that contribute to its propagation and solidification in the consumer's minds (Fan, 2006). Cinema has been proven to be a powerful communication medium thanks to its ability of influencing and directing attention to critical social, political, and economic issues, as well of fostering discussions around societal norms (Lancioni, 1996). Cinema contributes to the shaping of a country image and nation brand (Gupta, Foroudi, Väätänen, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020; Kim & Richardson, 2003) and has the power to influence the audience's intentions to visit the country (Cardoso et al., 2017) and to purchase its products (Chan, 2007). Furthermore, cinema has the ability to communicate the characteristics of a country, namely its infrastructural, cultural, social, political and environmental attributes (Gupta, Foroudi, Väätänen, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020), and can be used as strategic nation branding opportunity, capable of boosting the country's economy and contributing positively to several industries. An example is the Oscar-winning film *Parasite*, which was embraced as a branding opportunity for South Korea, according to Lee (2021). These characteristics of cinema are also translated in series. Similarly, series also offer the opportunity to experience the nation brand through moving images, across five main dimensions: sensorial, affective, behavioural, and intellectual.

Considering the impact that series exert on the shaping of perceptions regarding specific countries, coupled with the lack of research in this domain, this study endeavors to elucidate the relationship between the narrative content and the resultant imagery conveyed about a particular nation. Primarily, this research seeks to understand how such depictions are interpreted by viewers of the series, to the extent that they wield influence over their intentions to visit, reside in, or engage in buying the products of that country. Additionally, the study aims to analyse the effect of series consumption on the intention to recommend the destination and disseminate word-of-mouth.

1.1. Research Problem

Several research has been conducted on the topic of Country Image, through two main directions: Product Country Image (PCI) (Gorostidi-Martinez et al., 2017; Li et al., 2014; Papadopoulos & Elliot, 2015; Roth & Romeo, 1992) and Travel Destination Image (TDI) (Crompton, 1979; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Elliot et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2018). Nation branding is a more recent field that is gaining popularity (Hao et al., 2021). Despite the growing interest regarding these areas of research, not much attention has been devoted towards how series and films can be mediums of communication for the shaping and diffusion of a nation brand. Series and films have the power to portray a country across its main attributes- infrastructure, culture, social norms, environment, political environment (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättäenenc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020) -, giving the audience a vicarious experience of the nation brand, as well as an opportunity to create expectations on the experiences a country can offer (Kim & Richardson, 2003). These expectations will influence the audience's behavioral intentions towards the country (to visit, to live and to purchase its products), the recommendations of the country to others, and the nation equity.

The studies are generally focused on the effects of the portrayal of the places in films and series on visiting intentions and/or visitation (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättäenenc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020; Hao et al., 2021; Rodner & Kerrigan, 2018). Despite it, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the influence of cinema and series on leveraging individuals' nation brand perceptions and its usefulness on building a strong nation brand. In addition, the role of series and films as providers of a Nation Brand Experience has not been studied yet, to my knowledge. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the filling of that gap by answering the following research questions: What is the influence of series in

the promotion of Nation Brand Experience? What is the influence of Nation Brand Experience on consumer behavioral intentions?

1.2. Research objectives

The main objectives of this study are to understand how series contribute to the experience of the nation brand and to the perceptions and image of a country. This study also seeks to understand how such experience influences intentions to visit, live and purchase the country's products, the recommendation of the nation and its experience to others and ultimately, nation equity.

The following specific research objectives are proposed:

- To understand the influence of country's (a) infrastructure, (b) culture, (c) social norms and (d) environment portrayed in series on consumers' nation brand experience.
- To analyse nation brand experience on consumer's intention to visit Italy.
- To analyse nation brand experience on consumer's intention to purchase Italian products.
- To analyse nation brand experience on consumer's intention to live in Italy.
- To understand the influence of nation brand experience on nation equity.
- To understand the influence of nation brand experience on promoting word of mouth.

To reach the objectives, the series *La Casa de Papel* is used to study how it influences consumer's perception of Italy particularly through the depiction of scenes set in Tuscany.

1.3. Methodology

To answer the research questions and achieve the mentioned objectives, this study follows a quantitative methodological approach, with a questionnaire as the chosen instrument for data collection. The testing and validation of the conceptual framework is done through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

This study is relevant scientifically as it contributes to the literature by providing a deeper understanding of series as a channel for promotion of the nation brand experience,

and of the impact of such experience on the attraction of visitors and migrants and in incentivizing the purchase of the country's products. This knowledge is relevant from a managerial perspective as it helps marketers understand whether series are an effective channel for the promotion of the experience of the nation. With this information, marketers can evaluate whether investments to incentivize the portrayal of the countries in series can bring revenues, increase nation equity, and create positive Word of Mouth.

1.4. Dissertation Structure

This dissertation starts with an introduction to the topic and its relevance to the current environment. The research problem is presented alongside the main objectives of this investigation. Chapter two presents the literature review where relevant knowledge and theory to this topic is analysed. This analysis constituted the basis for the construction of the theoretical model and for the development of the hypotheses.

Following the Literature Review, chapter three elucidates the data collection and processing methods, describing the selected approach for hypothesis testing—Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)—as detailed in the Methodology section. Still in this chapter, the characteristics of the sample are summarized. Afterwards, the model is analysed, and the hypotheses tested in chapter four- Results. Chapter five presents the discussion of the results. In this chapter, a deeper analysis of the results is conducted. The last chapter, six is dedicated to Conclusion. In this chapter, the results are summarized, as well as the theoretical and practical implications of this study. The limitations of the investigation and avenues for future research are also debated.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Country image

Country image (CI) is a well-researched topic that first emerged from Rober Schooler's seminal paper in 1965 (Lu et al., 2016). It can be perceived as the point of intersection of international business, marketing, and consumer behavior (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). Country image reflects the way consumers perceive a country, its people, products, and brands. It can be defined as the overall set of beliefs and perceptions of a country, influenced by the country's history, politics, economy, culture, traditions, and technology (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The perceptions can be at a macro level, such as the character and competencies of the people and of the country and at a micro level, when referencing products and services (Pappu & Quester, 2010).

There are two main components to CI: cognitive and affective (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). While the cognitive country image is related with the perception of the country's technology, economic development, living standards, industrialization and political orientation (Pappu et al., 2006), the affective country image is composed by the emotional reactions towards a country.

Country image's literature typically focuses on overall image (Dagger & Raciti, 2011), national stereotypes and general views of a nation (Palau-Saumell et al., 2016; Yousaf, 2017), product country image (Gorostidi-Martinez et al., 2017; Li et al., 2014), and country-of-origin (Choi & Cai, 2016; Roth & Romeo, 1992). Themes of ethnocentrism, culture, destination image, branding, consumer loyalty, business buying behavior, country image effect, consumer attitude, buying intention are also discussed throughout the CI literature (Lu et al., 2016). Despite the wide variety of themes, the research on country image has two main streams: Product Country Image (PCI) and Travel Destination Image (TDI). These two constructs are connected by the attitude theory. Image affects the evaluation of the products of the country and of the country as a destination, which in turn affects the consumer's attitudes and behavior towards them (Wang, 2021).

Product Country Image is one the most discussed themes under Country Image and can be described as the perception of the quality of products made in a given country based in general beliefs and on prior beliefs regarding the country's production and marketing

techniques (Roth & Romeo, 1992). The country of origin effect refers to the evaluation made of products based on where they were manufactured and overall perceptions of the country, which influences the intention to purchase them (Papadopoulos & Elliot, 2015). The associations of products to countries help people process information and play a significant role in decision making and posterior attitudes, especially in the intention to purchase the product (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). These perceptions tend to be connected with world affairs (Heslop et al., 2004; Knight & Calantone, 2000); levels of environmental protection (Heslop et al., 2004), aligned with the home country in world affairs (Lee & Ganesh, 1999); quality of life (Heslop et al., 2004), individual rights and freedoms (Heslop et al., 2004), political stability (Heslop et al., 2004), standards of living (Orbaiz & Papadopoulos, 2003; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002), level of economic development (Lee & Ganesh, 1999); stability of the economy (Heslop et al., 2004); and wealth (Heslop et al., 2004; Orbaiz & Papadopoulos, 2003). People centered beliefs such as friendliness (Heslop et al., 2004; Knight & Calantone, 2000; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002); pride in achieving high standards (Lee & Ganesh, 1999); trustworthiness (Heslop et al., 2004; Laroche et al., 2005); and individualism (Heslop et al., 2004), creativity (Knight & Calantone, 2000; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002); education (Heslop et al., 2004; Knight & Calantone, 2000; Laroche et al., 2005; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002); industriousness (Heslop et al., 2004; Knight & Calantone, 2000; Laroche et al., 2005; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002); technical skills (Knight & Calantone, 2000; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002), and work ethic (Heslop et al., 2004; Knight & Calantone, 2000; Laroche et al., 2005; Lee & Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 2002) also contribute to the image formation of a country.

Travel Destination Image is the beliefs, knowledge and feelings visitors have regarding a destination (Crompton, 1979). These beliefs can come from the natural environment (natural attractions, the scenery, climate, beliefs about the environment) (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993), the culture of the place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), the societal feeling, friendliness and whether people are welcoming (Trauer & Ryan, 2005), quality of service (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) contributing to an overall evaluation of the country. The global image of the country is especially important in the decision making process and intention to visit when the country as a whole is considered (Elliot et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2018).

Destination Image impacts destination preferences, satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Zhang et al., 2014). The country's attributes as a destination (services, accommodation, accessibility, etc.) can be perceived as a product, as visitors are purchasing an experience. Therefore, some principles studied for PCI can still be applied to TDI. According to Elliot and Papadopoulos (2016), the beliefs associated with a country's products are also relevant to destination receptivity.

Cognitive country image has the greatest influence on product evaluations and affective country image has the greatest influence on destination evaluations (Elliot & Papadopoulos, 2016). While affective country image has a direct impact on destination image, cognitive country image acts as antecedent to affective country image (Lu et al., 2016).

2.2. Place Branding

According to Agnew (1987), a place consists of three elements: location, locale and sense of place. Location is the physical point of a place. A locale is the setting for social interactions and relationship building. And sense of place is the emotional attachment that people have with it. Consequently, a place is not only the physical location but also all the associations and feelings connected to it.

Place marketing is the use of marketing tool for the creation, communication, delivery and exchange of offerings that create value for the city's customers and community (Braun, 2008). Despite the conceptual difference, branding and marketing are used interchangeably in this context. Place branding involves both branding and marketing strategies to promote a city or country as a desirable destination for visitors, inward investment, migration and job creation (Fan, 2006). It is closely related with image and reputation management and with the exercise of construction of an identity for the place (Kavaratzis & Florek, 2021). The resulting place brands influence consumers' expectations about the place and, therefore, are very useful to align the expectations of a place to reality.

The place brand is composed not only by the physical and natural environment elements, but also by the economic, legal, cultural, and political elements of the place in question. The identity of the place brand has symbolic and sensory elements that contribute to the image of the place. Art, sports, music and cultural events are methods of

communication of these elements (Skinner, 2018). Movies and series, books and the news are relevant contributors to the formation of the image of a place. One of the four constructive elements of identity is changing signifiers, which are great events, food, architecture, popular literature and art, including cinema and series (Govers & Go, 2009).

Place branding is an encompassing term that can be used when referring to the process of branding a city, a region or even a country. However, literature generally applies this term for sub-national level places. When dealing with countries, nation branding is the term generally used.

2.3. Nation Branding

Countries have an image regardless of any effort put into building one or not (Fan, 2006). However, that image can be managed to become more appealing and be used as a nation branding tool (Hakala et al., 2013).

Nation Branding refers to the process of applying branding techniques that are typically used on products and services, to countries (Fan, 2006). This process results in an enhanced Nation Brand. Through nation branding, the image and reputation of a country can be improved and help the nation become more competitive for tourism, investment and talent attraction (Hakala et al., 2013).

The nation brand is influenced, not only by experience, but also previous beliefs, stereotypes, social, political and economic conditions of the country (Fan, 2010), its products and companies, its people, the culture, history and traditions (Agarwal & Sikri, 1996). Each nation has its own history, weather, geography, political system, culture, literature, architecture, and other characteristics that differentiate them from other countries and that can make them attractive for tourism, investment, and business. These characteristics are all key components of the nation's brand and that are communicated through different channels, such as branded exports, cultural artefacts, tourism experience, brand ambassadors, famous personalities, and others. This results in the development of a nation brand image (Dinnie, 2015).

Nation branding is helpful when improving the image of a country and can be used as a political tool, to strengthen the country's position (Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011) and usually

used for tourism promotion (Scott et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that there are inherent factors, such as the political, economic, and social situation, that also affect the country's image that cannot be solved through branding alone (Fan, 2006). Due to these complexities, nation branding can be more challenging than product branding, as it encompasses many factors that are unique to each country.

Nation branding shares similarities with soft power and public diplomacy. Soft power is the ability of forging and influencing others' decisions, neither through coercion nor payment but through attraction and positive incentives. Public diplomacy is a communication instrument of a country's resources and soft power to promote and attract foreign audiences (Nye, 2008). Soft power and public diplomacy, as nation branding, entail the construction and dissemination of a national image abroad with the purpose of shifting perspectives and attitudes toward the country. The soft power of a country rests on the attractiveness of its culture, the political values, foreign policies and whether they are perceived as legitimate and moral (Kim & Nye, 2013).

There are two main indexes in literature to evaluate nation brand: the Nation Brand Index (NBI), developed by Anholt, and the Country Strength Brand Index (CSBI), proposed by Fetscherin. While NBI follows a consumer-based brand equity approach, CSBI follows a company-based brand equity approach (Anholt, 2005; Fetscherin, 2010). The consumer-based brand equity approach assesses brand value in terms of the value deposited in it by consumers (Keller, 1993). NBI has six dimensions and is calculated by surveying consumer's perception on those six dimensions of nation brand: exports, governance, culture, people, tourism, immigration, and investment. The company-based brand equity approach estimates the country performance in terms of attracting tourism and Foreign Direct Investments (Fetscherin, 2010).

In similarity to products and service brands, nation brands also reflect multiple and differentiating country elements (the culture, landscapes, the people, the food, etc.) that provide a unique experience to the consumers. With the growing valorization of experiences, Nation Brand Experience is an emerging concept and a logical continuation of the studies in the field of nation branding (Yadav et al., 2021).

2.4. Nation Brand Experience

2.4.1. Brand Experience

In 1999, Pine and Gilmore discussed the rise of the Economy of Experience, and a new economic offering distinct from traditional products and services. The authors noted that there was a growing demand for experiences and that positive led to increasing engagement and loyalty among consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Experiential marketing was further defined by Schmitt (1999). The traditional marketing ideologies were challenged with the new approach. In contrast to traditional marketing where consumers were perceived as rational decision-makers that focused just on the functional features and benefits of the products and services, in experiential marketing, consumers are rational and emotional, concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences. The goal is to provide a holistic experience to consumers. The consumer's experience has the following dimensions: Five different types of experiences can be provided to a consumer. Sensory experiences affect the senses. Affective experiences appeal to customers' feelings and emotions. Cognitive experiences engage customers' problem-solving skills and their creativity. Behavioral experiences induce consumers to engage in physical activities and/or inspire them to change their lifestyle and behaviors. Social experiences comprise elements of all the previous experiences while including the relational aspect of connecting and sharing feelings and thoughts with other brand users (Schmitt, 1999).

The brand experience refers to the entire process of searching, obtaining and consuming which leads to the assessment of the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Holbrook, 2000). The sensations, behaviors and thoughts evoked by the products or services are all part of the brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2019; Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2020). During these steps, consumers are exposed to brand-related stimuli such as brand-identifying colors (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992), shapes (Robert W. Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998), typefaces, background design elements (Mandel & Johnson, 2002), slogans, mascots, and brand characters (Keller, 1987). These stimuli are part of the identity of the brand and key elements of the brand experience. The experience with products can be direct, when there is physical contact with the product, or indirect when the contact occurs through secondary sources such as advertisement, for example (Kempf & Smith, 1998). Service experience occurs upon the interaction of the consumer with the store's physical and/or digital environment, personnel, policies and practices (Batat, 2022).

A brand experience scale was developed by Brakus et al. (2009). This scale has four dimensions: sensory brand experience (composed by all the visual, gustatory, aural, olfactory, and tactile experiences), affective brand experience (comprises all the feelings provoked by the brand), behavioral brand experience (actions, and behaviors arising from that contact with the brand) and intellectual brand experience (the thoughts and curiosity evoked). After tests, the relational dimension was removed from the initial scale.

Brand Experience has become an important topic of research for multiple reasons. It is a more embracing term than brand attachment, brand love and brand personality. Brand experience can happen even when consumers do not show interest or feel a connection to the brand and it is a stronger predictor for actual buying behavior and a more significant determinant of brand equity and brand loyalty (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009). A positive brand experience will bring satisfaction to the customer and ultimately, lead to loyalty (Bagozzi et al., 2017; Batra et al., 2012) and affect decision-making, as consumer are more likely to repeat purchases and recommend (Brakus et al., 2009).

2.4.2. Nation Brand Experience

Nation Brand Experience (NBE) is the Brand Experience concept extended to the nation context. The experience with products, services or brands can be a factor when evaluating a nation brand and influence travel intentions (Lee & Lee, 2021; Yadav et al., 2021). A positive evaluation of the nation arising from a positive experience can lead to a greater status for that nation's brands, products and services (Davvetas et al., 2020).

The brand experience scale was adapted to the context of Nation Brand by Yadav et al. (2021). The dimensions of the brand experience scale can be adapted to the context of a nation. The sensory brand experience refers to all the visual (scenery, landscapes, monuments), gustatory (culinary), aural (traditional music, sounds), olfactory (smells) and tactile experiences when being in direct or indirect contact with a country. Intellectual brand experience can happen through thought provoking activities that increase curiosity, such as going to a museum. Affective experiences happen when visiting a destination that has special meaning and that one feels attached to, welcomed by the people, or love the architecture. Behavioral brand experience comprises physical and "motor" activities, such as going on a hike or practicing a sport. According to Yadav et al. (2021), the sensory and

affective dimensions of Nation Brand Experience tend to have the most impact on Nation Brand Love (NBL), Nation Brand Loyalty (NBLT) and Word of Mouth (WOM), while behavioral and intellectual NBEs do not affect WOM while mediated by NBL.

Nation branding experience literature generally focuses more on tourism as marketers invest more and more in creating tourism experiences. A positive experience with tourism may lead to positive WOM (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Moliner-Velázquez et al., 2019) and visitors often feel or develop an attachment to the destinations (Hosany et al., 2017; Steenkamp et al., 2003). According to Barnes et al. (2014), there is a direct and mediated role of the sensory and affective Destination Brand Experience components in revisit intentions and word-of-mouth recommendations, with satisfaction having a mediating role. Behavioral and intellectual experiences appear more difficult to achieve in a tourism context (Barnes et al., 2014).

The present study is different in the sense that the experience of the country happens through images in a series and not a physical, on-site experience. In most literature, the experience of a place is from a primary source, because of a visit. However, the experience of a country can happen through a secondary source or secondary place interaction, such as series and movies (Kim & Richardson, 2003). This proposition comes from the idea of vicarious experience. In the case of movies and series, the audience is able to experience a place vicariously by identifying and putting themselves in the position of the characters (Metz, 1981). This also happens in advertisements, where the product experience portrayed is lived vicariously by the audience. The audience of a movie or series can be regarded as an information processor and is capable of experiencing the destination through the characters and the observation of the country's landscapes, infrastructure, culture, traditions (Kim & Richardson, 2003). According to Govers et al. (2007), vicarious place experiences through television, literature, pictures and movies, as secondary sources of information, are relevant in influencing pre-visit image.

2.5. Impact of Moving Images on Nation branding

The image formation process results from information streams that foster the development of impressions and mental constructs (Reynolds, 1965). Images can influence and predict consumer behavior, feelings, thoughts and actions (Dichter, 1985) and are used

to process information and provide an explanation for behavioral tendencies (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

Images can be formed from two different types of sources- induced or occurred authentically. Induced images of a country are the result of a conscious effort of promoting and marketing the places, through advertisement and brochures, for example. On the other hand, organic images are the consequence of indirect sources of information regarding the place, such as news, magazines, literature, movies, and series. Moving images are capable of shaping and extending the image of a nation in the minds of spectators in part due to its capability of passing great amounts of information about a country in a short period of time (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000). These are perceived to be more unbiased and to portray the country more realistically.

Cinema acts as an important tool for communication of the overall conditions of the country (Sheng & Lo, 2010). Kim and Richardson (2003) highlighted that films and series have the capability of cognitively altering images of a country, developing a familiarity that tends to increase the interest of viewers. Studies have shown that cinema plays a role in portraying a country, and communicating its aesthetics and characteristics (Gunning, 1986; Holt, 2002; Tomaselli, 2006), as well as its societal norms, natural landscapes and cultural aspects (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). According to Gupta et al. (2020), cinema can silently communicate the infrastructural, cultural values held by its people, social and the political and environmental attributes of a country, through which spectators can build their expectations about the experiences the country can provide. The exposition of a country in cinema influences the audience's decisions and evaluation, and contributes to them perceiving the nation as a brand (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättäenenc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020; Saraniemi, 2010).

There is a considerable amount of literature about cinema as a purveyor of the country's image (Cardoso et al., 2017). The knowledge found in all these studies covering the effects of cinema in portraying the attributes of a nation can be applied to series. Just like cinema, series can capture the elements that characterize the place being portrayed. What makes cinema a good communication medium, and diffusor of country image is also present in series. Despite the literature on nation branding being relatively extensive, there is a gap in literature on the effect of series on nation branding and nation brand experience.

2.6. Film tourism

The connection of films and series to tourism and intentions to visit has been studied by several authors (Cardoso et al., 2017; Hahm & Wang, 2000; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Young & Young, 2010). The phenomenon where tourists travel to a destination as a result of watching their portrayals in films or series (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006) is called “film tourism”.

The impact of TV on destination choices was first recognized by Tooke and Baker (1996). Since then, there have been studies on the effects of productions on tourism demand (Kim et al., 2007) and the economy as a whole of having a popular TV series filmed in a certain region or city (O'Connor et al., 2008; Shani et al., 2009). The effects can also be negative if the portrayal of the destination is negative (Pratt, 2015).

There are multiple case studies on the impact of the movie trilogy *Lord of The Rings* on destination awareness, intention to visit and its impact on tourism and the economy of New Zealand (Buchmann et al., 2010; Carl & Kinson, 2007; Croy, 2010). Another example is the case of *Game of Thrones* and the city of Dubrovnik, one of the cities where it was filmed (Tkalec et al., 2017). The results showed an increase in tourism after the series, as well as a spillover effect for other cities in Croatia. This is also observed with productions in the UK, for example with *Harry Potter* (Lee, 2012) and with South Korean television programs (Kim et al., 2009; Kim & O'Connor, 2011). Vila et al. (2021) concludes that films are not a big contributor to attract tourism for Spain by its own but play a role in generating tourism interest and that destination in TV series generates awareness and visit motivation.

To analyze the influence of TV series in the promotion of Nation Brand Experience and its influence on consumer behavioral intentions, this study will follow the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This theory proposed by Ajzen (1991) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that proposes that all rational behavior can be predicted directly from the behavioral intention. TPB focuses on predicting behaviors that are not entirely under traditional control. The theory proposes that people will behave in a certain way because they believe that will lead to a particular

type of outcome. The theory approaches concepts such as attitude, behavioral control, and behavioral intention. The attitudes are the result of learning and experience.

2.7. Hypotheses Formulation

2.7.1. Country's infrastructure portrayed on Cinema and Series and Nation Brand Experience

The heritage value, architecture, historic buildings, scenery (Hayes & MacLeod, 2007), natural beauty, cosmopolitan look, activities for entertainment, monuments, novelty attractions and cleanliness (Timothy, 2005) are defining aspects of the infrastructure of a country. The visualization of these attributes in cinema is capable of altering the audiences' images of the place (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

The representation of the infrastructural attributes of the country builds the viewers' expectations on what experiences they could have if they decided to visit. It also solidifies the nation as a brand in the eyes of the viewers (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättänen, Gupta, & Wright, 2020). As mentioned before, image formation of a country happens through secondary sources, such as series, due to the phenomenon of vicarious experience. So, it is plausible to argue that the audience is capable of vicariously experiencing the country's infrastructure through its visualization on TV series. Therefore, the first hypothesis is the following:

H1: The country's infrastructure reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience.

2.7.2. Country's culture reflected on Cinema and Series and Nation Brand Experience

It has been recognized in the literature the role of culture as an explaining factor regarding consumer brand preferences (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver, 2010; Holt, 2002). Attitude toward dress, behaviors with others, interest in arts and sports are factors contributing to the country image (MacLeod, 2002). Religion and language are also determinant factors to a country's culture (Dinnie, 2008). Every country possesses its unique culture, rendering it an indispensable element in the national image, and serving as a conduit for expressing a nation's authentic spirit and essence (Anholt, 2002). These aspects

can be portrayed in cinema and series, and contribute to the construction of the image of a nation, especially for foreign audiences (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). The contact with the country's culture will lead to a deeper understanding of the country and its values (Anholt, 2002), and ultimately, to the audience building an emotional connection with the culture and the country (Hammond, 2010).

Representing and promoting culture in motion picture is an essential component of enriching and solidifying the nation brand (Anholt, 2002; Gupta, Foroudi, Väättänc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020). The representation of the country's culture builds the viewers' expectations on experiences they will have if they decide to visit. Considering the possibility of the formation of an image of a place and obtaining knowledge about it through secondary sources, such as series, it's plausible to argue that the audience is capable of vicariously experiencing the country's culture through its visualization in TV series. Therefore, the second hypothesis is the following:

H2: The country's culture reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience.

2.7.3. Country's political environment reflected on Cinema and Series and Nation Brand Experience

Country image is strongly affected by the political environment (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; O'Connor et al., 2008). Individuals' ability to move freely in a country, freedom of speech and information, crime rate and terrorism are some of the political factors influencing the image of a country (Gupta & Gupta, 2013). Cinema and series are powerful communication tools for the political situation of a country (Wang, 2005). Kim and Richardson (2003) studied the impact of political conditions communicated through motion picture on destination image.

The representation of the political environment of the country builds the viewers' expectations on the experiences they will have if they decide to visit. It also contributes to the perception of the nation as a brand (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättänc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020). Knowing of the possibility of the formation of an image of a place and obtaining knowledge about it through secondary sources, such as series, it can be argued that the

audience is capable of vicariously experiencing the country's political environment through its visualization on TV series. Therefore, the third hypothesis is the following:

H3: The country's political environment reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience.

2.7.4. Country's environmental conditions reflected on Series and Nation Brand Experience

Country image is influenced by the environmental conditions (Liu & Diamond, 2005). Fair weather, air quality and fertile terrain attract interest among tourists (Sinclair, 2004; Swiderska et al., 2008). These and other environmental factors also influence businesses and decisions to invest in the country and to visit (Asif & Muneer, 2007).

The environmental conditions of a country communicated by cinema can influence spectators' consideration of the country as a brand and create expectations regarding experiences they might (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättäenenc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020). Considering the possibility of the formation of an image of a place and obtaining knowledge about it through secondary sources, such as series, we can argue that the audience is capable of vicariously experiencing the country's environmental conditions through the visualization of TV series. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is the following:

H4: The country's environmental conditions reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience.

2.7.5. Country's social norms reflected on Cinema and Series and Nation Brand Experience

Motivation of novelty, education, exploration and "evaluation of self" are some social norms that have been connected with the intention to visit a country (Crompton, 1979). The people and social norms are intrinsic to the country's image and to the nation brand. According to Foroudi et al. (2016), social norms of living style, language, clothing, finances, mode of transportation and diet are some of the relevant social norms represented in cinema.

Although cinema has been studied as a medium for communication and product placement, and as a driver of behavior customers (Gould et al., 2000), the literature is not extensive in terms of understanding how social norms of a country represented in media can contribute to the nation brand and how they drive consumers' intentions and behaviors. However, according to Gupta, Foroudi, Väättänc, Gupta and Wrighte (2020), the representation of the country's social norms in cinema builds the viewers' expectations on what experiences they will have if they decide to visit and contributes to the solidification of the image the nation as a brand. Having known the possibility of the formation of an image of a place and obtaining knowledge about it through secondary sources, such as series, it is plausible to argue that the audience is capable of vicariously experiencing the country's social norms through the visualization of TV series. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is the following:

H5: The country's social norms reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience.

2.7.6. Nation Brand Experience and Visit intention

There have been multiple studies have linked destination image with destination selection (Goodrich, 1978), travel satisfaction (Bigné et al., 2001), destination familiarity (Chaulagain et al., 2019) and visit intentions (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Zhang et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2016). According to Wang (2021), destination image is the intermediary concept between country image and the intention to visit the country. Therefore, the intention is influenced directly by the destination image and indirectly by country image (Elliot & Papadopoulos, 2016).

The portrayal of destinations and places on cinema and series is a channel for the communication of the overall characteristics of the country (Sheng & Lo, 2010) and its effect on visit intention is a topic of research in film tourism. Multiple studies have reached the conclusion that the portrayal in motion picture of a city or a country builds awareness and is capable of influencing the country's image and the visitor's behaviors and intentions (Gupta, Foroudi, Väättänc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020; Hoa et al., 2015). This intention is materialized by consumers visiting the place because of to its portrayal in motion picture (Hoa et al., 2015; Jones & Smith, 2005; Peaslee, 2011; Tkalec et al., 2017; Vila et al., 2021).

The experience of a nation helps to gain a deeper understanding of the country's attributes and creates a greater sense of attachment to the nation, which in turn lowers the perceived risk of visiting (Yadav et al., 2021). The experience with a country's products, services, and brands can also affect the nation brand and influence travel intentions (Lee & Lee, 2021). Therefore, it can be argued that vicarious exposure to a nation's infrastructure, environmental and political conditions, culture, and social norms through television series can influence intentions to visit.

H6: Nation Brand Experience influences consumer's intentions to visit a country.

2.7.7. Nation Brand Experience and Purchase intention

Purchase intention is influenced by product attributes, consumer's general perceptions of products from the country of origin and the perceptions of said country, according to Yaprak and Parameswaran (1986). According to Wang et al. (2012), cognitive country image influences purchase through its influence on product image, while affective CI affects purchase intention in a direct way.

There have been studies that found a connection between the visualization of series and movies with purchase intentions (Chan, 2007; Pervan & Martin, 2002). Ertz et al. (2021) found an increase in intentions to purchase Turkish products due to watching Turkish drama series, especially from enhanced experiential associations related to the country. Another relevant conclusion was that experiences are an explaining factor of the intention to purchase the products originating from the country represented in the series. Lkhaasuren and Nam (2019) found a positive effect in online shopping intention of Mongolians from the consumption of Korean movies, series, and music, as well as an improvement in the positive economic and national image of South Korea. The success of Korean cultural products has benefitted many industries such as tourism, cosmetics, food, fashion and electronics (Lee, 2021).

Due to its contribution to the image of a country and to the nation brand, series can improve the expectations of great experiences with the country and with its products. Research has found that motion picture help increase the awareness of a destination and affect purchasing behaviors (Beeton, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that the exposure to the country's characteristics, through a vicarious experience via series that affect the

image someone holds of a country can influence someone's intention to buy a product originating from that country.

H7: Nation Brand Experience influences consumer's intentions to purchase products from that country.

2.7.8. Nation Brand Experience and Residing intention

A strong nation brand contributes to the attraction of talent and immigration, since it helps a country become more competitive (Hakala et al., 2013).

The role of country image on the decision making process has been recognized (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Therefore, an intuitive response would be to argue that country image would be one of the factors considered when evaluating the intentions to migrate to a certain country. However, this relationship has not been thoroughly analyzed in literature (Papadopoulos, 2004; Zaveri & Mulye, 2010). In the research of Berthon et al. (2005), employer attractiveness components (one important factor when evaluating whether to migrate or not to a country) seems to match with dimensions of country image. The innovativeness aspect of interest value and the ambitiousness of development value relate to the country and people competency dimensions of country image. The social, economic and application value are similar to the character of a country and its people (Nadeau & Olafsen, 2015). Research also found that affiliations to a country can influence migration intention, as well as economic reasons, level of similarities between the home country and the host country, in terms of shared history and culture (Hadler, 2006), subjective wellbeing in terms of quality of life (Cai et al., 2014). These aspects are all essential components to a country's image. Research points some other components of country image, such as scenery and social opportunities as reasons to stay in a country (Mellander et al., 2011). Nadeau and Olafsen (2015) found that country image, as a dimension of employer attractiveness is a factor of consideration for intention to migrate.

Images of a country portrayed in series contribute to the experience of the nation brand through a vicarious experience of its characteristics and attributes, to gain a deeper knowledge of the country, to the construction of the country image and to consolidate a nation brand. These images have an influence in the decision-making process. Therefore, it can be argued that the experience of a nation brand through the images on the series may influence the viewers and their intention to reside in Italy.

H8: Nation Brand Experience influence consumer's intentions to migrate to a country.

2.7.9. Nation Brand Experience and Nation Equity

Nation Equity and Country Brand Equity derive from the brand equity literature (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993; Yoo & Donthu, 2002).

According to Aaker (1996), brand equity is composed by all the assets and liabilities of a brand that add or subtract value of the product or service to the customers. It entails five dimensions: awareness, associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other brand assets. Brand equity provides a framework for examining consumer's brand evaluations and purchase intentions (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010).

This concept was extended to countries: Country Brand Equity (CBE) (Roth et al., 2008; Shimp et al., 1993) and Country Equity (CE) (Pappu & Quester, 2010). CBE is the aggregate brand equity of all products originating from a specific country, according to Roth et al. (2008) and CE is the value that the country of origin adds to its products, according to Pappu and Quester (2010).

The Anholt-GfK hexagon model, Country RepTrak, FutureBrand Country Brand Index and Brand Finance are some of the proposed frameworks to measure Nation Equity. The Anholt-GfK hexagon model encompasses six pillars: exports, governance, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, people, and tourism. Country RepTrak has three pillars – advanced economy, appealing environment, and effective government. FutureBrand highlights quality of life, value system, business potential, heritage and culture, tourism and “made in” (COO). Brand Finance considers three pillars: goods and services, investment, and society.

Country image influences brand equity (Sanyal & Datta, 2011), as country of origin operates through brand equity (Lin & Kao, 2004) and through its influence on brand image, brand awareness and perceived quality (Yasin et al., 2007). Country image is also an essential component to nation equity. According to Iversen and Hem (2001), Country Equity is composed by the macro country image, micro country image, country awareness, perceived quality and country loyalty.

If the vicarious nation brand experience influences behavioral intentions of visitors and consumers (visiting, purchasing, and residing) it will also affect Nation Equity. For example, exports, immigration, culture and heritage, people and tourism have the possibility of being impacted due to the portrayal of the country's attributes in the series and the experience of the nation brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Nation Brand Experience influences Nation Equity.

2.7.10. Nation Brand Experience and Word-of-Mouth

It has been analysed how a positive brand experience leads to brand satisfaction and loyalty (Roy et al., 2013). A positive experience increases the likeliness of customers wanting to repeat the experience and of recommending the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). In the context of tourism, there is extensive amount of literature pointing out that visitor satisfaction and a positive experience leads to a feeling of attachment to the destinations (Hosany et al., 2017; Steenkamp et al., 2002), higher loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2006; Bosque & Martín, 2008; Pritchard & Howard, 1998) and may lead to positive Word of Mouth (WOM) (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Moliner-Velázquez et al., 2019).

In the nation context, Nation Brand Experience leads to Nation Brand Loyalty and to positive Word of Mouth, while mediated by Nation Brand Love (Yadav et al., 2021). It can be expected that after a positive experience with the Nation Brand through the series, and an increased exposure to the country and its attributes, that viewers may feel more attached to it and want to recommend the nation and its experience to others. Therefore, the last hypothesis is the following:

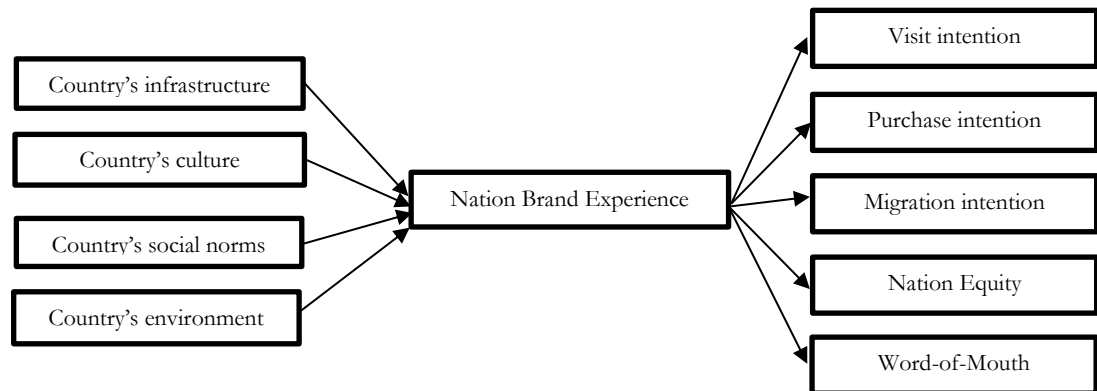
H.10. Nation Brand Experience has a positive effect on Word of Mouth.

2.8. Conceptual model

The conceptual model is built from the relevant literature analyzed and posterior hypotheses formulation. The model establishes with the attributes of a country reflected by TV series adapted from Gupta, Foroudi, Vääänen, Gupta and Wrighte (2020): infrastructure, culture, social norms and environment, and how they promote the Nation Brand Experience in its four dimensions (sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual).

The Nation Brand Experience is hypothesized to influence behavioral intentions of the audience (to visit, purchase and reside), nation equity and word of mouth.

Figure 1: Conceptual model



3. Methodology

This section is dedicated to methodological considerations and to the clarification and explanation of the methods chosen to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. The methods of data collection and treatment are explained in this section. The software used in the treatment and analysis of the data are also here discriminated, SPSS and SmartPLS4. Finally, a comprehensive explanation of the data processing technique employed in this study, namely Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), is provided.

Ethical consent was a concern and consideration in this study as we wanted to protect the privacy and the rights of participants, as well as ensure the validity of the results obtained. The ethical principles of Bell et al. (2022) were applied to ensure the correct procedures and measures were taken. The questionnaire, as the elected method of data collection, informed participants in detail of the research objective, the use and treatment of data and of the confidential and anonymous nature of the study. Voluntary consent was solicited from the participants, and they were informed of their right to end the survey at any time.

3.1. Method

Series are gaining popularity, especially with the rise of streaming platforms. This form of media increases the audience engagement and encourages conversation about it to other media platforms, creating a buzz around the series and influencing more people to watch it (Tkalec et al., 2017). The impact of cinema on the country's image and tourism is a relatively well studied topic. However, literature is scarce regarding the role of the portrayal of a country in series in nation branding, especially in the nation brand experience. This study contributes to the filling of that gap, with its major objective being to understand if nation brand experience through series influence on audience's behavioral intentions has (visiting, purchasing, and migrating, recommendations) and on nation equity.

The series *La Casa de Papel* was used in this study as the stimulus to assess how its images in Tuscany, Italy influence the audience's perceptions of the country and the nation brand experience, as well as its consequences, in terms of behavioral intentions and nation equity. This series is a worldwide phenomenon and is one of the most popular shows in

Netflix (Armstrong, 2019), with Portugal holding one of the largest audiences. During the series, several countries are portrayed as destinations- Italy, Portugal, Philippines, and many others. In the case of Italy, the characters are seen in Florence, more specifically on Piazza del Duomo, Piazza della Signoria and the Miradouro da Piazzale de Michelangelo. Another important location during the third season is the Pratovecchio de Arezzo monastery.

This series was chosen due to its popularity and large audience (Zorilla, 2021), providing a wider number of possible respondents to the questionnaire. From the multiple locations portrayed in the series, Italy was chosen since it is one of the countries with more representation.

In accordance with the research questions this study addresses, a quantitative methodology was followed. A deductive quantitative methodological approach uses theory as the starting point to build a theoretical framework and to propose hypotheses regarding a set of observed possible relationships. The theoretical framework allows the researcher to put theory into action, identify gaps in current research, shape constructs, operationalize variables, and identify research questions (Varpio et al., 2020). The hypotheses are tested using quantitative approaches and statistical analysis are performed to confirm or reject them and to provide new knowledge and theory (Newman et al., 1998). Data is collected to measure reality objectively. They are used to investigate, determine and explain a relationship between variables that are numerically measurable, using statistical instruments (Saunders et al., 2019).

Considering these factors, a quantitative methodology was selected as the most suitable and effective approach to address the research questions and obtain the required answers.

3.2. Measures

The measurement of the constructs was performed through the adaptation of existing scales in literature. To ensure its overall appropriateness, marketing academics reviewed the applicability of the questionnaire items to the study context. The conceptual model shows as exogenous variables the attributes of a country reflected by TV series. Considering the questionnaire was developed using scales from prior research, precautionary measures were taken to avoid common-method bias (CMB). Firstly, meticulous attention was given to crafting unambiguous and straightforward items. Additionally, as the measurement of constructs employed Likert-type scales, a detailed examination of convergent validity was

undertaken to ensure that items pertaining to the same variable were not placed next to each other (MacKenzie et al., 2011; Tourangeau et al., 2000; Weijters et al., 2009). These attributes were adapted from the attributes reflected on cinema from the work of Gupta, Foroudi, Vääänen, Gupta and Wrighte (2020). Each of these attribute's scale was already adapted from other author's works. The items of infrastructure (heritage value, natural beauty, cosmopolitan look, entertainment, monuments, novelty attractions and cleanliness) were adapted from Timothy (2005). The politics' items (safe movement, freedom of speech, crime rate and terrorism) were adapted from Gupta and Gupta (2013). Some of the culture items are from the original form, formerly adapted from Uwah (2017) (attitude toward others, attitude toward arts and openness to religion). The other items (heritage value, cultural norms and value norms) were adapted from the works of Foroudi et al. (2016) and Kim et al. (2014). The social norms' items (language spoken by people, living style, mode of transportation, dress worn by people, financial condition of people and food habits) were also adapted from Foroudi et al. (2016) and the environmental conditions from Swiderska et al. (2008). These aspects of a country are hypothesized to affect the vicarious experience of a nation brand when portrayed in series. The Nation Brand Experience is measured by an adaptation of the NBE scale by Yadav et al. (2021). This scale was initially constructed for the physical experience and some items needed to be adapted to fit the experience through the visualization of the series. These alterations were done having the work of Schmitt (1999) as a guideline. For the behavioral intentions, the scale to measure intention to visit was adapted from Veen and Song (2014), Alvarez and Campo (2014) and Molinillo et al. (2018); the scale to measure intention to purchase was adapted from Wang et al. (2012) and the scale to measure migration intention from Hadler (2006) and Yousaf et al. (2021). A scale of Steenkamp (2019) was used to measure Nation Equity. And finally, the items for Word-of-mouth were adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Gupta and Gupta (2013). All constructs, items and measurement scales are detailed on Appendix I.

A likert-5 scale, ranging from (1) = totally disagree to (5) = totally agree was used to measure all items. The Likert scale is one of the most used psychometric tools in social sciences research, as it helps quantify the subjectivity of attitudes, perceptions and opinions (Joshi et al., 2015). For this study, a Likert scale of 5 points (with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree), was considered appropriate. The items were measured with this scale in the previous studies and according to Dawes (2008), none of the variations of the

Likert scale is a less desirable way to collect data if the data is to be used for a regression analysis. Additionally, the number of scale points does not seem to affect the reliability and validity of the data (Matell & Jacoby, 1971).

3.3. Data collection

To study the effects of a series in nation brand experience and of NBE on intention to visit, purchase and reside, nation equity and recommendations, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to collect the data.

The population for this study is people that have watched the series, that remember the scenes in Italy and that have not been to the country. The reason for wanting to consider only those who had not visit Italy is that through these individuals, the effect of the visualization of the series on nation brand experience and on behavioral intentions, nation equity and WOM will be more accurately measured. This is an effort to isolate the change in intentions, nation equity and recommendations created by the nation brand experienced gained through the visualization of the series from other external sources that build and shape country image or previous judgments. Despite this effort, it is relevant to mention that the image of a country can't be entirely connected to the series as there will always be pre-conceived ideas and other external factors influencing it.

The questionnaire was developed in Google Forms and administered in Portuguese and English. A convenience sample was used, the data allowed us to describe and interpret the relationships among existing variables. The questionnaire was tested by researchers in the marketing area. In addition, pre-test was conducted by presenting the questionnaire to a group of 20 people with different academic qualifications and ages, to assess their understanding of the questions and the variability of their answers. The first set of questions are used to target the desired - people who have watched the series, remember the scenes in Italy and that have never been there. Those who do not fit the requirements are directed to the end of the questionnaire. The second section is dedicated to the evaluation of the attributes of the country that are reflected in the series. Respondents are asked whether the visualization of the series has improved their knowledge about the country's attributes, its infrastructure, politics, culture, social norms, and environment. The third section measures the Nation brand experience. Questions are asked regarding the sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioral experiences experienced upon watching the scenes of Italy in the series. The fourth, fifth and sixth sections measure the impact on

behavioral intentions (visit, purchase and reside), nation equity and recommendations, respectively. The last section of the questionnaire comprises all the demographic questions, such as age, education, nationality, country of residence and income.

The questionnaire was distributed on social media- Instagram, Whatsapp and Facebook, and Reddit. Another channel of distribution used was the institutional email of the Faculty of Economics of Porto. In addition, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was also used. MTurk is an online, crowdsourcing platform, where individuals and businesses can outsource their jobs to workers that perform these tasks. This platform provides a form of recruitment of participants for surveys, at a low cost, approved by academia (Wang et al., 2017). MTurk offers a more diverse pool of participants and a faster collection of data at a reasonable cost. Despite the advantages of this crowdsourcing platform, there are some concerning aspects regarding inattention, self-misrepresentation, high attrition, self-selection bias, vulnerability to bots and others. However, there are measures that can be taken in lower the susceptibility to these issues (Aguinis et al., 2021). Notwithstanding its shortcomings, data collected via MTurk is of higher quality when compared to similar platforms (Peer et al., 2017). And according to Landers and Behrend (2015) , the samples collected from the platform are comparable, in quality, to traditional samples of convenience.

The questionnaire distributed is in its entirety in Appendix II.

3.4. Sample Collection

During the month of May and beginning of June, a total of 593 responses to the questionnaire were collected. Of that amount, 464 individuals had watched the third part of *La Casa de Papel*. Of those, 233 had never visited Italy and 211 remembered the scenes in Italy. Two of the 211 responses were eliminated since they did not fit the requirements- one respondent identified Italy as the place of residence despite having answered that had never been to Italy and other answer was rejected due to having irregularities in some demographic questions, which led me to believe that the completion of the questionnaire was not taken seriously.

Therefore, 209 valid responses were collected (N=209). This is the number of responses that met all the requirements. However, of these 209 responses, the demographic information of 28 responses was lost due to a glitch on Google Forms. The

answers were analysed in SPSS to provide a demographic report of the sample. Regarding gender, most respondents identify as females (n=118, 65.2%). The age ranged between 18 and 61, and almost half the respondents were aged between 18 and 25 (n=88, 49.16%), followed by the ages between 26 and 35 (n= 58, 32.4%). The ages between 36 and 61 perform the rest (n=35, 19.56%). In terms of nationality, most answers come from United States of America (n= 93, 51.4%). Portuguese people accounted for 37.6% of the respondents (n= 68). The remaining answers were given by people from Spain, Brazil, Pakistan, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Philippines, China, Thailand, India, Mexico, Romania, and Austria (n=20, 11%). In accordance, most respondents currently live in the USA (n=92, 51.4%). People living in Portugal accounted for 67 of the responses (37.4%). The other countries of residence were Spain, Brazil, Pakistan, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Philippines, Thailand, India, and Mexico (n=20, 11.2%). Two answers were not considered for country of residence as the two respondents identified their nationality as Asian. The required answer was for the identification of the country of residence, not the continent. For education, most respondents had a bachelor's degree (n=113, 62.4%), 17.1% (n=31) had completed their master's and 14.9% had completed High School (n=27). Of the remaining respondents, 5 had a Postgraduate degree (2.8%), 2 had completed less than High School (1.1%), 1 had a PhD (0.6%) and 2 had completed other form of education not mentioned (1.1%). In addition, most of the sample were employees (n=94, 51.9%), followed by students (n=49, 27.1%) and student-workers (n=23, 12.7%). Fourteen of the respondents were employers (7.7%) and one was in other situation in terms of occupation (0.6%). Finally, in terms of yearly income before taxes, the largest number of participants had earned less than 10.000€ (n=49, 27.1%), followed by participants with income ranging between 30.000€ and 39.999€ (n=30, 16.6%) and participants with income of 50.000€ or more (n=22, 12.2%). Some respondents chose to not answer this question (n=26, 14.4%) (see Table 1). Additionally, in appendix III, a more detailed portrait of the demographic profile of the sample is presented.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the sample

Gender	n	%
Female	118	65.20%
Male	61	33.70%
Other	2	1.10%
Age		

18-25	88	48.61%
26-35	58	32.04%
36-61	35	19.34%
Nationality		
United States of America	93	51.40%
Portugal	68	37.60%
Other nationalities	20	11%
Country of residence		
United States of America	92	51.40%
Portugal	67	37.40%
Other countries	20	11.20%
Education		
Less than High School	2	1.10%
High School	27	14.90%
Bachelor's degree	113	62.40%
Postgraduate degree	5	2.80%
Master's degree	31	17.10%
PhD	1	0.60%
Other	2	1.10%
Employment situation		
Student	49	27.10%
Student worker	23	12.70%
Employee	94	51.90%
Employer	14	7.70%
Other	1	0.60%
Yearly income before taxes		
>10.000€	49	27.10%
10.000€-19.999€	14	7.70%
20.000€-29.999€	19	10.50%
30.000€-39.999€	30	16.60%
40.000-49.999€	21	11.60%
50.000€ or more	22	12.20%
Rather not answer	26	14.40%

3.5. Structural Equation Model

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a general model that can be perceived as the compilation of different statistical models and methods, such as analysis of variance, analysis of covariance, multiple regression, factor analysis, path analysis, econometric models of simultaneous equation, and non-recursive modelling, multilevel modelling and latent growth curve modelling, for the estimation of magnitudes and directions of hypothesized causal relationships between variables and constructs in quantitative studies.

This technique can be applied to exploratory data-driven research or to confirmatory research (Bowen & Guo, 2011; Kline, 2023).

SEM, as other regression models test hypotheses about the strength and direction of relationships between prediction and outcome variables (Bowen & Guo, 2011). In standard regression analysis, only observed variables relations are estimated and the predictor and criterion role are separate and interchangeable. In SEM, regression relations between observed and latent variables can also be estimated.

The benefits of SEM lie on its capability of estimating a causal effect for any combination of latent or observed variables. The latent constructs are the abstract concepts, phenomena or theoretical constructs that are not directly observed in the dataset, such as attitudes and behaviour patterns (Bowen & Guo, 2011). Other benefits are that SEM can be applied to studies of an exploratory or confirmatory nature and that there is a large pool of models that can be analysed for longitudinal data. Additionally, this method is capable of handling difficult modelling issues and complex models (Hair et al., 2014)

There are three families of techniques in SEM: Covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM), Structural causal model, the first two being more recognized in management research.

Variance-based SEM is widely used in disciplines such as marketing, organizational research and business research (Kline, 2023). PLS maximizes the explained variance of endogenous constructs (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). While the covariance-based technique tests how well a model estimates a covariance matrix for the sample data, PLS-SEM is closer to a multiple regression analysis, in its iterative approach to explain the latent variables (Hair et al., 2011). In comparison to other SEM techniques, PLS-SEM can be applied to smaller samples (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982), is often used in research with complex models with a larger number of constructs, variables and structural paths. Another advantage of this method is that it does not impose any distributional assumptions on the data (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, PLS also emphasizes prediction estimating statistical models, extremely relevant for managerial implications (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results

The data was coded, treated, and analysed in SPSS. After that process, the statistical analysis of the research hypotheses and construct model was performed via Smart PLS 4. This software bases its analysis on Structural Equation Model, using the partial least squares (PLS) path modelling method.

As already mentioned, the method used for the data analysis was Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method is adequate when evaluating and validating theoretical models and relationships between constructs, especially for smaller samples and complex models with a larger number of variables (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982).

Firstly, in PLS-SEM, an analysis of the measurement model is conducted. The first step was to examine the factor loadings. Then, construct reliability and validity of the constructs was analysed, as well as their discriminant validity. Afterwards, the focus was shifted towards the structural model, with the testing of the hypotheses.

4.1. Measurement model

The first step when assessing the measurement model is to examine the factor loadings of all the items. According to Hair et al. (2019), loadings above 0.708 indicate item reliability and that the construct explains more than 50% of its variance. The items that failed to meet this standard were eliminated from the model. The factor loadings for all items are on appendix IV. One construct (infrastructure) was extracted from the model as six of its seven items had loadings lower than 0.708. Regarding the construct Nation Brand Experience, the sensorial and behavioral experiences dimensions were also eliminated. Some other items were also removed from other constructs. From the construct of culture, the items eliminated were: “Attitude towards arts” and “Cultural heritage”. In the case of the affective experience, the item taken off was: “Thinking about Italy affects my moods”. For the construct Nation Brand Equity, the items erased were: “Italy stands for high quality” and “I know a lot about Italy”. Finally, for positive WOM, the item eliminated was: “I would recommend Italy due to its tangible and intangible culture”. To minimise the likelihood of common method bias (CMB), the questionnaire followed (Podsakoff et al., 2003) recommendations. As previously mentioned, the survey used validated scales, randomised the items, and guaranteed the respondents’ data would be confidential.

Harman's single-factor test was also run to check for CMB (Harman, 1976). The results indicate that 37.608 (< 50% cut-off point) of the total variance was explained by a single constrained factor, which suggests that the instrument is free of any significant CMB.

Secondly, to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs, composite reliability (Dijkstra-Henseler's rho and composite reliability) and the Cronbach's alpha were measured. For these measures, values above 0.7 are considered good in terms of reliability (Hair et al., 2019) and all constructs met this threshold. The values of Dijkstra-Henseler's rho range between 0.769 and 0.923 and the values for composite reliability range between 0.859 and 0.935. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha varies between 0.754 and 0.920. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated to measure convergent validity. Values of the AVE superior to 0.5 are considered acceptable since this means that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its items. For all the constructs, the observed values were higher than 0.5.

Table 2: Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Political environment	0.821	0.881	0.650
Culture	0.856	0.892	0.580
Social norms	0.857	0.897	0.636
Environmental conditions	0.754	0.859	0.670
Nation Brand Experience	0.920	0.935	0.643
Nation Brand Equity	0.871	0.900	0.564
Visit intention	0.779	0.870	0.691
Purchase intention	0.807	0.886	0.722
Residence intention	0.866	0.918	0.789
Word of Mouth	0.885	0.916	0.687

The third step was to measure discriminant validity. The objective is to assess if the constructs that should not, theoretically, be highly related to each other are effectively not highly correlated (Hair et al., 2019). The two methods used to measure discriminant validity were Fornell and Larcker (1981) and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

HTMT is the “mean value of the item correlation across constructs relative to the mean of the average correlation for the items measuring the same construct”. The threshold proposed for this ratio for structural models is 0.9, according to Henseler et al. (2015). The results demonstrate that no significant high correlation between the constructs was found, as all the values were below 0.9 or if higher, very close to that value (see Table 3). For those constructs whose values exceeded the threshold by a little, no correlation was found between them.

In Fornell and Larcker’s method, each construct’s AVE is compared to the squared inter-construct correlation of that same construct and all other constructs in the model, as a measure of shared variance. The shared variance should not be higher, for any construct, than their AVEs. The model, shows no problems of shared variance (see Table 4).

Table 3: HTMT

	Culture	Environmental conditions	Nation Brand Equity	Nation Brand Experience	Politics	Purchase intention	Residence intention	Social norms	Visit intention	Word of Mouth
Culture										
Environmental conditions	0.911									
Nation Brand Equity	0.646	0.722								
Nation Brand Experience	0.713	0.744	0.881							
Politics	0.901	0.810	0.638	0.656						
Purchase intention	0.653	0.650	0.734	0.735	0.564					
Residence intention	0.687	0.687	0.719	0.727	0.692	0.556				
Social norms	0.888	0.849	0.700	0.706	0.820	0.595	0.576			
Visit intention	0.424	0.460	0.765	0.671	0.349	0.757	0.433	0.418		
Word of Mouth	0.663	0.719	0.911	0.818	0.699	0.739	0.831	0.658	0.639	

Table 4: Fornell-Larcker

	Culture	Environmental conditions	Nation Brand Equity	Nation Brand Experience	Politics	Purchase intention	Residence intention	Social norms	Visit intention	Word of Mouth
Culture	0.761									
Environmental conditions	0.739	0.819								
Nation Brand Equity	0.566	0.586	0.751							
Nation Brand Experience	0.639	0.625	0.793	0.802						
Politics	0.767	0.650	0.545	0.575	0.806					
Purchase intention	0.546	0.503	0.617	0.635	0.463	0.850				
Residence intention	0.597	0.565	0.628	0.657	0.588	0.463	0.888			
Social norms	0.765	0.690	0.605	0.628	0.693	0.493	0.502	0.798		
Visit intention	0.358	0.355	0.640	0.578	0.292	0.609	0.361	0.353	0.832	
Word of Mouth	0.582	0.591	0.802	0.742	0.602	0.623	0.732	0.573	0.540	0.829

4.2. Structural model

After the measurement model positive assessment, the next step of the analysis of the results in PLS-SEM is to examine the structural model.

Before assessing the estimated relationships between the constructs of the structural models, collinearity needs to be examined to not bias the regression results. The data analysis followed Kock (2015) recommendation that a variance inflation factor (VIF) values above 5 are indicative of collinearity issues. The values should be around 3, and below. This criterion is met as one can observe in Table 4.

Table 5: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
Culture -> Nation Brand Experience	3.726
Environmental conditions → Nation Brand Experience	2.442
Nation Brand Experience → Nation Brand Equity	1.000
Nation Brand Experience → Purchase intention	1.000
Nation Brand Experience → Residence intention	1.000
Nation Brand Experience → Visit intention	1.000
Nation Brand Experience → Word of Mouth	1.000
Politics → Nation Brand Experience	2.644
Social norms → Nation Brand Experience	2.758

The first procedure when examining the structural model is to evaluate the coefficient of determination, R^2 , of the constructs. This coefficient is a measure of the explanatory power of the model (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011) and reflects the effect of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2019). Different fields of studies consider variable values of R^2 as acceptable (Raithel et al., 2012). It is common for fields that are more subjective for its studies to compute lower values. Nation Brand Equity and Word-of-Mouth are strongly influenced by the Nation Brand Experience, with a R^2 of 0.629 and 0.551, respectively. This means that 62.9% and 55.1% of the variation of Nation Brand Equity and Word-of-Mouth, respectively, may be explained by Nation Brand Experience. NBE is also strongly influenced by the portrayal of the attributes of a country reflected in the series, with a R^2 of 0.488. All the other constructs also present high levels of explanation from the dependent variables, even visit intention, which was the construct with the lowest value of R^2 .

Table 6: R-square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Nation Brand Equity	0.629	0.628
Nation Brand Experience	0.488	0.478
Purchase intention	0.403	0.400
Residence intention	0.432	0.429
Visit intention	0.334	0.331
Word of Mouth	0.551	0.549

Additionally, Stone-Geisser's Q^2 is a measure used to assess the inner model's predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). Values larger than zero for an endogenous construct indicate predictive accuracy of the structural model for that construct (0.25 indicate medium predictive power and 0.5, large predictive power). All the items follow this criterion, with values between 0.012 and 0.4. The values of Q^2 are displayed on Appendix.

After confirming analyzing the explanatory power of the structural model and its predictive accuracy, the research hypotheses were tested. The method used was a bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS4, with 5000 subsamples. Bootstrap is a technique that draws a large number of subsamples and estimates models for each of them. The models are used to calculate the standard error for each parameter that is then used to determine its significance, using t-tests (Hair et al., 2014). Table 7 contains the results of this procedure.

Table 7: Hypotheses testing

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
H2: Culture → Nation Brand Experience	0.198	0.205	0.105	1.881	0.06
H3: Political environment → Nation Brand Experience	0.095	0.092	0.1	0.952	0.341
H4: Environmental conditions → Nation Brand Experience	0.255	0.253	0.111	2.296	0.022
H5: Social norms → Nation Brand Experience	0.234	0.236	0.117	2.006	0.045
H6: Nation Brand Experience → Visit intention	0.578	0.579	0.05	11.508	0
H7: Nation Brand Experience → Purchase intention	0.635	0.637	0.055	11.533	0
H8: Nation Brand Experience → Residence intention	0.657	0.659	0.048	13.689	0
H9: Nation Brand Experience → Nation Brand Equity	0.793	0.795	0.03	26.492	0
Nation Brand Experience → Word of Mouth	0.742	0.744	0.038	19.526	0

Hypothesis one stated that the country's infrastructure reflected by TV series contributes to the Nation Brand Experience, however due to the lower factor loadings of the respected items this dimension has been removed from the conceptual model and the hypothesis could not be tested. According to the results presented in Table 7, the dimensions of environmental conditions ($\beta = 0.255$; $p = 0.022$) and social norms ($\beta = 0.234$; $p = 0.045$) have a positive influence on NBE, supporting hypotheses four and five respectively. However, culture ($\beta = 0.198$; $p = 0.060$) and political environment ($\beta = 0.095$; $p = 0.341$) do not have a significant influence on NBE, not supporting hypotheses two and three. The political atmosphere of a country (safe movement, freedom of speech, crime rate, terrorism) might be difficult to assess in a series, if it is not an essential part of the plot and the story. On the other hand, it is surprising to find that the hypotheses regarding the influence of culture portrayed in series on NBE is not supported (Anholt, 2002) as television is a relevant channel to project the cultural heritage (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). However, there are some reasons that possibly be behind this result. The first is that culture is an essential and defining aspect of the image held of a country and nation brand. Respondents might have already a well-established view and not have gained new insights on Italy's culture from the footage of the series. Another reason could be that the series and the scenes were not enough for the respondents to gain information about Italy's culture, in terms of the attitude towards education, others, religion, sports, arts, the culture heritage, norms and values. This result contradicts literature that recognizes the center role of culture in the country's image formation and nation brand (Anholt, 2002; Gupta, Foroudi, Väättäenenc, Gupta, & Wrighte, 2020; Lu et al., 2016).

A positive impact of the Nation Brand Experience on visit intention (H6), purchase intentions to buy the country's products and services (H7), the intention to reside (H8), nation equity (H9) and Word-of-Mouth (H10) was hypothesized. These hypotheses were supported, as there was indeed a significant impact of a positive NBE on visit intention ($\beta = 0.578$; $p = 0.000$), on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.635$; $p = 0.000$), on residing intention ($\beta = 0.657$; $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, a positive and strong effect was also found for nation equity ($\beta = 0.793$; $p = 0.000$) and WOM ($\beta = 0.742$; $p = 0.000$). These results provide the insight that a positive NBE, obtained via watching a series, strongly affect the behavioral intentions of its spectators.

Culture (H2), politics (H3), environmental conditions (H4) and social norms (H5) portrayed in series are hypothesized to have a positive impact the Nation Brand Experience. As is observable in table, the constructs environmental conditions ($\beta = 0.255$; $p = 0.022$) and social norms ($\beta = 0.234$; $p = 0.045$) are confirmed to impact NBE. However, culture ($\beta = 0.198$; $p = 0.060$) and political environment ($\beta = 0.095$; $p = 0.341$) do not have a significant impact on NBE. The political atmosphere of a country (safe movement, freedom of speech, crime rate, terrorism) might be difficult to assess in a series, if it is not an essential part of the plot and the story. On the other hand, it is surprising to find that the hypotheses regarding the influence of culture portrayed in series on NBE is not supported (Anholt, 2002) as television is a relevant channel to project the cultural heritage (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). However, there are some reasons that possibly be behind this result. The first is that culture is an essential and defining aspect of the image held of a country and nation brand. Respondents might have already a well-established view and not have gained new insights on Italy's culture from the footage of the series. Another reason could be that the series and the scenes were not enough for the respondents to gain information about Italy's culture, in terms of the attitude towards education, others, religion, sports, arts, the culture heritage, norms and values.

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5. Discussion

Series are gaining more and more popularity over the latest years, with the rise of streaming platforms. Similarly, to cinema, this form of media is successful on the capture of elements and characteristics of a place and a country. For this reason, series can contribute to the image an audience holds of a country and to perceive it as a brand (Gupta, Foroudi, Vääänen, Gupta, & Wright, 2020; Kim & Richardson, 2003).

In research, cinema has been identified as capable of effectively portraying and conveying aspects of a country's infrastructure, culture, political environment, social norms, and environmental conditions (Gupta, Foroudi, Vääänen, Gupta, & Wright, 2020). Additionally, several studies explore the relationship between a country's portrayal in cinema or series on the intentions to visit (Hoa et al., 2015; Jones & Smith, 2005; Peaslee, 2011). After gathering this knowledge, curiosity regarding the impact of the series on the nation brand experience, and consequently, of nation brand experience on the behavioral intentions of the consumers arise. The main objectives of this study are to understand these relationships and its outcomes impacts. With the accomplishment of these objectives, managers and marketers will be able to understand if series are an effective channel of promotion of the nation brand experience and capable of incentivizing the audience to visit and to reside, to purchase the country's products and of impacting the nation equity and word-of-mouth.

The outcomes of the study indicate a positive impact of the nation brand experience, obtained through the visualization of the series, on the all the behavioral intentions of the consumers. However, just two of the initial five categories of characteristics of the country portrayed in the series were found to have an impact on the nation brand experience. Additionally, it was found that intellectual and behavioral experiences were more significant in terms of the overall nation brand experience.

Firstly, results indicated that of the initial set of characteristics of a country that can be communicated through series, the environmental conditions (composed by the weather, terrain, and air quality) and social norms (composed by language spoken by people, living style, mode of transportation, dress worn by people, financial conditions, and food habits) influence the nation brand experience towards Italy. From the visualization of the series, the consumers did not gain new, relevant insights regarding Italy's infrastructure, as one

can infer from the fact that this construct did not perform well in terms of their factor loadings. This insight goes against what was expected based on the literature analysed. According to multiple studies, infrastructure, namely the monuments, landscapes were particularly relevant for the construction of a country image and to the consolidation of the nation brand (Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Etchner & Ritchie, 1993; Gupta et al., 2020). Additionally, the cultural aspects and political environment, portrayed by the series, did not have a significant impact on the nation brand experience. This result was somewhat surprising considering it goes against the literature analysed that emphasized the importance of both the culture and the political environment to the country image and nation brand (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Anholt, 2002; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Lu et al., 2016). However, a plausible explanation for these surprising results can be that this series may not have had enough focus on these attributes of the country so that the audience could have extracted new information and gather new knowledge upon its visualization. Another possible explanation resides in the fact that Italy has already a well-established nation brand and the perceptions of the audience regarding it were not modified.

Nation brand experience is a concept that had not previously been applied to series or any form of media before this study. Usually, this term refers to the in-person, physical experience of the country, based on its four components- sensorial, affective, intellectual, and behavioral (Barnes et al., 2014; Yadav et al., 2021). Therefore, it is understandable that the sensorial and behavioral experiences, how the senses are affected by Italy's sceneries and foods, and the activities of relaxation or adventure, for example, are not significant components of the overall nation brand experience obtained with the series. Despite being able to experience the sentiments that the country can provide whilst watching the series, or to learn about activities that can be done, the audience cannot experience the sensorial and behavioral components of the nation if not by physically being there. On the other hand, the audience goes through intellectual and affective experiences of the nation brand while watching the series. These two components of the NBE do not need a physical presence to happen. The affective experience relates to the emotions and that one can feel towards a nation while being in contact with the country, even if it is via a secondary channel. The same applies to the intellectual experience. Learning about the nation does not need to happen while being physically there. A series is a very effective channel to teach and diffuse information about a country (Sheng & Lo, 2010).

Nation brand experience, obtained via the series, has a strong impact on intentions to visit the countries. This result is concordant to previous research that highlights the phenomenon of film tourism. Additionally, the experience also propels the audience's intention to purchase the country's products and to reside there. The country image is an essential factor when evaluating and debating to buy products, as well as the overall nation brand (Papadopoulos & Elliot, 2015). However, literature is not extensive in terms of the evaluation of the impacts of nation brand experience on the intention to purchase the country's products. Similarly, the connection of residing intentions with the nation brand and country image is not often discussed in literature.

Furthermore, nation brand equity heavily and positively benefits from a positive nation brand experience, lived through a series. The portrayal of a country is informative of the characteristics and attributes of a place generates curiosity and creates an attachment. According to the study of Yadav et al. (2021) the nation brand experience leads to nation brand love. All this contributes to the growth of the nation brand equity.

Similarly, a positive nation brand experience also creates a very significant effect on positive Word-of-Mouth. The experience of the country, especially affective and intellectual, the spectators obtain from the series, leads to them being more inclined and wanting to propagate a good word about the country and wanting to recommend the experience to others.

6. Conclusion

This study explores a relevant but little discussed topic in Nation Branding literature. While considerable effort has been allocated towards the investigation of the connection of films and series to tourism and visit intentions, the same cannot be said about the impact of series on the nation brand experience and its influence on behavioral intentions of the consumers (Hao et al., 2021). In fact, a new perspective is taken on the concept of nation brand experience, which itself is an emerging concept. The research questions- What is the influence of series in the promotion of Nation Brand Experience? What is the influence of Nation Brand Experience on consumer behavioral intentions? - highlight the major objectives of the study.

The main concepts, theories and previous studies were revised, and the knowledge obtained was essential to develop the hypotheses and the theoretical model. A quantitative methodology was chosen as the ideal approach to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions. The data was collected via an online questionnaire and the results were analysed via SPSS and the hypotheses were tested using the statistical software SmartPLS4.

The social norms and the environment conditions of the nation brand were found to influence the affective and intellectual experiences of the nation brand. Additionally, results also confirm that a positive nation brand experience obtained from the visualization of the portrayal of a country and its attributes strongly improves the nation brand equity and promotes the word of mouth. The experience also increases the consumer's intentions to visit and/or reside in the country, and the intention to purchase its products.

The theoretical and practical implications are explored in the next sections, as well as the limitations of the study and considerations for future research.

6.1. Theoretical implications

Despite the attention that has been recently devoted to the broader topic of nation branding, there are some avenues that have not been explored significantly (Hao et al., 2021). This investigation contributes theoretically to the literature on nation brand experience, that is an emerging topic and to the study of the impact of series on the propagation and solidification of the nation brand.

Generally, previous studies have focused on the impact of motion pictures and series on tourism and intentions to visit (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Peaslee, 2011; Tkalec et al., 2017; Vila et al., 2021). This study also contributes to the literature by providing a new light on the effects these forms of media have not only for visit intentions, but also for other consumer's behavioural intentions (intention to purchase the countries' products, the intention to reside in the country, and to recommend the nation experience). Another theoretical contribution of this investigation is the exploration of the relationship between the nation brand experience and the nation equity.

This study contributes to expanding our understanding of series-related emotions and their impact on the nation's brand, along with their role in shaping the dissemination of a nation's brand experience. Furthermore, this study introduces novelty by perceiving the nation's brand experience as a narrative facilitated through a series of visualizations that have the potential to influence the audience's perceptions and intentions towards a country.

The reason for the relevance of the improvement on the knowledge on these topics lies on the growing interest of the general population on series. This form of media is gaining more and more popularity. And this popularity promotes the conversation and discussion, especially on social media. Series, as films, are a channel capable of swaying the public opinion and shed light and often provide commentary on social, environmental, and political matters (Lancioni, 1996). They also can act as a channel for divulgation of the attributes and characteristics of a country, capable of establish a positive and captivating image in the mind of the audience (Kim & Richardson, 2003). As the significance of series continues to rise in society, it becomes imperative to understand its potential impact on a nation as a brand, and how it can serve as an alternative, vicarious means of experiencing the nation's brand. This study enriches academia by shedding light on the use of series as a promotional tool for national branding and its potential effects on consumer intentions and national equity.

In particular, this study contributes to the theory with its findings regarding the characteristics of a country that seem to affect the most the NBE, as well as the impact of NBE on the intentions of the consumers and on nation equity. The results indicate that the environmental conditions of a country and its social norms are the aspects of a country that portrayed on series, have a stronger influence on the Nation Brand Experience. In terms of NBE, affective and intellectual experiences are the ones that a series can offer to

the audience. And these experiences when positive, increase the spectator's intentions to visit and reside in the country, to purchase its products and to recommend to others. Additionally, the nation equity is also strongly and positively affected by a positive NBE. Through the confirmed hypotheses, the gained knowledge allows to fill the existent gap on the literature of series and cinema as a propagation vehicle for the nation brand, as well as of a different perspective on NBE provided through a second source, and its impacts.

6.2. Practical and managerial implications

With the burgeoning popularity of series and streaming platforms, certain questions arise concerning their impact on the audience and society. As previous studies have indicated, series and films can shape people's perceptions of a country and influence them to view the nation as a brand (Gupta, Foroudi, Vääänen, Gupta, & Wright, 2020). Moreover, several studies have been conducted on the impact of motion picture on tourism (Cardoso et al., 2017). While all these studies touch on extremely relevant topics, it is still relevant to study NBE provided via a series, and its impacts.

The results of this investigation are vital for leaders and managers to understand if these channels of communication work well and have results as a method of promotion and diffusion of the nation brand. Having this information is relevant to figure if this is a good strategy of nation branding and if investments in this direction could be profitable and be effective to the country's economy.

Countries can take advantage of series as a strategy of promotion and communication of its strengths. According to the results of the study, the environmental conditions and the social norms of a country are especially relevant to offer a nation brand experience to the audience of the series. Which means that the country would benefit from the portrayal of the positive attributes it possesses in these two dimensions. For example, for a country that has very nice weather or good air quality, these are characteristics should be emphasized onscreen. Another example is a country that has a fertile terrain might want to spread that information as it may lead the audience to acknowledge the quality of its products or that it is a country whose agriculture is profitable. Additionally, all countries have their particular social norms- language, living style, way of dressing, food habits and others- that can be portrayed in series and contribute very positively to the experience of the nation brand. Some aspects might be more developed or attractive to certain audiences. Therefore, it is

important to play up these characteristics to attract the attention and better the experience of the watchers. In the case of Italy, series can highlight the country as an extremely relevant tourism destination, with numerous monuments classified as world heritage, stunning landscapes, delicious food, excellent accesses, fantastic weather, stylish people.

According to the results, the environmental conditions of the nation and its social norms are the aspects that have the most influence on the experience of the nation brand by the audience. Therefore, elements such as the country's weather, the air quality, terrain should be used in the promotion of the country through the series. The depiction of the country's habitants and their habits, financial conditions, living style, mode of transportation, how they dress, food habits the language spoken, should also be explored in series due to its significant contribution to the NBE. Secondly, knowing that the affective and intellectual experiences are fundamental to provide a positive nation brand experience, the leaders and managers should aim at providing these types of experience to optimise the impacts on the behavioural intentions of the audience and on nation equity. For that reason, the series should appeal to the emotional side of the audience and try to establish an emotional connection between the spectator and the country. To achieve this, the series should portray the characters living positive and emotional moments for example, with romantic moments, exciting scenes of adventure or self-discovery. These scenes should show the character finding happiness in the place. The moments and emotions experienced by the characters onscreen should be unique, strong and lead the audience to believe that simply by being in the country, they will also experience those feelings. Similarly, the series should try to stimulate the curiosity and critical thinking of the audience, and to seek to teach the audience regarding the country, for example, its history or the museums that they can visit there, for example. Another way to provide an intellectual experience to the audience would be to introduce the audience to the country's authors and literature. This could be achieved, for example, through the books that characters mention or read onscreen, or even through passages of famous books read by the narrator. Additionally, the integration of the country's music and artists could be another form of providing an intellectual experience to the audience.

Providing a positive nation brand experience is of utmost significance to obtain the desired results of increasing the behavioural intentions of the consumers. According to the findings, a positive nation brand experience increases the intentions of the consumers to

visit and reside in the portrayed country as well as the intentions of purchasing the country's products. This is relevant information to have since it lets us know that this representation is beneficial to the promotion of the nation brand. In addition, it is indicative that a positive nation brand experience can boost the economy and that the investment of having series being filmed in a country and eventually, giving benefits of encouragement to do so can be profitable.

Alongside the effects on the intentions and behaviours of consumers towards the country, the results also point that a positive nation brand experience has a significant impact on the nation equity and on word-of-mouth (recommendations). The nation equity can be defined as the value the nation brand brings to its products and services. Once again, having this information, the leaders and managers might be more prone to have series being filmed in the countries, as it brings an additional value to not only the country's products and services, but also to the equity country itself. Furthermore, the positive nation brand experience extracted from the visualization of the series also encourages the recommendation of the experience to others. This is also highly beneficial as more people become familiarized with the country and its nation brand and more people become influenced to visit, reside, or purchase its products. This is another reason that can lead managers and marketers to choose to invest in this kind of marketing strategy.

In conclusion, the results of this investigation provide insights that are useful by providing practical guidelines for leaders and nation marketers that are looking for less explored marketing strategies to improve a nation brand.

6.3. Limitations and future research

This study is one of the few that investigates the effect and impact of series on the formation and propagation of the nation brand and the first, to our knowledge, to focus on understanding the impact of series on the nation brand experience, and how this experience influences the audience's behavioral intentions. Therefore, it is expected that it encounters some limitations.

To answer the research questions of this research, a series was chosen to study the effects of its portrayal of Italy on the NBE. This series was selected due to its popularity. However, the scenes in Italy were not very extensive and some attributes, such as the cultural aspects or the infrastructure, of the country were not deeply explored in its scenes.

For that reason, it is expected that the results could have been different if a different series was chosen. It could be interesting to replicate this study with other series that portrayed the country in a more extensive manner. Similarly, this study focuses on one destination, Italy. Applying this research to another country or even to various countries could be very interesting to understand if the results are affected by the country in question, or by the previous knowledge the audience has of its characteristics.

Another factor that should be considered is that Italy already has a well-established nation brand. Due to this fact, the audience probably had previous conceptions and opinions of the country that likely affected the results. The effect of a series on the nation brand experience might be stronger and freer of pre-conceived notions for countries that do not have as strong a nation brand. For these countries, their representation in moving images in worldwide productions is a great channel to inform the audience of its characteristics and to communicate its nation brand. This would constitute a relevant approach to this topic.

Another challenge faced happened during the collection of the data. The desired respondents were people that had watched the series and remember the scenes in Italy and that had never been to the country. Due to all these requirements, the collection of the data was difficult as it was hard to reach individuals that met all of them. Perhaps it could be interesting to do this investigation with a larger sample and observe changes in the results.

Finally, series are popular among all generations. However, its relevance might differ across the different age groups. A new path of research for this topic would be to understand the impact of series on the nation brand experience for the different generations.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Variables and measurement scales of the study

Table i – Variables and measurement scales of the study

Scale/Items	Authors
Country attributes reflected by cinema	Gupta et al. (2020)
Infrastructure of the country shown in how the cinema reflects on Item 1: Heritage value Item 2: Natural beauty Item 3: Cosmopolitan look Item 4: Entertainment Item 5: Monuments Item 6: Novelty attractions Item 7: Cleanliness	Adapted from Timothy (2005)
Country's politics shown in how the cinema reflects on Item 1: Safe movement Item 2: Freedom of speech Item 3: Crime rate Item 4: Terrorism	Adapted from Gupta and Gupta (2013)
Country's culture shown in how the cinema reflects on its peoples' Item 1: Attitude towards education Item 2: Attitude towards others Item 3: Attitude towards religion Item 4: Attitude towards sports Item 5: Attitude towards arts Item 6: Cultural heritage Item 7: Cultural values Item 8: Cultural norms	Adapted from Foroudi et al. (2016) and Uwah (2017)
Country's social norms shown in how the cinema reflects on the Item 1: Language spoken by people Item 2: Living style Item 3: Mode of transportation Item 4: Dress worn by people Item 5: Financial condition of people Item 6: Food habits of people	Adapted from Foroudi et al. (2016)
Country's environment shown in how the cinema reflects on its' Item 1: Weather Item 2: Landscape Item 3: Air quality	Adapted from Swiderska et al. (2008)

Nation Brand Experience	
Sensory Brand Experience Item 1: Portugal is a place that positively stimulates my senses with its delicious food, stunning scenery, and interesting cultural experiences. Item 2: I find that my senses are positively stimulated when I think about Portugal, where the sights, sounds, and flavors are all so vibrant and captivating. Item 3: I find Portugal interesting in a sensory way. Item 4: Portugal appeals to my senses.	
Affective Brand Experience Item 1: I have strong emotions for Italy. Item 2: Italy is an emotional area. Item 3: I feel a connection with Italy. Item 4: Thinking about Italy affects my moods.	Adapted from Brakus et al. (2009); Barnes et al. (2014); Schmitt (1999)
Behavioral Brand Experience Item 1: When I think about Italy, I envision myself engaging in physical activities and behaviors there. Item 2: Italy is activity oriented. Item 3: Italy offers activities of adventure and/or relaxation.	
Intellectual Brand Experience Item 1: I engage in a lot of thinking when I consider Italy. Item 2: Italy makes me think. Item 3: Italy stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving. Item 4: Italy stimulates cognitive thinking. Item 5: Italy stimulates my creativity.	
Behavioral Intentions	
Intention to visit Item 1: I intend to visit Italy in the near future. Item 2: I would choose Italy as the destination for my next holidays. Item 3: I would prefer to visit Portugal as opposed to other similar destinations.	Adapted from Van der Veen & Song (2014); Alvarez & Campo (2014) by Molinillo et al. (2018)
Intention to purchase Item 1: I am interested in buying Italian products. Item 2: I am likely to buy Italian products in the near future. Item 3: Other aspects being equal, Italian products would be my preferred choice.	Adapted from Wang et al., (2012)
Intention to reside/migrate Item 1: I think about moving to Italy. Item 2: If provided an opportunity, I would move to Italy. Item 3: I intend to move to Italy in the near future.	Adapted from Hadler (2006) and Yousaf et al., (2021)
Nation Equity	Steenkeper (2019)

Item 1: This country stands out from other countries. Item 2: This country is relevant to me. Item 3: This country is an innovative country. Item 4: This country stands for high quality. Item 5: I have a detailed understanding of what this country stands for. Item 6: This country stands for something unique. Item 7: This country fits my lifestyle. Item 8: This country is a dynamic country. Item 9: I hold this country in high regard. Item 10: I know a lot about this country.	
Word-of-Mouth	
Item 1: I have recommended Italy to a lot of people. Item 2: I “talk up” Italy to my friends. Item 3: I try to spread the good word about Italy in general. Item 4: I would recommend Italy due to its accessibility (e.g., transportation, infrastructure, services quality). Item 5: I would recommend Italy due to its tangible and intangible cultural heritage and history. Item 6: I would recommend Italy due to its societal feeling- welcoming and friendly inhabitants, customs, openness to religion and security.	Adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006); Gupta and Gupta (2013)

Appendix II: Full survey

The impact of Series on Nation Brand Experience

My name is Ana Raquel Novais and I am a Master's student in Portugal. This questionnaire is part of a study that aims to assess the impact of country representation in series.

Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary and responses are confidential. I ask for honesty in your answers and that you choose the options that best represent your opinions. Your participation is essential to the success of this study. The average response time is 7 minutes.

This survey is completely anonymous and confidential. The personal data collected is not identifiable, since the information collected is only about age, gender, education, and employment status. The treatment of the data provided throughout this study is in accordance with the RGPD. The data collected in this study will be statistically treated in aggregate form, and the results of the analysis may lead to publications of a scientific or other nature.

Thank you very much for your time!

Do you accept to participate in this study?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you watched the third season of La Casa de Papel?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you ever been to Italy?

☐ Yes

☐ No

During the third season of La Casa de Papel, numerous scenes are set in Tuscany, Italy. The Professor meets Berlin in Florence at the Piazza del Duomo and they walk through Piazza della Signoria. Another scene takes place at Michelangelo's Piazzale Belvedere, where the characters look out over the cityscape. During several episodes of the third season, the

Pratovecchio monastery in Arezzo serves as the location for the conception and preparation of the plan to rob the Bank of Spain.

Do you remember these scenes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Country attributes reflected on La Casa de Papel

After watching La Casa de Papel, I have gained insights regarding Italy's infrastructure in terms of..

(Please rate the items using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in the way that best reflects your judgement)

- Heritage Value
- Natural beauty
- Cosmopolitan look
- Entertainment
- Monuments
- Novelty attractions
- Cleanliness

After watching La Casa de Papel, I have gained insights regarding Italy's infrastructure in terms of..

(Please rate the items using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in the way that best reflects your judgement)

- Safe movement
- Freedom of speech
- Crime rate
- Terrorism

After watching La Casa de Papel, I have gained insights regarding Italy's culture in terms of... (Please rate the items using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" that best reflects your judgement)

- Attitude towards education
- Attitude towards others
- Attitude towards religion
- Attitude towards sports
- Attitude towards art
- Cultural heritage
- Cultural values
- Cultural norms

After watching La Casa de Papel, I have gained insights regarding Italy's social norms in terms of... (Please rate the items using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in a way that best reflects your judgement)

- Language spoken by people
- Living style
- Mode of transportation
- Dress worn by people
- Financial conditions of people
- Food habits of people

After watching La Casa de Papel, I have gained insights regarding Italy's environmental conditions in terms of... (Please rate the items using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in a way that best reflects your judgement)

- Weather
- Landscape
- Air quality

In a scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree", indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- Italy is a place that positively stimulates my senses with its delicious food, stunning scenery, and interesting cultural experiences

- I find that my senses are positively stimulated when I think about Italy, where the sights, sounds, and flavors are all so vibrant and captivating
- I find Italy interesting in a sensory way
- Italy appeals to my senses
- Italy induces feelings and sentiments
- I have strong emotions for Italy
- Italy is an emotional area
- I feel a connection with Italy
- Thinking about Italy affects my moods
- When I think about Italy, I envision myself engaging in physical activities and behaviors there
- Italy is activity-oriented
- Italy offers activities of adventure and/or relaxation
- I engage in a lot of thinking when I consider Italy
- Italy makes me think
- Italy stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving
- Italy stimulates cognitive thinking
- Italy stimulates my creativity

In a scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree", indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- I intend to visit Italy in the near future
- I would choose Italy as the destination for my next holidays
- I would prefer to visit Italy as opposed to other similar destinations

In a scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree", indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- I am interested in buying Italian products
- I am likely to buy Italian products in the near future
- I am likely to buy Italian products in the near future

In a scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree", indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- I think about moving to Italy
- If provided an opportunity, I would move to Italy
- I intend to move to Italy in the near future

In a scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree", indicate the level of agreement with the following statements.

- Italy stands out from other countries
- Italy is relevant to me
- Italy is an innovative country
- Italy stands for high quality
- I have a detailed understanding of what Italy stands for
- Italy stands for something unique
- Italy fits my lifestyle
- Italy is a dynamic country
- I hold Italy in high regard
- I know a lot about Italy

Please rate the following statements using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in a way that best reflects your judgment.

- I have recommended Italy to a lot of people
- I “talk up” Italy to my friends
- I try to spread the good word about Italy in general
- I would recommend Italy due to its accessibility (e.g. transportation, infrastructure, services quality)
- I would recommend Italy due to its tangible and intangible cultural heritage and history
- I would recommend Italy due to its societal feeling- welcoming and friendly inhabitants, customs, openness to religion and security

Please rate the following statements using the scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" in a way that best reflects your judgement.

- Italians are well-educated
- Italians are hard working

- Italians strive to reach high standards
- Italians have high standards of living
- Italians have high technical capabilities
- Italians are trustworthy
- The Italian governmental institutions are able to provide an adequate service
- The Italian governmental institutions make an effective use of resources

Please rate the following statements by selecting the circle and number closest to your opinion.

- I dislike/like Italy
- "Bad"/"Good" attitude toward Italy
- "Unpleasant"/"Pleasant" attitude toward Italy
- "Disadvantageous"/"Advantageous" attitude toward Italy
- "Unfriendly"/"Friendly" attitude toward Italy

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is exceptional
- Is superb
- Is fantastic
- Is extraordinary

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is energetic
- Is outgoing
- Is lively
- Is vigorous

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Looks good
- Is aesthetically appealing
- Is attractive
- Has beautiful landscapes

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is innovative
- Is original
- Does its own thing

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is authentic
- Is true to its roots
- Doesn't seem artificial
- Doesn't try to be something it's not

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is rebellious
- Is defiant
- Is not afraid to break rules
- Is nonconformist

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is chic
- Is glamorous

- Is sophisticated
- Is ritzy

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is liked by most people
- Is trendy
- Is popular
- Has an overall positive view

After watching La Casa de Papel, do you think...? (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- People who visit Italy are different from others
- If you were to visit Italy, you would stand apart from others
- People who visit Italy stand out in a crowd
- People who visit, invest and/or reside in Italy are unique

After watching La Casa de Papel, I think Italy... (Please rate the following items completing the previous sentence in a scale from 1="Strongly disagree" to 5="Strongly agree")

- Is a cultural symbol
- Is iconic

Nationality: _____

Where do you currently reside? _____

How old are you? _____

Which gender do you identify with?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ Middle School

☐ High School

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

☐ PhD

What is your professional situation?

☐ Student

☐ Student worker

☐ Employee

☐ Employer

☐ Retired

☐ Other situation

What was your income after taxes in the last 12 months?

☐ Less than 10.000€

☐ 10.000€-19.999€

☐ 20.000€-29.999€

☐ 30.000€-39.999€

☐ 40.000€-49.999€

☐ 50.000€ or more

☐ Rather not say

Appendix III: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Table ii– Characterization of the demographic variables

Demographic Variables N=181	Total	
	n	%
Gender		
Male	61	33.7%
Female	118	65.2%
Other	2	1,10%
Age		
18	3	1.7%
19	5	2.8%
20	5	2.8%
21	5	2.8%
22	18	9.9%
23	15	8.3%
24	13	7.2%
25	24	13.3%
26	7	3.9%
27	5	2.8%
28	6	3.3%
29	3	1.7%
30	10	5.5%
31	3	1.7%
32	11	6.1%
33	6	3.3%
34	2	1.1%
35	5	2.8%
36	2	1.1%
37	1	0.6%
39	2	1.1%
40	4	2.2%
41	3	1.7%
42	7	3.9%
43	1	0.6%
45	1	0.6%
47	1	0.6%
49	2	1.1%
51	1	0.6%
52	1	0.6%
53	1	0.6%
54	3	1.7%
55	1	0.6%

56	1	0.6%
57	1	0.6%
60	1	0.6%
61	1	0.6%
Nacionalidade		
Portugal	68	37.6%
United States of America	93	51.4%
Spain	2	1.1%
Brazil	3	1.7%
Pakistan	1	0.6%
Netherlands	1	0.6%
United Kingdom	2	1.1%
Uruguay	1	0.6%
Philippines	3	1.7%
China	1	0.6%
Thailand	1	0.6%
India	2	1.1%
Mexico	1	0.6%
Romania	1	0.6%
Austria	1	0.6%
Country of residence		
Portugal	67	37.4%
United States of America	92	51.4%
Spain	3	1.7%
Brazil	3	1.7%
Pakistan	1	0.6%
Netherlands	3	1.7%
United Kingdom	3	1.7%
Germany	1	0.6%
Philippines	3	1.7%
Thailand	1	0.6%
India	1	0.6%
Mexico	1	0.6%
Education		
Less than High School	2	1.1%
High School	27	14.9%
Bachelor degree	113	62.4%
Postgraduate degree	5	2.8%
Master	31	17.1%
PhD	1	0.6%
Other	2	1.1%
Occupation		

Student	49	27.1%
Student worker	23	12.7%
Employee	94	51.9%
Employer	14	7.7%
Other situation	1	0.6%
Yearly income (before taxes)		
Less than 10.000€	49	27.1%
10.000€-19.999€	14	7.7%
20.000€-29.999€	19	10.5%
30.000€-39.999€	30	16.6%
40.000-49.999€	21	11.6%
50.000€ or more	22	12.2%
Rather not answer	26	14.4%

Appendix IV: Factor loadings

Measures	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Infrastructure				
Heritage value	0.655			
Natural beauty	0.602			
Cosmopolitan look	0.722			
Entertainment	0.647			
Monuments	0.692			
Novelty attractions	0.686			
Cleanliness	0.625			
Political environment		0.821	0.881	0.65
Safe movement	0.819			
Freedom of speech	0.79			
Crime rate	0.819			
Terrorism	0.794			
Culture		0.856	0.892	0.58
Attitude towards education	0.736			
Attitude towards others	0.717			
Attitude towards religion	0.755			
Attitude towards sports	0.756			
Attitude towards arts	0.686			
Cultural heritage	0.674			
Cultural values	0.745			
Cultural norms	0.775			
Social norms		0.857	0.897	0.636
Language spoken by people	0.704			
Living style	0.771			
Mode of transportation	0.821			
Dress worn by people	0.747			
Financial conditions of people	0.793			
Food habits of people	0.802			
Environmental conditions		0.754	0.859	0.67
Weather	0.836			
Terrain	0.766			
Air quality	0.853			
Nation Brand Experience		0.92	0.935	0.643
Sensorial				
Italy is a place that positively stimulates my senses with its delicious food, stunning scenery, and interesting cultural experiences	0.475			
I find that my senses are positively stimulated when I think about Italy, where the sights, sounds, and flavors are all so vibrant and captivating	0.614			
I find Italy interesting in a sensory way	0.58			
Italy appeals to my senses	0.627			
Affective				
Italy induces feelings and sentiments	0.703			
I have strong emotions for Italy	0.803			
Italy is an emotional area	0.722			

I feel a connection with Italy	0.762			
Thinking about Italy affects my moods	0.672			
Behavioral				
When I think about Italy, I envision myself engaging in physical activities and behaviors there	0.688			
Italy is activity-oriented	0.664			
Italy offers activities of adventure and/or relaxation	0.646			
Intellectual				
I engage in a lot of thinking when I consider Italy	0.778			
Italy makes me think	0.759			
Italy stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving	0.802			
Italy stimulates cognitive thinking	0.751			
Italy stimulates my creativity	0.737			
Visit intention		0.779	0.87	0.691
I intend to visit Italy in the near future	0.825			
I intend to visit Italy in the near future	0.845			
I would prefer to visit Italy as opposed to other similar destinations	0.826			
Purchase intention		0.807	0.886	0.722
I am interested in buying Italian products	0.88			
I am likely to buy Italian products in the near future	0.847			
Other aspects being equal, Italian products would be my preferred choice	0.82			
Residing intention		0.866	0.918	0.789
I think about moving to Italy	0.911			
If provided an opportunity, I would move to Italy	0.845			
I intend to move to Italy in the near future	0.907			
Nation Brand Equity		0.871	0.9	0.564
Italy stands out from other countries	0.74			
Italy is relevant to me	0.71			
Italy is an innovative country	0.728			
Italy stands for high quality	0.691			
I have a detailed understanding of what Italy stands for	0.715			
Italy stands for something unique	0.736			
Italy fits my lifestyle	0.729			
Italy is a dynamic country	0.676			
I hold Italy in high regard	0.781			
I know a lot about Italy	0.64			
Positive Word-of-Mouth		0.885	0.916	0.687
I have recommended Italy to a lot of people	0.833			
I “talk up” Italy to my friends	0.826			
I try to spread the good word about Italy in general	0.876			
I would recommend Italy due to its accessibility (e.g. transportation, infrastructure, services quality)	0.789			
I would recommend Italy due to its tangible and intangible cultural heritage and history	0.661			
I would recommend Italy due to its societal feeling-welcoming and friendly inhabitants, customs, openness to religion and security	0.772			

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