City Image.
Comparing residents' and tourists' perceived image of Verona

Rossella Baratta, Fabio Cassia, Vania Vigolo, Marta Ugolini
Department of Business Administration, University of Verona (Italy)
Email: *rossella.baratta@univr.it; fabio.cassia@univr.it; vania.vigolo@univr.it; marta.ugolini@univr.it*

Abstract

Purpose. The aim of the research is to examine the perceived image of Verona, both as a tourist destination and as a city to live in. City image can be defined as a set of believes, ideas and impressions people hold regarding a city, and can strongly affect residents' and tourists' attitudes and behaviors toward the city: it can increase tourists' loyalty and satisfaction, but it also plays a key role in creating residents' support for further tourism development. The image of a city depends much on the quality of the services it provides, both public services and tourism facilities, and perceptions are expected to vary between residents and tourists.

Methodology. The research was conducted through questionnaires to 380 residents and 167 tourists of Verona. Questionnaires were based on a multi-item scale addressing six dimensions of the city image, four of them being shared by both tourists and residents, thus allowing for a direct comparison.

Findings. Empirical findings show that even if residents and tourists hold quite similar perceptions, residents detain a lower perceived image especially regarding municipal facilities. Additional findings provide evidence that heritage and cultural sites are among the most representative attributes of Verona in tourists' perceptions and that the economic benefits of tourism are not systematically perceived by residents.

Practical implications. The research provides useful implications for policy makers and destination management organizations, it shows some strengths and weaknesses of Verona, and it provides evidence about the correlation between the perceived image of a city and the perceived economic benefits of tourism.

Originality/value. At our knowledge, this is the first analysis of the image of Verona, and the first time residents' and tourists' perceptions are jointly investigated and compared. Moreover, the study addresses the image of a medium-small city, that is typical in the Italian context, validating and improving an existing scale that could be further adopted for other Italian cities.

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1. Introduction

The image of tourist destinations has received much attention in tourism studies (e.g. Beerli and Martin, 2004; Byon and Zhang, 2008; Chi and Qu, 2008; Cherifi et al., 2014; Mak, 2017), and a growing body of research is recognizing the importance of assessing also the image residents hold of the place where they live (e.g. Zenker and Rütter, 2014; Stylidis et al., 2015; Gilboa et al., 2015; Stylidis, 2016). City image has important behavioral consequences, and a positive image generally translated into positive attitudes and behaviors toward the city, both for tourists and residents (Kotler, 1997; Gilboa et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2017). To ensure the sustainable development of tourist destinations, the evaluation of the image held by these key stakeholders becomes therefore a necessary condition (Stylidis et al., 2015).

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to: a) examine the perceived image of tourists, b) examine the perceived image of residents, and c) compare the two city images. A model to study tourists' and residents' images jointly is developed and tested, and the setting of the study is the city of Verona in north-eastern Italy, the second largest municipality of Veneto region and a popular destination for cultural tourism.

The selected model is based on a previous study addressing both residents' and tourists' city image, but separately (Gilboa et al., 2015). The present research adapts and improves the model in order to test the scale validity for residents' and tourists' image comparison. Moreover, it responds to the call made by Gilboa and colleagues (2015) regarding the need assess the image of medium-small cities, and not just major capital cities.

Overall findings provide important insights both for city planning and city marketing, and to the best of our knowledge this is the first time residents' and tourists' perceptions regarding Verona are jointly investigated and compared.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 provides the theoretical background for the study, methodology is described in section 3, results are presented in section 4, while conclusions, implications and limitations of the research are listed in section 5.

2. Theoretical background

City image can be defined as the set of beliefs, ideas and impressions people hold regarding a city (Kotler, 1997). It is a mental picture that may depend both on objective knowledge about the services and facilities provided by a city, but also on more emotional and affective components (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977; Stylidis et al., 2017). Moreover, several cities can be considered not just as a place to live in but also as tourist destinations, and literature suggests that the image of tourist destinations is likely to vary between locals and visitors (Stylidis et al., 2017). The perspectives of different groups of stakeholders need to be taken into account when assessing city image (Ahmed, 1991; Stylidis et al., 2017), and the involvement of residents as part of the tourism planning process is a necessary condition for the sustainable development of a destination in the long-term (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012; Stylidis, 2016).

City image, even if quite abstract in essence, may have concrete consequences on attitudes and behaviors of both residents and tourists (Kotler, 1997; Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006, 15; Gilboa et al., 2015). Hence, understanding this complex and multidimensional concept is important for several reasons. The first and more obvious is to highlight a city's strengths and weaknesses, both for city planning and city marketing (Luque-Martínez et al., 2007) and consequently correct the more problematic aspects in order to improve the overall

city image. A positive destination image in fact translates into positive tourists' attitudes and behaviors, such as destination choice and tourists' decision making process (Byon and Zhang, 2009), the intention to revisit, to recommend the city to others, the generation of a positive word of mouth (Phillips and Jang, 2008; Aksu et al., 2009; Byon and Zhang, 2010; Stylidis et al., 2017). Destination image affects tourist traffic (Gilboa et al., 2015), the overall level of satisfaction during the visit (Chi and Qu, 2008; Stylidis et al., 2015), and if carefully assessed and evaluated can be useful to better position the destination and to improve its competitiveness in the global arena (Pike and Ryan, 2004). Residents' perceptions, even if less investigated by previous literature (Stylidis, 2016), play a likewise significant role on residents' attitudes toward tourism, their intention to recommend the destination (Bigne et al., 2005; Stylidis et al., 2017) and their support for further tourism development (Ramkissoon and Nunkoo, 2011; Stylidis, 2016). Residents also constitute an important intangible component of the overall tourist experience (Stylidis et al., 2015). In addition, the examination of residents' city image can help to understand how to improve their quality of life and welfare (Luque-Martínez et al., 2007) and overall citizens' satisfaction is generally related to the development of place attachment and a more positive citizenship behavior (Zenker and Rütter, 2014). However, the relation between residents' city image and their attitudes and support is often mediated by the perceived impacts of tourism (Stylidis, 2016). In other words, residents that hold a more favorable city image are more likely to perceive the benefits related to tourism, and according to Social Exchange Theory (Ap, 1992), when the benefits of tourism are higher than costs, residents are likely to be more supportive (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009; Gursoy et al., 2010; Stylidis and Terzidou, 2014). Tourism economic impacts need to be taken into account when assessing residents' city image, since both concepts are strongly correlated (Stylidis et al., 2015).

The aim of the present research is not just to assess tourists' and residents' perceived image separately, but rather to compare and jointly analyze both images since different stakeholders can perceive the same city differently, according to their own filter or lens (Merrilees et al., 2012; Stylidis et al., 2015: Stylidis et al., 2017). Residents may hold a more positive city image than tourists because of more accurate perceptions of their own city and their stronger level of place attachment (Stylidis et al., 2016). A higher familiarity with a place in fact can be related to a more positive city image (Baloglu, 2001). Other studies however found that tourists, on the contrary, may detain more favorable perceptions than residents (Stylidis et al., 2017) because they may be more focused on affective components of the city image, rather than just objective knowledge about services and destination attributes. Divergent perspectives must be taken into account by city planners and city marketers, since gaps and divergences in the perceptions of a city can lead to conflicts between residents and tourists (Stylidis et al., 2015) and this can in turn affect the overall sustainability of a tourist destination (Byrd et al., 2009; Stylidis et al., 2017).

According to this theoretical background, the following hypothesis can be derived:

Hypothesis 1: *The city image of Verona is expected to vary between residents and tourists.*

3. Methodology

a. Study setting

Verona is situated in Northeast Italy and is the second largest municipality of Veneto region, after Venice, with a population of nearly 260 000 inhabitants (ISTAT, 2016). Verona

has been awarded World Heritage Site by UNESCO and tourism is a well-developed industry: in 2016 Verona counted with 1.725.908 arrivals and 3.618.193 overnight stays and tourism flows grew +77,66% from 2006 to 2016 (U. O. Sistema Statistico Regionale, Regione Veneto, 2016).

b. The sample

The sample is made of 380 residents of Verona and 167 tourists, with an overall sample of 457 individuals. Data were collected between January and March 2017 and questionnaires were delivered both personally and through online surveys. The great majority of respondents were approached during waiting times outside the main attractions of Verona at the weekend, where both tourist and residents can be found.

c. The questionnaire

City image is based upon several city attributes and dimensions, however in order to allow for a comparison between tourists' and residents' perceptions a common scale was needed. Hence, following Gilboa et al. (2015), a multi-item scale comprising 25 items belonging to five city dimensions was developed and a sixth dimension was added in order to assess the economic impacts of tourism (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009; Stylidis et al., 2015). The final scale is made of 29 items, divided into six dimensions, four of them being shared by tourists and residents: Municipal facilities, Leisure, Security and Public services; one dimension specific for tourists: Tourism and recreation; and one dimension specific for residents: Economic impacts (Table 1).

Two similar questionnaires were developed, one for tourists and one for residents. The questionnaire for tourists was made of three sections: a) city image scale, based on five city dimensions, b) space for comments and observations on tourism, and c) demographic data on the interviewee. Respondents were asked their level of agreement on a 7 point Likert scale with each attribute of Verona and since all items refer to positive attributes, the higher the level of agreement the more positive the overall city image. The questionnaire for residents was made of four sections: a) city image scale, based on four city dimensions, b) economic impacts of tourism, c) space for comments and observations on tourism, and d) demographic data on the interviewee. Again, respondents were asked their level of agreement on a 7 point Likert scale with each attribute of Verona and with the four statements related to the economic impacts of tourism.

d. Data analysis

After the review of descriptive statistics, data were analyzed in three stages. First, mean and standard deviation for each item in the questionnaire were calculated in order to assess tourists' and residents' city image. Moreover, an additional variable was created (Avg_Image) consisting in the mean of all items for each respondent. In order to examine the importance of economic benefits of tourism in residents' perceptions, the correlation between the economic impacts and the average image was assessed. Finally, tourists' and residents' city images were compared and an independent sample T-Test was performed.

Table 1. Items of the city image's questionnaire among residents and tourists

Scale items	Variable	Source
Factor I – Municipal facilities		Gilboa et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2017.
A tolerable level of air pollution	Mun_1	
Well lightened at night	Mun_2	
Good public transportation	Mun_3	
Care for elderly people	Mun_4	
Well maintained streets and sidewalks	Mun_5	
Easy communication with municipality officials, local police, etc.	Mun_6	
Green spaces	Mun_7	
Clean	Mun_8	
Factor II – Leisure		Byon and Zhang, 2010; Gilboa et al., 2015.
Tourism facilities (accommodation, restaurants, parks, etc.)	Leis_1	
Close to major cities	Leis_2	
Close to main motorways	Leis_3	
Discos and nightclubs	Leis_4	
Youth clubs (scouts, etc.)	Leis_5	
Factor III – Security		Byon and Zhang, 2010; Gilboa et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2017.
Quiet	Sec_1	
Safe	Sec_2	
A low crime rate	Sec_3	
Not crowded	Sec_4	
Factor IV – Public services		Byon and Zhang, 2010; Gilboa et al., 2015.
Enough bank and postal branches	Pub_1	
Enough shops	Pub_2	
Enough hospitals and healthcare facilities	Pub_3	
Factor V – Tourism and recreation (only for tourists)		Byon and Zhang, 2010; Gilboa et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2017.
Historical sites	Tour_1	
Heritage	Tour_2	
Cultural activities (concerts, museums, theaters, etc.)	Tour_3	
Pubs, restaurants, recreational facilities (movie theaters, etc.)	Tour_4	
Sport and country clubs	Tour_5	
Factor VI – Economic impacts (only for residents)		Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2009; Stylidis, 2015.
Tourism is a source of economic benefits for me or my family	Eco_1	
Tourism increases the cost of living	Eco_2	
Economic benefits deriving from tourism are equally split among residents	Eco_3	
Economic benefits deriving from tourism are higher than costs	Eco_4	

Source: our elaboration

4. Findings

Hereafter, city image for tourists and residents is presented, then the comparison between tourists' and residents' perceptions is discussed.

a.Tourists' city image

The sample of tourists is made of 89 women (53%) and 78 men (47%). The average age is 38 years, with a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 76. Four interviewees are unemployed (2%), 7 are retired (4%), 4 do household work (2%), 36 are self-employed (22%), 14 are managers (8%), 58 are employees (35%), 24 are students (15%), 13 (8%) do other jobs and 7 people (4%) did not answer the question. Only 23 interviewees (14%) do a job related to tourism, while 132 (79%) do not and 12 people (7%) did not answer. Twelve interviewees (7%) define their level of income as lower than the average, 34 (20%) declare that income allows to cover costs, 76 (46%) define their income in the average, 5 (3%) higher than the average, 4 (2%) much higher than the average and 36 interviewees (22%) prefer not to

answer. The majority of tourists, 121 (72%), were in Verona for leisure, while 33 (20%) for business. Thirteen people (8%) did not specify.

Table 2 shows that tourists have an overall positive image of Verona, since the level of agreement with each attribute is always greater than 4 (mean value of the scale) with an average image of 5.18. Culture emerge as the strongest attribute in tourists' perceptions, since the presence of heritage and cultural sites (Tour_2 and Tour_1) reaches the highest level of agreement, and cultural activities such as museums, theaters and concerts (Tour_3) are also acknowledged by tourists. Moreover, Verona offers possibility for shopping (Pub_2) and is probably easy to reach thanks to the proximity to main motorways (Leis_3). The greatest criticality of Verona as a tourist destination is the fact that it is perceived as a quite crowded city (Sec_4), even if tourists themselves could be one of the sources of city congestion. Municipal facilities such as care for elderly people and easiness of communication with public officials (Mun_4 and Mun_6) also present quite low levels of agreement, but this could be due to tourists' indifference with respect to services they do not experience directly. Finally, the level of air pollution (Mun_1) may represent another relative weakness of Verona.

Table 2. Tourists' city image

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mun_1	4.2813	1.52205
Mun_2	5.0750	1.30094
Mun_3	4.6154	1.50895
Mun_4	4.2207	1.18714
Mun_5	4.8827	1.50521
Mun_6	4.2733	1.37522
Mun_7	4.8466	1.45119
Mun_8	5.2848	1.43053
Leis_1	5.9146	1.20022
Leis_2	5.8354	1.13655
Leis_3	6.0244	1.16678
Leis_4	4.6358	1.45365
Leis_5	4.6467	1.26457
Sec_1	5.3114	1.28431
Sec_2	5.1296	1.25178
Sec_3	4.5849	1.30869
Sec_4	4.0542	1.68507
Pub_1	5.0516	1.31817
Pub_2	6.0309	1.17120
Pub_3	5.2338	1.26694
Tour_1	6.2515	1.22396
Tour_2	6.3851	1.21995
Tour_3	5.9876	1.33223
Tour_4	5.7826	1.28304
Tour_5	4.4207	1.25648
Avg_Image	**5.1834**	**.78286**

Source: our elaboration on PASW Statistics

b. Residents' city image

Table 3. Residents' city image

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mun_1	3.2706	1.68093
Mun_2	4.9151	1.38503
Mun_3	4.2713	1.67199
Mun_4	4.2986	1.35716
Mun_5	3.7831	1.67697
Mun_6	4.0726	1.44908
Mun_7	4.2328	1.64930
Mun_8	4.6605	1.56128
Leis_1	5.8492	1.11940
Leis_2	5.9048	1.07611
Leis_3	6.1953	.91656
Leis_4	4.7973	1.53082
Leis_5	4.6054	1.46909
Sec_1	5.2902	1.36090
Sec_2	4.9762	1.30169
Sec_3	4.5213	1.41970
Sec_4	4.0294	1.59479
Pub_1	5.1671	1.45177
Pub_2	5.8651	1.24261
Pub_3	5.6111	1.27601
Avg_Image	**4.8192**	**.80003**

Source: our elaboration on PASW Statistics

The sample of residents is made of 235 women (62%) and 129 men (34%). Sixteen people (4%) did not answer the question. The average age is 39 years, with a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 87. Thirteen interviewees are unemployed (3%), 37 are retired (10%), 5 do household work (1%), 46 are self-employed (12%), 11 are managers (3%), 104 are employees (27%), 110 are students (29%), 8 (2%) do other jobs and 2 people (1%) did not answer. Only 63 interviewees (17%) do a job related to tourism, while 295 (77%) do not and 22 people (6%) did not answer. Forty-five interviewees (12%) define their level of income as lower than the average, 86 (23%) declare that income allows to cover costs, 181 (48%) define their income in the average, 31 (8%) higher than the average, 4 (1%) much higher than the average and 33 interviewees (8%) prefer not to answer.

Table 3 presents residents' city image. The level of agreement with each attribute of Verona is almost always greater than 4 (mean value of the scale), with an average image of 4.82. However, residents' perceptions vary considerably across attributes and some strengths and weaknesses of Verona can be identified. Proximity to main motorways and to major cities are the most representative attributes of Verona (Leis_3 and Leis_2), along with the

presence of shops (Pub_2) tourism facilities (Leis_1) and medical facilities (Pub_3). Critical aspects are instead related to municipal facilities such as streets and sidewalks maintenance (Mun_5), the easiness of communication with municipality officials (Mun_6), the presence of green spaces (Mun_7), the quality of public transportation (Mun_3) and most of all the level of air pollution (Mun_1), that reaches the lowest level of agreement. Moreover, although security in general does not seem to be a problem for residents, Verona is perceived as quite a crowded city (Sec_4).

With respect to the economic impacts of tourism, residents do not generally agree in considering tourism as a source of economic benefits (Eco_1), nor that such benefits are equally shared among the local population (Eco_3), as it is shown in Table 4. However, residents do not seem to perceive a marked increase in the cost of living deriving from tourism (Eco_2) and the overall benefits and costs of tourism are more or less equivalent in residents' perceptions (Eco_4). Since the standard deviation in the perception of economic benefits (Eco_1) is quite high, an independent sample T-Test was performed between residents with a job related to tourism and residents that do all other jobs, and in fact the level of agreement for the former group is 5.24 on average, while it decreases to 3.49 for the latter group and the difference is statistically significant as shown in Table 5. Hence, apart from the few interviewees with a job related to the tourism industry, tourism does not seem to be a source of benefits for the residents of Verona.

In conclusion, both the average image and the acknowledgment of economic benefits deriving from tourism are quite low in residents' perceptions. In line with previous literature (Stylidis, 2016), a correlation between these two concepts has been found, as shown in Table 6, and since both city image and perception of positive tourism impacts are related to residents' support for tourism and sustainable development of tourist destinations, these data constitute an important warning sign for city planners and city marketers.

Table 4. Economic benefits of tourism

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Eco_1	3.8271	2.04468
Eco_2	4.4205	1.57549
Eco_3	3.1833	1.52947
Eco_4	4.2909	1.59379

Source: PASW Statistics

Table 5. Significant differences in the perception of economic benefits of tourism (Independent Sample Test)

		t-test for Equality of Means						
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Eco_1	EVA	6.551	353	.000	1.75388	.26771	1.22738	2.28038

*EVA: Equal Variances Assumed
Source: our elaboration on PAWS Statistics

Table 6. Correlation between average city image and economic impacts of tourism

		Avg_Image	Eco_1	Eco_2	Eco_3	Eco_4
Avg_Image	Pearson Correlation	1	.321**	.159**	.441**	.260**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.002	.000	.000
	N	380	376	371	371	361

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: our elaboration on PASW Statistics

c. Comparing residents' and tourists' city image

Table 7 presents residents' and tourists' mean for each item in the questionnaire that was shared by both categories, hence Factor V (Tourism and recreation) and Factor VI (Economic impacts) are not considered. Although perceptions are quite aligned, some discrepancies emerged, thus providing empirical support for Hypothesis 1: *The city image of Verona is expected to vary between residents and tourists*. In particular, tourists hold a more positive image of Verona, and the average city image is 5.18 for tourists and 4.82 for residents.

However, again perceptions vary across city dimensions and the average city image alone may not be sufficient for an appropriate comparison between residents and tourists. Therefore, the average value for each common dimension was calculated, namely Factor I (Municipal facilities), Factor II (Leisure), Factor III (Security) and Factor IV (Public Services) and an independent sample T-Test was performed. Results, reported in Table 8 and Table 9, show that the abovementioned difference in the average image is statistically significant and that tourists' city image is more positive than residents' regarding Factor I: the average score of Municipal facilities is 4.2 in residents' perceptions and 4.7 in tourists' perceptions and again the difference is statistically significant. A more detailed analysis, not reported here, revealed that the items where greatest misalignment emerged are: the level of air pollution (Mun_1), public transportation (Mun_3), streets and sidewalks maintenance (Mun_5), the presence of green spaces (Mun_7) and cleanness (Mun_8). The same analysis also showed that proximity to main motorways (Leis_3) and the presence of hospital and medical facilities (Pub_3) are instead better perceived by residents than tourists.

These results indicate that residents have more accurate perceptions of city attributes they have greater experience about. In line with previous literature (Stylidis et al. 2017), the lower city image held by residents could be explained by the fact that residents tend to be more critical with city attributes they have objective knowledge about, whereas tourists focus more on emotional and affective dimensions.

Table 7. Residents' and tourists' city image

Residents' and tourists' city image
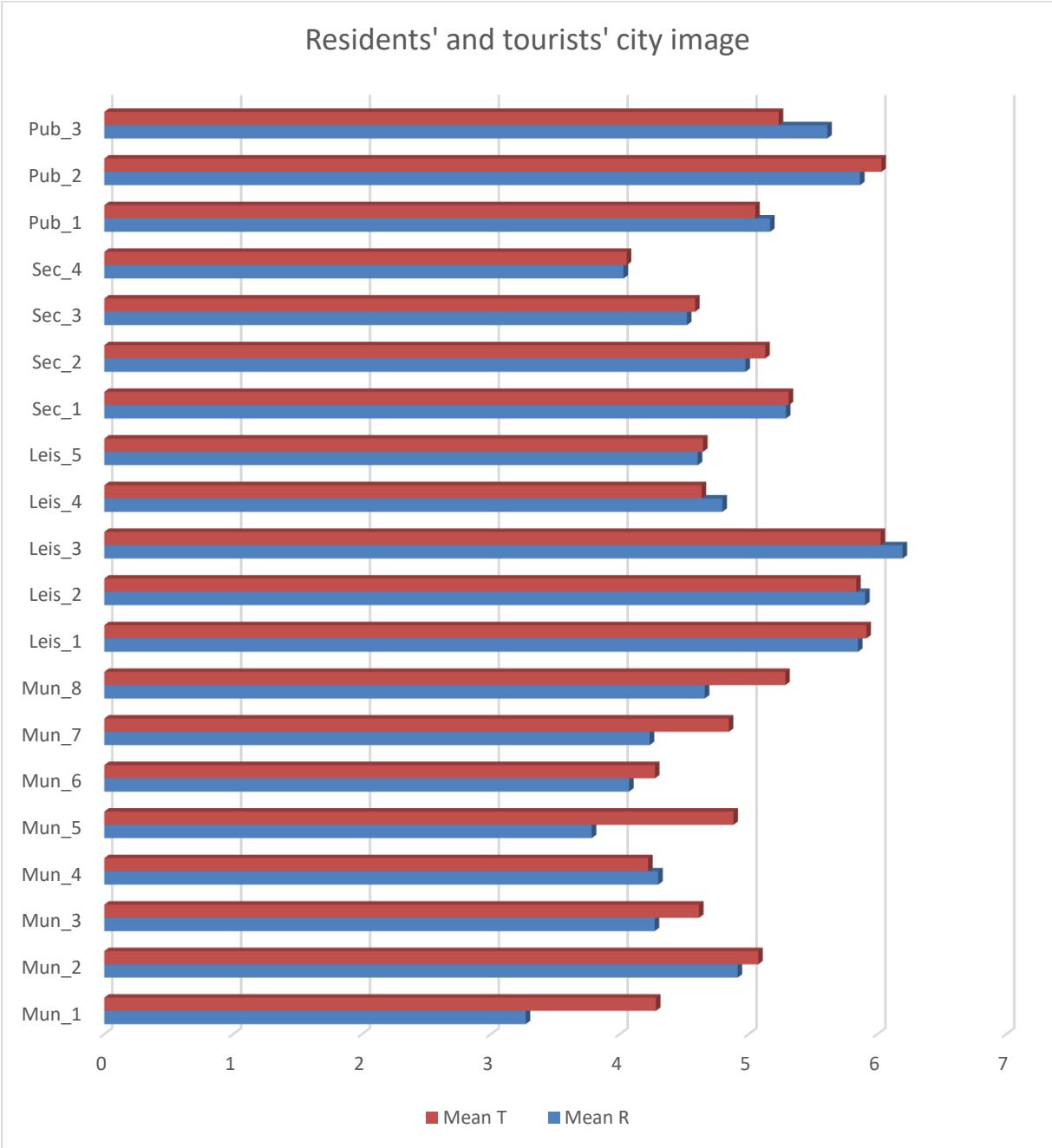
Source: our elaboration

Table 8. Residents' and tourists' average image for city dimension

Res_vs_Tour		Mean	Std. Deviation
Avg_Municipal facilities	Res	4.1994	1.02258
	Tour	4.6558	.91513
Avg_Leisure	Res	5.4730	.85755
	Tour	5.3903	.91145
Avg_Security	Res	4.6953	1.09037
	Tour	4.7869	1.09316
Avg_Public services	Res	5.5431	1.05176
	Tour	5.4032	.96206
Avg_Image	Res	4.8192	.80003
	Tour	5.1834	.78286

Source: PSWS Statistics

Table 9. Significant differences in residents' and tourists' image for city dimension (Independent Sample Test)

		t-test for Equality of Means						
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Avg_Municipal facilities	EVA	-4.472	481	.000	-.45641	.10207	-.65696	-.25585
Avg_Leisure	EVA	.961	499	.337	.08269	.08605	-.08637	.25175
Avg_Security	EVA	-.879	524	.380	-.09159	.10417	-.29623	.11305
Avg_Public services	EVA	1.404	521	.161	.13996	.09972	-.05594	.33586
Avg_Image	EVA	-4.935	545	.000	-.36417	.07379	-.50912	-.21921

*EVA: Equal Variances Assumed
Source: our elaboration on PAWS Statistics

5. Conclusions and implications

The purpose of the study was to assess the city image of Verona both as a tourist destination and as a city to live in, and to compare city images held by tourists and residents. Overall, findings revealed that tourists detain a positive image of Verona with respect to all city dimensions examined in the research. In addition, findings suggest that successful positioning and promotion of Verona should be focused on culture and heritage, since these

are the most representative city attributes in tourists' mental images. Relative criticalities emerged with respect to some municipal facilities, however they do not seem to negatively affect the image of Verona as a tourist destination. The only rather problematic aspect that emerged from the study is related to the perception of Verona as a quite crowded city, hence efforts for deseasonalization and decentralization of tourist flows may be required in a long-time horizon. Residents' city image on the contrary emerged to be more critical: although leisure and public services do not represent a problem for the inhabitants of Verona, many items belonging to municipal facilities are considered inadequate, and this critical aspect also emerged from the comparison between residents' and tourists' image. Moreover, residents' quite low city image is strongly correlated to the scant perception of economic benefits deriving from tourism. These findings support the need to improve both residents' quality of life and their level of involvement in tourism planning and development, since the current situation can potentially represent a threat to residents' support for tourism, the development of a positive citizenship behavior and the overall destination sustainability in the long run.

The study contributes to previous literature on city and tourist destination image by testing an integrated model on tourists and residents and comparing results. It also adds to the field of research calling for major residents' involvement in the tourism planning process, by providing evidence about the importance of residents' perceptions of tourism economic impacts.

Practical implications for both city planners and DMOs and city marketers can be derived from the results of the research: city strengths such as culture and heritage should be emphasized in the promotion of Verona, while an effective deseasonalization or decentralization strategy could be implemented to minimize the weakness point related to the city congestion. In addition, some facilities should be addressed by municipal authorities and consequently improved, in order to ensure residents' welfare and quality of life.

The study is not free from limitations: the first major shortcoming is due to the fact that the questionnaire did not address residents' and tourists' attitudes and behaviors, but just their perceptions about the city image. Hence, we have to rely on prior literature to claim that a positive image translates into positive behaviors toward the city itself. Secondly, only Italian tourists participated to the research, since the period of the data collection was rather unfavorable to the presence of foreigner tourists. And thirdly, only the economic impacts of tourism are investigated, since environmental and socio-cultural issues were already raised in the other dimensions of the questionnaire.

Further research should enlarge the sample incorporating the perceptions of foreign tourists too, that constitute a relevant part of Verona tourism flows. Other perspectives could also be taken into account, such as tourism sector and local authorities. Finally, the research could be broadened to other medium-small scale cities, that constitute the vast majority in the Italian setting.

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