Challenges and Opportunities for Island Tourist Destinations: The Case of the Island of Sal, Cape Verde

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Abstract. The Tourism Area Life Cycle destination goes through different phases from its exploration until its decline or rejuvenation. The knowledge about these different phases allows the improvement of investment decisions by the private sector or by the government, in a context of challenges and opportunities. The main objective of this study was to verify in which phase the Island of Sal and Cape Verde were at an individual and competitive level during the period 2010–2018, considering the Tourism Development Index (TDI). To calculate the TDI, destinations with the same ‘sun and beach’ market were chosen, such as the Dominican Republic, Morocco, Tunisia and the Canary Islands, because they compete for the same European market and their geographical proximity to this market; data from government and non-government sources were used. It was concluded that the Island of Sal is in the Development phase, the same phase as that of Cape Verde. As for competitiveness, they are in the exploration and stagnation phase, both needing to increase the TDI to 48% and 43%, respectively to reach the involvement phase. For the calculation of the TDI, data from Cape Verde can be used to analyse the Sal Island index and vice versa. Strategic policies must be considered in the long term, incorporating information on the relative positions of direct competitors and unexpected events such as COVID 19, which can be seen as an opportunity to diversify the offer, create new segments and discover new inbound markets.

Keywords: Tourism Area Life Cycle · Tourism Development Index · Sal Island

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1 Introduction

Tourism today represents a highly competitive sector and has been assumed as an alternative or even as the main driver of development for countries and localities, whose dynamism and complexity permeate other crosscutting segments, corroborating its potential for profitability and sustainability. However, when these countries have integrated tourism products and a defined geographical area, establishing themselves as a tourist destination, they end up facing competitors for the same source markets.

However, what is “tourism”? There are several definitions and ideas on tourism however, according to Balanzá and Nadal [1], a consensus has not been reached. Cooper et al. [2] indicate that tourism is “a multidimensional and multifaceted activity, which has contact with many different lives and economic and social activities”, therefore, “the discussions on the concept of tourism are intrinsically related to the context, […] and they can cover tourists, or what tourists do, or the agents that serve them, and so on” [p. 4].

The World Tourism Organization sees this sector of economic development as a rapidly growing industry worldwide that expands businesses and creates new products, and as a tool for poverty reduction in the least developed countries. Therefore, it is vital for sustainable development. Looking at the data, globally in the last two years the flow of tourists has been gaining another, with a 7% increase in 2017 (the largest increase since 2010) and another 5% increase in 2018 [3, 4]. This translated into a sharp increase in exports generated by tourism, which reached 1.6 trillion dollars in 2017 and more than 1.7 trillion in 2018, converting tourism in one of the most important export sectors in the world. In addition to the $1.6 billion in revenue received by destinations, international tourism generated another $256 billion in international passenger transportation by non-residents. One thing is certain, tourism reaches everyone this is done regardless of the level of development of the countries, according to Zaei and Zaei [5].

Returning to the question of competitiveness, according to Coelho and Lourenço [6] the conquest of source markets depends, on the ability of destinations to differentiate themselves from their competitors, both in terms of basic resources and strategic performance. However, the strategies have been based on input from technicians and stakeholders, and often without regard to the importance of the life cycle of the tourist destination. It should be noted that Coelho and Butler [7] affirm that for each phase of the cycle there is a different strategy.

In this context, the main objective of this research is to verify in which phase the Island of Sal and Cape Verde were at an individual and competitive level during the period 2010–2018, considering the Tourism Development Index (TDI).

This article is structured after the present introduction, as follows. Section 2, presents a brief overview of tourism on the Island. The third section the concepts of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) and the Tourism Development Index (TDI) will be presented, that is, the methodology that supports the present investigation will be presented. The analysis of the results obtained is carried out in Sect. 4, where the life cycle is identified both by the Butler model [8] and by the [6] approach. Finally, the conclusions, summarizing the essential elements of the study.
2 Overview of Tourism in the Island of Sal

The island has been growing demographically at an average annual growth rate of 4,5% and currently has a resident population of at least 38,243 inhabitants [9, 10], with approximately 6,8% of the population residing in Cape Verde.

Its economy is markedly touristy with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 151,752,60 euros\(^1\) with a predominance of the tertiary sector that generates 2/3 of the island’s wealth, with a GDP/per capita of 4,496,69 euros. Transport and storage are the main economic activity with 23,6% of the island’s wealth, determined mainly by the airport. The Island continues to grow up with 30 tourist establishments, 10,6% of the total existing in the country and an accommodation capacity of 13,451 guests and 343,211 guests (47,9%) and 2,519,487 overnight stays in 2017.

Of visitors arriving in the Island of Sal as a tourist destination, those from the United Kingdom are the most frequent (86,731) followed by Belgium and the Netherlands (39,392) and Germany (29,470).

There are 5,068 people employed by hotel establishments, of which 55% are Cape Verdians and 52% women. In terms of the number of rooms and beds, the Island of Sal is one of the islands with the highest expression (45,7% and 44,7%) at the national level [9, 11].

Considering the Island of Sal tourist potential, different types of tourism can be developed from ‘sun and beach’ tourism (diving, windsurfing, surfing, kitesurfing, kite beaching, shark bay, fishing and sports); nature tourism (hiking, cycling, quads, the tour of the island), cultural tourism (Museum of Sal, handicrafts, Palmeira town, Pedra de Lume village, gastronomy) and health tourism (massage/spa, mud baths, baths salt, specialized health services). Santa Maria beach with 3 km of white sands was named by TripAdvisor as one of the 25 most beautiful beaches in the world and one of the seven wonders of Cape Verde.

3 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Tourism Area Life Cycle Approach

The model of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) destination mostly used to describe the development of tourism over time, according to [12] is that of Butler [8], with five phases of the cycle (see Fig. 1). With this model, decision-makers depend on knowledge of the destination life cycle phase to determine their strategic options [8]. However, this model has some limitations identified by [13]. For example, concerning to the indicators that determine when the change in phase occurs, since it often checks different elements in different phases of the cycle, that is, it does not limit a single phase. The description of the model phases is as follows:

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\(^1\) Monetary value converted into euros using the Banco de Portugal currency converter at www.bportugal.pt on 05/22/2020.
1. **Exploration**: In this phase, small groups of tourists appear in destinations and rarely stay in facilities for the local population. The social, economic and environmental impacts do not change.

2. **Involvement**: This phase is characterized by the regular increase in visitors to the destination and the perception of the community as a business opportunity. The community begins to realize the benefits and they begin to create exclusive accommodations for visitors. The focus of the population and the visitors becomes more formal and some sectors of the community are beginning to improve. Starts a process of advertising and marketing about the destination, as well as some organization.

3. **Development**: This is the pre-consolidation phase, the promotion of the destination intensifies, the number of tourists tends to be equal to or greater than that of the population, and the community begins to perceive some changes and social, economic and environmental impacts, both positive and negative. More tourist infrastructures are created in terms of the tourist environment, as well as the exploration of cultural and natural attractions. Foreign investment in the community increases.

4. **Consolidation**: Tourism becomes the main responsible for the economic development of the destination. The promotion of the destination takes on other dimensions and aims to increase the average stay of tourists diversify and conquer new markets.

5. **Stagnation**: At this stage, the destination has already reached or exceeded its maximum tourist capacity. It faces environmental, social and economic problems. Destination promotions carried out in other phases made it successful as a destination, but the peculiarities that characterized it cease to be so attractive. At this stage, two things can happen:
5.1. **Decline:** In this stagnation phase, the destination begins to move towards the starting point, the exploratory phase, as it no longer has the ability to compete with other destinations, the number of tourists will drastically decrease and visits will become rarer. Tourist infrastructures lose their utility and the community tends to acquire them at low cost.

5.2. **Rejuvenation:** At this stage of stagnation, the destination bets on the exploration of other natural and cultural attractions, which until then had been little or nothing used. It is a phase of reinventing yourself with what is original in the destination.

### 3.2 Tourism Development Index

The TALC model not only established the stages through which a tourism destination passes, but it also has the limitation of not being able to distinguish when it happens. To solve this problem, [7] proposed a tool called Tourism Development Index (TDI), which would allow to deterministically quantifying the phases of the life cycle of a destination. Besides, the main concern shown in the index is to highlight a certain level of well-being of the local population as a result of tourism. This index is calculated according to the expression given by:

\[
TDI_{jt} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( \frac{D_{ijt}}{D_{ijTt}} \right) \times \left( \frac{P_{jt}}{P_{jT}} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_{jt}}{T_{jT}} \right)
\]

where,

- \(D_{ijt}\)—are the values of the variables \((i)\) in relation to the tourist conditions of the attractions and the fixation of the destination \((j)\) in a certain period of time \((t)\),
- \(P_{jt}\)—the resident population of the destination \((j)\) in a determined period of time \((t)\),
- \(T_{jt}\)—number of tourists in the destination \((j)\) in a determined period of time \((t)\),
- \(D_{ijTt}\)—is the sum of the values of the variables \((i)\) in relation to the tourist conditions of the attractions and the fixation of the destination \((j)\) in a certain period of time \((t)\),
- \(P_{jT}\)—the sum of the population of all destinations \((j)\) in a certain period of time \((t)\),
- \(T_{jT}\)—the sum of the number of tourists in all destinations \((j)\) in a certain period of time \((t)\).

Coelho [14] presents a demonstration of the index through what he calls the TDI calculation matrix (see Table 1) with \(w\) destinations and \(n\) destination variables.

Using destination 1 \((j = 1)\) for a given period of time \((t = 0)\) as an example, demonstrate expression (1) as follows:

\[
TDI_{t=0} = \frac{1}{n} \left( \sum \frac{D_{11}/P_{1j}}{\sum P_{j0}} + \sum \frac{D_{21}/P_{1j}}{\sum P_{j0}} + \cdots + \sum \frac{D_{n1}/P_{1j}}{\sum P_{j0}} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_{1j}}{\sum T_{j0}} \right)
\]
Rewriting expression (2),

$$TDI_{t=0} = \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{D_{11} \times \sum P_{j0}}{\sum D_{1j0} \times P_1} + \frac{D_{21} \times \sum P_{j0}}{\sum D_{2j0} \times P_1} + \cdots + \frac{D_{n1} \times \sum P_{j0}}{\sum D_{nj0} \times P_1} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_1}{\sum T_{j0}} \right)$$

(3a)

$$TDI_{t=0} = \frac{1}{n} \left( \frac{D_{11}}{\sum D_{1j0}} + \frac{D_{21}}{\sum D_{2j0}} + \cdots + \frac{D_{n1}}{\sum D_{nj0}} \right) \times \left( \frac{\sum P_{j0}}{P_1} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_1}{\sum T_{j0}} \right)$$

(3b)

This results in expression (1).

The environmental, economic and sociocultural variables, related to the tourist conditions of attraction and fixation, are protected area, historical heritage, four and five-star hotels, animation activities, medical services, urban planning, security, accessibility, human resources training, information and communication, and urbanization plans. See the original TDI construction in [6, p. 24]. For a ‘sun and beach’ destination (as is the case of the Island of Sal), variables such as the quantity/quality of the beaches and other, provided they have a direct relationship with well-being [6]. This proposal led to the quantification of the Life Cycle for a competitive context, as shown in Table 2. Due to the diversity of the variables that constitute the factor **Conditions of attraction and tourist fixation**, the difficulty in obtaining the data in due time and what it is understood as goods and services available in a given region, Coelho and Lourenço [6] proposed the replacement of the set of variables related to that factor by the nominal variable of GDP. This represents a set of goods and services produced or available in a given region in a certain period, without considering transfers received or sent abroad. To carry out this substitution, [6] defined some assumptions and hypotheses that can be found in [6, p. 27–29]. All the hypotheses were verified and, because of this new approach, the TDI is given by the expression (4), and the variable GDP is now considered free of tourist income ($GDP^*$) and a new variable—Tourist Income ($TI$):

$$TDI_{jt} = \frac{1}{2} \left[ \left( \frac{GDP_{jt}^*}{GDP_{Tr}} \right) + \frac{TI_{jt}}{TI_{Tt}} \right] \times \left( \frac{P_{jt}}{P_{Tt}} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_{jt}}{T_{Tt}} \right)$$

(4)
In addition, the new construction of the TDI that allows improving the model of the Life Cycle of a tourist destination (TALC) can be viewed in [6, p. 30]. Before continuing with this study, three hypotheses were put forward due to different opinions on the state of tourism on the Island of Sal and, consequently, in Cape Verde. Therefore, the following hypotheses were established to analyse the period 2010–2018: (1) the relative positioning and the stage of the life cycle of the Island of Sal in terms of competitiveness concerning other destinations with the same market as ‘sun and beach’ and looking for the same emission markets, in this case, the European market; (2) which of the destinations to use for the analysis of competitiveness through the TDI: Cape Verde or Island of Sal; (3) the stage of the tourist life cycle the Island of Sal at an individual level and whether one should consider the island as a tourist brand or the country in which it is inserted. To find the answers to the hypotheses proposed in this study, a bibliographic search was carried out referring to the Island of Sal and the country where it is inserted (Cape Verde), of the Life Cycle model of a tourist destination proposed by [8] as TDI proposed by [6, 7]. The analysis of the TALC of the Island of Sal and its TDI were performed in comparison with countries with the same type of tourism: ‘sun and beach’. The chosen countries were: Canary Islands, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Dominican Republic, since they are also those with a short distance in relation to the European market. For the analyses, data from the years 2010 and 2018 for each of the factors present in formula (4) were used, to make the appropriate comparisons in terms of competitiveness. The variables ‘GDP’, ‘Resident population’, ‘Tourist income’ and ‘Tourists’ were considered, as previously defined. To calculate the relative position of each country in its competitive context for the market considered ‘sun and beach’, Microsoft Excel was used. The data to support the calculations was obtained from governmental and non-governmental sources. The monetary values collected at the sources were in euros, dollars, dirhams and escudos, all of which were converted into euros using the Bank of Portugal’s currency converter at www.bportugal.pt. The same calculations made for the Island of Sal were made for Cape Verde, to verify the importance of the island and the archipelago.

Table 2. Different values of Tourism Development Index (TDI) corresponding to different angles of the stages of the life cycle (Source: [6, p. 23]).

| Life Cycle Phases | TDI values | Angle of the tangent line at the point of phase change |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Exploration       | 0 < TDI < 0, 194 | 0° < α < 11° |
| Involvement       | 0, 194 ≤ TDI < 0, 577 | 11° ≤ α < 30° |
| Development       | 0, 577 ≤ TDI < 1, 401 | 30° ≤ α < 90° |
| Consolidation     | 1, 401 < TDI < 3, 019 | 30° ≤ α < 45° |
| Stagnation        | TDI > 3, 019 | 0° ≤ α < 11° |

In addition, the new construction of the TDI that allows improving the model of the Life Cycle of a tourist destination (TALC) can be viewed in [6, p. 30].
4 Presentation and Analysis of Results

According to [15], the Island of Sal as a tourist destination, and within the ‘sun and beach’ segment, is in the third phase of its life cycle, that is, in a development phase. Due to the following characteristic reasons for this phase: in high seasons, the number of tourists is greater than the population; there is already pressure on the environment, basic and urban infrastructure; foreign investors are present on the island; the number of offers is increasing and the product is beginning to diversify and better living conditions for the population.

Regarding the Life Cycle model proposed by [8], we found that Cape Verde’s Tourist Life Cycle in 2010 was in the exploration phase. The Strategic Plan for Tourism Development begins the process of promoting Cape Verde as a tourism brand and in 2018 in the Development phase (the number of tourists is greater than the country’s population; large hotel chains, mainly on the island of Sal; there is already a certain pressure on the environment and basic infrastructure, especially on the more touristic islands of Sal and Boa Vista; the living standards of Cape Verdeans improve mainly on these two islands). Regarding the Island of Sal, in 2010 it was in the Development phase, the same phase as in 2018, for the reasons described previously (see Fig. 2).

![Fig. 2. Life cycle phase of Cape Verde (CV) and the Island of Sal tourist destination 2010 and 2018 (Source: Own elaboration).](image)

4.1 Tourism Development Index Applied to Cape Verde

With the values obtained in 2010, the Canary Islands led the market with a TDI of 0.9576, that corresponds to the development phase. Cape Verde (0.0044) was already in the exploration phase, as was the Dominican Republic (0.1796). Tunisia (0.2483) and Morocco (0.2188) were in the engagement phase. In relation to 2018, Cape Verde has a TDI of 0.0002, revealing a loss of position within its phase and in a worse competitive situation; The Dominican Republic also loses position (0.0099); and Tunisia (0.5493) showing an improvement in its relative position, being the destination that grew the most in 2018, remaining in the same phase despite its growth of around
The relative positioning of the remaining destinations has changed: the Canary Islands have a TDI of 0.0265, revealing a change from the development phase to the exploration phase; Morocco (0.0061), revealing also a negative change, moving from the involvement phase to the exploration phase, translating into the possibility of a decline, despite having increased the number of tourists by 32%.

### 4.2 Tourism Development Index Applied to the Island of Sal

With the values obtained in Table 3, one can see that in 2010 the Canary Islands led the market for ‘sun and beach’ with a TDI of 0.9619, standing in the range 0.577–1.401 that corresponds to the development phase. The Island of Sal (0.0039) was in the exploration phase, as well as the Dominican Republic (0.1798). Morocco (0.2191) and Tunisia (0.2486) were in the engagement phase. In relation to 2018, relative positions remained for three destinations: Island of Sal (0.0002), revealing a loss of position within its phase and in a worse competitive situation; Tunisia improves its position (0.5467), being the destination that grew the most in 2018, maintaining the same phase despite its growth around 120%; Dominican Republic (0.0099) also loses position. The Canary Islands (0.0265) has a change from the development phase to the exploration phase; Morocco (0.0061) has a negative change, moving from the involvement phase to the exploration phase, translating into the possibility of a decline.

#### Table 3. Determination of TDI (year 2010 and 2018) – Island of Sal (Source: Own elaboration).

| Destinations      | Year | Net GDP (€) | Tourist recipe (€) | Population (no.) | Tourists (no.) | TDI  |
|-------------------|------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|------|
| Island of Sal     | 2010 | 143717      | 26013              | 25779            | 154115        | 0.0039 |
|                   | 2018 | 197197      | 196445             | 38243            | 397020        | 0.0002 |
| Canary Islands    | 2010 | 40811000    | 8028000            | 2064876          | 10649727      | 0.9619 |
|                   | 2018 | 45720000    | 12895000           | 2207225          | 15559791      | 0.0265 |
| Dominican Republic| 2010 | 41683000    | 3859063514         | 9479000          | 4125000       | 0.1798 |
|                   | 2018 | 72589000    | 6954102921         | 102660000        | 65000000      | 0.0099 |
| Morocco           | 2010 | 70305000    | 7580899397         | 32182000         | 9288000       | 0.2191 |
|                   | 2018 | 100414000   | 6616376776         | 123000000        | 0.0061        |
| Tunisia           | 2010 | 33231000    | 3223922114         | 10640000         | 7828000       | 0.2486 |
|                   | 2018 | 33760000    | 1261010663         | 11565204         | 140000000     | 0.5467 |
| Total             | 2010 | 26545395    | 14844581804        | 59296672         | 1434738811    | 1.6134 |
|                   | 2018 | 260545395   | 14844581805        | 59296672         | 1434738811    | 0.5893 |
5 Conclusion

The competitive situation, considering similar destinations, of Cape Verde and the Island of Sal is the same, which shows that they remained in the exploration phase for eight years (2010–2018). Given their relative loss of position, it is an indication that the two destinations are in a stagnant phase. In this competitive space ("sun and beach" market) the competitors of the Island of Sal/Cape Verde have not evolved in terms of tourism, except for Tunisia, which despite having grown more than 100%, did not change in relative terms which indicates a certain stagnation. The destination of the Dominican Republic is stagnant, and the destinations of Morocco and the Canary Islands are in decline.

For Cape Verde and the Island of Sal to enter the exploration phase, in this market, their TDI is expected to grow 43% and 48% respectively, considering that their competitors improve little during the low period revision.

In global terms, there is a certain reduction in inequalities in this market, since the total TDI went from 1,6133 in 2010 to 0,5893 in 2018, indicating that the Island of Sal tends to improve in terms of competitiveness. In that sense, the island got closer to developing destinations, albeit in a minor way. The same is true of Cape Verde.

A limitation of these type of studies is related to the availability of the data. On the one hand, its quality remains questionable, since different institutions work with different collection criteria. On the other hand, the unavailability of these certain data and the need to resort to unofficial sources, making it difficult to compare destinations.

Other competing destinations can be used in other studies and for other inbound markets, and it is advisable to apply the TDI of expression (1) using the set of variables that refer to the factor “Tourist conditions”.

Since it is easier to obtain data for Cape Verde and because the calculation of the TDI of both destinations leads to the same phase of the life cycle, one can be recommended in some cases to use data from Cape Verde to analyse the Island of Sal, and this can be understood as the tourist brand of Cape Verde.

Currently, the Island of Sal is amid a health crisis in the context of the pandemic COVID 19, significantly impacting tourist demand. This disturbance to tourism caught the destination unprepared, so it is necessary to include in planning strategies the question of developing models and forecasting methods that can integrate these unexpected events, to improve competitiveness. Furthermore, it is a time that the Island of Sal (and Cape Verde) has the opportunity to be more creative and innovative to diversify the offer, create new segments and discover new inbound markets, especially if the European market remains suspended by this or other crises.

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