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**Evaluating the role of national culture on tourist perceptions:
an empirical survey.**

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1. Introduction

In tourism industry, the analysis of consumer perceptions is a key factor useful to manage and control the effects of collective marketing programs planned in tourist destination (TD) and, therefore, to improve its competitiveness (Novelli, Schmitz, Spencer, 2006). In so-called community-type TD (Martini, 2005), destination management is based on communal efforts for coordinating local tourism business players - facilities, transportation, hospitality, entertainment, etc. - to create a distinctive value proposition for the tourists. Hence, collaborative management becomes a relevant method of decision-making and strategy-design processes in destination marketing activities (Wang, Fesenmaier, 2007; Erkus-Öztürk, Eraydin, 2010). In this perspective, destination image is one of the most important issues to manage in collective marketing efforts aimed to drive tourists' destination choice (Echtner, Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu, Mc Cleary, 1999; Gallarza, Saura, Garcia, 2002). Several researchers have illustrated that destination image and tourist's purchase decisions are positively correlated (Mayo and Jarvis 1981, Woodside and Lysonski 1989). In particular, Woodside and Lysonski (1989) set out a conceptual framework studying in depth the relationships among intentions to visit, destination awareness and destination cognitive associations. Moreover, destination image results a critical dimension in perception of tourist satisfaction (Pizam, Neumann, Reichel, 1978; Kozak, Rimmington, 2000; Chi, Qu, 2008), depending on a comparison of his expectation about the destination or a previously held destination image and his perceived performance of the destination (Chon, 1989). Chi and Qu (2008) examined the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among destination image, tourist attribute and overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty.

In the viewpoint of this study, the analysis of cultural values could represent a critical issue in destination marketing research, as relevant characteristics that influences traveller behaviour and interaction with destination residents and/or tourism staff (Kang and Moscardo, 2006). The majority of the study focused on the influence of national culture in tourist behaviour (Kang and Moscardo, 2006; Kim and McKercher, 2011; Manrai and Manrai, 2011) in relation with information search (Money and Crotts, 2003; Litvin et al., 2004), decision making (Correia et al., 2011), customer satisfaction (Crotts and Erdmann, 2000; Turner et al., 2001; Tsang and Ap,2007) and perceptions (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006). Coherently with these assumptions, the aim of the paper is to explore in depth the influence of cultural values on tourist perceptions, using Hofstede's cultural dimensions (2001). The objective is to analyze its influence on destination image, tourist satisfaction and behavioural intention. We study the tourist perceptions in a specific case of travellers that participate in a mega event planned in a host destination: America's Cup World Series organised in Naples in April 2012. Mega sport events with international appeal provide long term economic impacts to the host community (Jones, 2001) promoting the host country's culture and traditions (Kim, Morrison, 2005).

The paper has the following structure: first, there is a literature review on destination management and cross-cultural research in tourism, analyzing the role of tourist perceptions in marketing activities; second, it's presented the empirical study exploring the influence of cultural dimensions on travellers perception in the case of America's Cup World Series Naples 2012; third, the findings of the empirical research are discussed considering as well the limits and the future opportunities to improve the study.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Destination management, marketing activities and tourist perception

Destination management (Laws, 1995; Go, Govers, 2000; Lee, King, 2009) can be considered a set of strategies aimed to design, manage and control an integrated place value proposition co-created by mutual efforts of several tourism business players. In the case of so-called "community-type destination" (Martini, 2005), place management is based on mix of tourist resources - such as attractions, facilities, transportation, hospitality, entertainment, etc. - to build together a destination marketing plan for realizing common goals (Buhalis, 2000; Vernon et al., 2005). From an internal perspective, these processes allow to identify the place-specific resources and tourism services available in a specific geographical context, satisfying economic needs of local stakeholders and building synergies among these stakeholders coherently with territorial vocation (Martini, 2005). From the external perspective, instead, destination marketing strategies would be able to improve destination awareness and image in the tourists' mind, building a distinctive destination identity. In order to optimize these collective marketing aims, Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005) underlined the role of destination branding processes, defined as the set of "activities that serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection among the visitors and all internal stakeholders of the place". In fact, the destination branding consists of managerial processes that play a role about the two aforesaid perspectives (Risitano, 2006): first, they are business activities aimed to align the marketing actions of several tourism stakeholders in the area (internal perspective); second, they support the cognitive connection between tourist perceptions and destination brand promise (external perspective). Several researchers studied the relationships among tourist behaviours and perceptions (e.g. destination image, intent to come back, tourist satisfaction, destination personality, destination brand awareness, etc.) to examine the destination choice processes. In this paper, we would analyze in depth three typologies of tourist perception: destination image, tourist satisfaction and future intentional behaviour.

Crompton (1979) defines destination image as an individual's mental representation of beliefs, ideas, feelings and overall perception of a particular destination. It can influence tourist behaviour in destination choice and influences the after-decision-making behaviours including participation

(on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and behavioural intentions (intent to return and intent to recommend) (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Bigne et al., 2001; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 1993; Lee et al., 2005; Mansfeld, 1992; Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) suggest that the process of destination image is influenced from a much wider spectrum of information, both marketing and no-marketing. Consequently there is a link between a destination's tourist image and its national image (Kotler, 1987). The latter reflects historical, political, economic and social factors. Several studies (Lawson, Band-Bovy, 1977; Baloglu, McCleary, 1999; Bigne, Sanchez, 2001; Moon, Kim, Lee, 2011) propose a general theoretical model of image-formation based on factors that differentiates between stimulus factors (e.g. information sources, previous experience, and distribution) and personal factors (e.g. psychological and social). These comprise multidimensional constructs that can be divided into two primary dimensions: cognitive and affective. The cognitive component can be interpreted as beliefs and knowledge about the physical attributes of a destination, while the affective component refers to the appraisal of the affective quality of feelings towards the attributes and the surrounding environments (Hosany, Ekinci, Uysal, 2006).

Coherently with this approach, Beerlin and Martin (2004), proposed a model in which destination image perception is influenced by information sources and personal factors. From a cognitive point of view, destination image is structured on a set of attributes that correspond to the resources/attractions of a TD: natural resources, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, tourist leisure and recreation culture, history and art, political and economic factors, natural environment, social environment, atmosphere of the place.

More specifically, the tangible and intangible factors defined in Beerlin and Martin's model (2004) can measure destination image but also can influence the level of tourist satisfaction (Alegre, Garau, 2010; Moon, Kim, Lee, Connaughton, 2011; Xia, Jie, Chaolin, Fend, 2009; Kim, Morrison, 2005), and tourist's intentional behaviour (Bigné, Sanchez, 2001; Chen, Tsai, 2007; Kaplanidou, 2009). According to Hosany and Prayag (2011), destination image influences behavioural intentions not only in the decision-making process but also in after-decision-making behaviours of tourists directly (intent to return) and indirectly (intent to recommend). In this perspective, the choice of host sport events represents a primary goal to promote a destination's positive image among actual and potential tourists (Chalip, 2003; Moon, Kim, Lee, Connaughton, 2011). In these cases, event image can affect destination image. Several studies suggest that event quality is not only very important for the success of the event itself, but also in developing a positive destination image (Crompton, 2003). Consequently, there is a strong relationship between event image and destination image (Ritchie, Smith 1991). In the case of a mega sport event it is interesting to highlight the impact of relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and tourist behaviour related to tourists' different cultural characteristics. Hofstede (2001) and Kaplanidou (2009) suggest that people from different countries have different destination's perceptions, levels of satisfactions and intentional behaviours.

2.1.1 The role of mega sport event in tourism industry

In tourism literature, the event management has been studied analyzing critical factors, such as: a. the relationships between event and tourism industry (Roche, 2000); b. the determinants that influence destination image (Kaplanidou, Vogt, 2007; Moon, Kim, Lee, 2011); c. the importance of the stakeholder's network approach to create value in the event planning (Stokes, 2006). According to Getz (1997), we can classify tourism events for temporal dimension (periodic and one-time) and a spatial dimension (local, regional, international), studying for every typologies of events: a. the level of tourist demand; b. the level of value created, specifying the main measures of this value (i.e. growth potential, market share, quality, image enhancement, community support, environmental value, economic benefits, sustainability, appropriateness). Coherently, Getz (1997, 2008) defined an event portfolio pyramid, identifying five kinds of events: 1. occasional mega

events (with high tourist demand and high value); 2. periodic hallmark events (with high tourist demand and high value); 3. national and regional events (with medium tourist demand and medium value); 4. periodic event and 5. one-time local events (with low demand and low value).

In recent years, the strategic role of mega event has significantly grown as these events have been considered as potential economic occasion for place development (e.g. growth of destination awareness, repositioning of destination image, increase of tourism demand, etc.). Mega events become an opportunity for host destination not only for the direct economic benefits, but also for the indirect benefits resulting from the media coverage (Ritchie, 1991; Roche, 2000; Lee, Taylor, 2005). Mega sport events with international appeal - such as Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, EXPO, America's Cup, etc. - promote the host country's culture, attractions and traditions (Kim, Morrison, 2005) providing short and medium-long term economic impacts to the community (McLeod, Soutar, 1993; Jones, 2001; Lee, Taylor, 2005), such as improving destination image and positioning in the TD competitiveness.

2.2 Cross-cultural research in the tourism studies

Cross-cultural research in tourism is receiving increasing attention from academics (Hudson, Ritchie, 2001). Several studies has then examined cross cultural differences in various facet of tourism such as information search (Money, Crotts, 2003; Litvin et al., 2004), traveler behaviour (Pizam, Sussmann, 1995; Kim, McKercher, 2011) and interaction with destination residents and/or tourism staff (Kang, Moscardo, 2006), satisfaction and complaining behaviour (Turner et al., 2001; Crotts, Erdmann, 2000; Tsang, Ap, 2007), tourist decision making (Correia et al., 2006) and tourist perceptions (Reisinger, Mavondo, 2006).

Culture has been defined in many ways. The foremost definition provided by Hofstede (1984) sees the culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another (Hofstede, 1984). Culture consists of "patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts" (Kroeber, Kluckhohn, 1952: 181).

Previous researches considered the framework developed by Hofstede (1980, 1991) one of the most relevant in the field of tourism cross-cultural research (Correia et al., 2011).

This framework envisage that cultural values that distinguish countries from each other are grouped into four clusters, called dimensions of national culture (Hofstede, 2004):

- Power Distance (PD): it expresses the tolerance of unequal distribution of power;
- Individualism/Collectivism (IDV): it refers to the degree of individuals to take care of themselves or to feel a part of a group and take care of its members.
- Masculinity/Femininity (MAS): it is related to individuals' concern of achievement, assertiveness, competition. On the other side, femininity into society is related to the focus of life's quality and interpersonal cooperation;
- Uncertainty Avoidance (UA): it refers to the degree to which members of society tolerate the risk, uncertainty and ambiguity.

Other two dimensions were been added in the last year, even if their value are not available for every country. These cultural dimensions are: a. Long-Term Orientation, based on Confucian dynamism that can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue; b. Indulgence/Restraint, that is related to the degree to accept free gratification and life amusement, rather than the requirement of social norms to gratification.

Tourism and cross-cultural research has tried to identify how each Hofstede's cultural dimensions are able to influence tourist behaviours and perceptions. In this perspective, Manrai and Manrai (2011) realized a useful review of the literature of the study that analyzed the effect of national cultural differences on tourist behaviours. Authors distinguished travelers' behaviour in three stage - before travel, during travel and after travel - in order to identify the effect of different cultural

dimensions during each stage. In particular, the so-called “social interaction driven (SID) travel behaviours” drive the evaluation of travel experiences in after travel stage. Coherently with the perspective of this paper, these dimensions include tourist perceptions such as: destination evaluation, satisfaction, image, price/quality evaluation and repeat purchase/revisit intention. Moreover, Manrai and Manrai (2011) classified other studies related to before and during travel behaviours, highlighting the influence of Individualism/Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance on social interaction and commercial transaction (Pizman, Sussman, 1995), duration, itinerary and travel frequency (Crotts, Litvin, 2003).

According to Hofstede’ framework, Hsu and Kang (2003) investigated the differences in service quality perception, destination image, satisfaction and revisit intention using the level of Individualism/Collectivism and Power Distance comparing Asian and western tourists. Authors envisaged that western tourists showed a greater destination image and satisfaction than Asian one, even if the last had a favorable response intentions. This difference into response can be argued analyzing the different rate of Power Distance and Individualism/Collectivism of the two macro-regions. Collectivism and high Power Distance are common Asian cultures. These cultural dimensions can explain the rate of dissatisfaction of Eastern tourists, that have evaluated their travel experience rather negatively. Conversely, they provided a favorable answer to intention to revisit’s questions.

Probably such response will be consistent with the notion of “continuity” in Asiatic value system, and then linked to Confucian dynamism dimension (the fifth one). The impact of Individualism on tourist perceptions is also reconnected to tourist self image. In fact, tourists from individualistic countries may have a need to be perceived as individualists (Prebensen, Larsen, Abelsen, 2003) and tourist satisfaction will be higher when there was congruity between tourist’s Self-Image and Destination-Image (Litvin, Kar, 2004).

Crotts and Erdmann (2000) rather examined the presence of different tourist price/quality evaluation in Masculine society. They found out that respondents from Masculine nations negatively evaluated prices and overall travel service quality. Travelers also declared the unfavorable loyalty to chosen airline, without any intention to repeat their experience. In a following study, Crotts and Litvin (2003) visualized that Masculine traits may result in higher levels of expectations and/or stricter standards of evaluations.

The rate of Uncertainty Avoidance of a culture does not influence all the tourist perceptions selected in this study. Usually this cultural dimension exerts its pressure on travel motivation, planning arrangement, preferences and travel mode, food and activity chosen (Pizman, Sussman, 1995; Crotts, Litvin, 2003; Crotts, 2004; Litvin et al., 2004). Definitely destination image and travel satisfaction are indirectly related to individuals’ rate of Uncertainty Avoidance. This dimension exercises a stronger pressure on intention to revisit their current TD, in which tourists have already had experience and they could control the unexpected.

3 Empirical research

3.1 Research design, methodology and hypothesis

Coherently with theoretical assumptions, in this paper we delineate an empirical survey to explore in depth the influence of cultural values on tourist perceptions. The research design is based on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (2001) to analyze its influence on destination image, tourist satisfaction and behavioural intention. We study the tourist perceptions in a specific case of travellers that participate on a mega event planned in an host destination: America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) planned at Naples in April 2012. Analyzing the tourist perceptions, we defined tourist measures for each constructs as follows: a. destination image was based on eight perceptive items related to place-specific resources, hygienic factors and tourism services; b. tourist satisfaction was measured on value perception related to six items (regatta-related and public

village-related); c. behaviour intention was based on four items, analyzing both intent to return and intent to recommend at level of TD and ACWS event 2013.

We carried out an empirical survey through in-depth interviews on international tourists (n=125). A questionnaire with open and closed answers - we used a five-point Likert scale (1 = “extremely disagree,” and 5 = “extremely agree”) to measure tourist perceptions - was submitted to a casual sample of tourists, inviting to evaluate their experiences in the event ACSW Naples 2012. The interviews were conducted during the event in front of the regatta racing area (11-15 April 2012). More in depth, in the empirical study we verified the following research hypotheses:

HP1. Power Distance influences negatively Destination Image (HP.1a) and Event Satisfaction (HP.1b), and positively Behavioural Intention (HP.1c).

HP2. Individualism dimension is related positively to Destination Image (HP.2a) and Event Satisfaction (HP.2b), negatively to Behavioural Intention (HP.2c).

HP3. Masculinity influences positively Destination Image (HP.3a) and Event Satisfaction (HP.3b), negatively Behavioural Intention (HP.3c).

HP4. Uncertainty Avoidance is related positively to Behavioural Intention.

3.2 Data sample and measures analysis

Descriptive data of the sample are given in Table 1. In the survey were collected 125 interviews, but final sample comprises 113 respondents, that represents 19 different nationalities.

The sample is mainly composed of men (56%) around 25 and 54 years (71%). Sport event has been the main reason of travel for the interviewed tourists (45%), also interested into cultural heritage of the area (37%). Around 41% of the tourist spent less than 100 Euro per day. This value is also confirmed by the high number of people that slept at local B&B or at friends’ house. They also booked online some tourism services (67% of the sample).

Table 1 - Sample characteristics

Variable	%	Variable	%
<i>Gender</i>		<i>Why did you come in Naples?</i>	
Male	56%	Cultural Tourism	37%
Female	44%	Naturalistic Tourism	9%
		Wellness & body care	3%
<i>Age</i>		Business	6%
		Sport-event	45%
18-25	11%	<i>Where did you sleep?</i>	
25-34	30%	Hotel	9%
35-44	21%	B&B	41%
45-54	20%	Room Rental	9%
55-64	16%	Yatch	6%
>65	3%	Friends' house	36%
<i>Expenditure (€ per day)</i>		<i>Where did you reserve it?</i>	
<100	41%	DIY	83%
101-150	27%	Travel agency	15%
151-200	13%	Sailing association	2%
201-300	15%	<i>On-line?</i>	
301-400	2%	Yes	67%
>400	3%	No	33%

3.2.1 Tourist perception measures

Our analysis of tourist perception was based on three different constructs: destination image, tourist satisfaction and intentional behaviour. For each of these dimensions, we identified several items to evaluate the tourist perception. More in depth, destination image was based on eight perceptive items related to: place-specific resources and hygienic factors (4 items); tourism services (4 items). Instead, tourist satisfaction was measured on value perception related to: regatta (2 items) and public village (4 items). Finally, behaviour intention was based on intent to return (2 items) and intent to recommend (2 items). As shown in Table 2, the high value of Cronbach's alpha up to 0,50 confirmed the presumed dimensionality of the pre-specified measures.

Table 2 – Dimensionality of tourist perception measures

Index Label	No. of Items	Cronbach alpha
<i>Destination Image</i>		
-Place-specific resources and hygienic factors	4	0,527
-Tourist services	4	0,503
<i>Behavioural Intention</i>		
-Intent to return	2	0,674
-Intent to recommend	2	0,558
<i>Event Satisfaction</i>		
-Regatta-related factors	2	0,575
-Village-related factors	4	0,743

3.2.2 Culture dimensions of Hofstede's model

Cross-national differences in tourist behaviour has been analyzed recurring to Hofstede's four cultural dimensions. On the first step of this study, cultural national dimension was converted into dichotomy variable. It was assigned "0" to the countries that presented a value lower than the overall average of each Hofstede's cultural dimension evaluate about the 19 nationalities of tourists' sample; and "1" to the ones upon the overall average. Actually, converting cultural dimension into dummy variable (High/ Low Power Distance, High/low Individualism etc.) lack to take into account important difference into cultural dimension values.

Conversely, in order to develop the second step of the study, cultural dimensions has been considered in their absolute terms. Hofstede's score collected on *geerthofstede.com* has been used. In Table 3 are presented the descriptive statistics for cultural dimensions of countries that belong research sample.

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics of Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Cultural dimension	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev.
PDI	11	81	47,23	15,217
IDV	18	91	68,28	20,082
MAS	16	88	60,07	12,150
UA	23	112	65,39	18,674

3.3 Findings

The analysis outlined two main outcomes. In the first study, we verified the presence of effective difference of tourist perceptions employing an independent t-test on the different measures. A second study rather was developed a correlation analysis among cultural variables and tourist perceptions measures in order to test in deep the research hypothesis.

The first study consisted into verify the presence of effective difference of tourist perceptions employing an independent t-test on perceptive measures explained in the previous section. Test's results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Independent t-test

		t	df	Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Power Distance					
<i>Destination Image</i>					
Place-specific	Equal Variances Assumed	1,33	111,00	0,19	0,15
& Hygienic fct.	Equal Variances Not Assumed	1,33	109,45	0,19	0,15
Tourist services	Equal Variances Assumed	0,59	110,00	0,56	0,07
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,58	100,21	0,56	0,07
<i>Behavioural Intention</i>					
Intent	Equal Variances Assumed	2,98	111,00	0,00**	0,71
to return	Equal Variances Not Assumed	2,99	110,49	0,00**	0,71
Intent to	Equal Variances Assumed	1,53	111,00	0,13	0,24
recommend	Equal Variances Not Assumed	1,54	110,12	0,13	0,24
<i>Event Satisfaction</i>					
Regatta-related	Equal Variances Assumed	0,35	107,00	0,73	0,05
factors	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,35	106,69	0,73	0,05
Village-related	Equal Variances Assumed	0,42	107,00	0,68	0,07
factors	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,42	106,33	0,68	0,07
Individualism/Collectivism					
<i>Destination Image</i>					
Place-specific	Equal Variances Assumed	0,23	111,00	0,82	0,03
& Hygienic fct.	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,23	91,27	0,82	0,03
Tourist services	Equal Variances Assumed	0,03	110,00	0,98	0,00
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,03	105,08	0,98	0,00
<i>Behavioural Intention</i>					
Intent	Equal Variances Assumed	0,31	111,00	0,76	0,08
to return	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,32	110,99	0,75	0,08
Intent to	Equal Variances Assumed	0,11	111,00	0,92	0,02
recommend	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,11	103,73	0,92	0,02
<i>Event Satisfaction</i>					
Regatta-related	Equal Variances Assumed	1,95	107,00	0,05*	0,29
factors	Equal Variances Not Assumed	1,88	83,87	0,06	0,29
Village-related	Equal Variances Assumed	-0,39	107,00	0,70	-0,06
factors	Equal Variances Not Assumed	-0,39	96,86	0,70	-0,06
Masculinity/Femininity					
<i>Destination Image</i>					
Place-specific	Equal Variances Assumed	0,50	111,00	0,62	0,06
& Hygienic fct.	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,48	67,38	0,64	0,06
Tourist services	Equal Variances Assumed	0,81	110,00	0,42	0,11
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,78	66,79	0,44	0,11
<i>Behavioural Intention</i>					
Intent	Equal Variances Assumed	1,58	111,00	0,12	0,41
to return	Equal Variances Not Assumed	1,58	76,41	0,12	0,41
Intent to	Equal Variances Assumed	2,04	111,00	0,04*	0,33
recommend	Equal Variances Not Assumed	1,85	59,43	0,06	0,33

<i>Event Satisfaction</i>					
Regatta-related factors	Equal Variances Assumed	2,70	107,00	0,00**	0,42
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	2,40	52,56	0,02*	0,42
Village-related factors	Equal Variances Assumed	0,24	107,00	0,81	0,04
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,24	65,15	0,81	0,04
Uncertainty Avoidance					
<i>Destination Image</i>					
Place-specific & Hygienic fct.	Equal Variances Assumed	0,98	111,00	0,33	0,11
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,98	109,95	0,33	0,11
Tourist services	Equal Variances Assumed	-0,07	110,00	0,94	-0,01
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	-0,07	100,80	0,94	-0,01
<i>Behavioural Intention</i>					
Intent to return	Equal Variances Assumed	3,18	111,00	0,00**	0,76
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	3,17	107,14	0,00**	0,76
Intent to recommend	Equal Variances Assumed	0,82	111,00	0,42	0,13
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,82	111,00	0,42	0,13
<i>Event Satisfaction</i>					
Regatta-related factors	Equal Variances Assumed	0,09	107,00	0,93	0,01
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,09	102,58	0,93	0,01
Village-related factors	Equal Variances Assumed	0,72	107,00	0,47	0,12
	Equal Variances Not Assumed	0,72	106,73	0,47	0,12

* p- value < .05 ** p-value <.01

Independent t-test shows that - in some cases - cultural variables explain tourist perception differences. In particular, Power Distance represents a critical dimension of tourist's Intent to Return ($t=2,98$; $p<0,01$). Also the presence of high level of Uncertainty Avoidance into society affect intentional behaviour index of Intent to Return ($t=3,18$; $p<0,01$) with a bigger mean differenced (0,71) in tourist's evaluation.

The Event Satisfaction is influenced by national culture just on Regatta-related Factors. In particular, while the Individualism weakly affect tourist satisfaction ($t=1,95$; $p<0,05$), the Masculinity dimension shows stronger effect on Regatta-related Factors ($t=2,7$; $p<0,01$). Masculinity represents the Hofstede's dimension that exerts the greater impact on tourist perception: it also play a critical role into tourist's Intent to Recommend ($t=2,04$; $p<0,04$).

Table 5- Pearson correlation matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Place-specific & hygienic	1,00	0,43**	0,27**	0,48**	0,40**	0,45**	0,01	-0,11	0,06	-0,01
2. Tourist services		1,00	0,23**	0,30**	0,19**	0,36**	-0,01	-0,09	0,04	-0,11
3. Intent to return			1,00	0,50**	0,23**	0,14	0,08	-0,07	0,18	0,2*
4. Intent to recommend				1,00	0,42**	0,34**	0,06	-0,08	0,16	-0,01
5. Regatta-related factors					1,00	0,19*	0,00	0,18	0,26**	-0,02
6. Village-related factors						1,00	-0,12	-0,11	0,07	-0,02
7. PDI							1,00	-0,56**	-0,36**	0,48**
8. IDV								1,00	0,35**	-0,47**
9. MAS									1,00	-0,25**
10. UA										1,00

* p- value < .05 ** p-value <.01

Once recognized that national culture exert some discrimination on tourist perceptions, we developed the second study that consists into analyze in deep such relationships among Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the three selected tourist perception measures during the mega sport event. In fact, while independent t-test use cultural dimension expressed as a dichotomy variable, during this stage cultural value has been expressed in absolute terms in order to keep with more detail the difference among countries.

Results of correlation analysis are shown in Table 5. Different tourist perception constructs and the four cultural dimensions are significantly correlated one each other. The analysis on absolute cultural dimension highlighted that just two correlation coefficient were statistically significant. In particular, individuals from Masculine societies has been more satisfied of the event, especially concerning the Regatta-related Factors ($r=0,26$). On the other side, individuals with higher risk Avoidance shower a more positive intentional behaviour to come back in TD. In fact, the rate of Uncertainty Avoidance is positively related with the level of Intent to Return ($r=0,2$).

4. Discussion

Our study shows interesting findings, providing a better understanding of the effect of cultural dimension on tourist perceptions. Independent t-test helped to explain that some difference in tourist perceptions occurs among individuals coming from different countries. These findings are consistent with previous literature that already visualize the role of national culture into shaping tourist perceptions.

The Independent t-Test findings pushed us to deeper analyze the direction of such relationship through the use of Pearson coefficients. People from high Power Distance countries reports a weak but positive destination evaluation related to Place-specific resources & Hygienic Factors ($r=0,01$) and a negative evaluation of Tourist Services ($r=-0,01$). The negative coefficient can be easily explained as they express high quality standard from visited destination. In consideration of weak and opposed results on Destination Image. They also positively evaluated the sport event competition (with a weak correlation coefficient) while were not satisfied by the activity organized the Village: *Hypothesis 1.a and 1.b should be rejected*. On the contrary, individuals from Power Distance countries show higher Intent to Return and Recommend the destination, so that *Hypothesis 1.c can be accepted*.

Rather, people from Individualistic countries have had a (weak) negative evaluation of destination image and satisfaction. Regatta-related Factors of satisfaction is rather positively correlated with the rate of Individualism into society ($r=0,18$). Also the Behavioural Intention is quite low and negative. *Considered the thoughts above, Hypothesis 2.a, 2.b and 2.c should be rejected*. Individualistic tourist, usually characterized by lack of interpersonal connection and sharing of responsibility, positively evaluate the regatta. It suggest to deeper analyze if this value is influenced by the gender of interviewed tourists or by their travel motivation.

The analysis emphasized that Masculine travellers positively evaluate mega sport event in the three different constructs envisaged. In particular people form Masculine countries express a positive Intent to Return and Recommend the destination, with a Pearson correlation index respectively of 0,18 and 0,16. Previous literature envisaged that considering the high standard of tourist, Masculine culture should be related with worsen destination perception. Our analysis rather show a significant and high coefficient ($r=0,26$) between the rate of Masculinity and Regatta-related Factors of Event Satisfaction. This positive value can be explained considering that sport event evaluation is more appreciated by Masculine culture: here men are expected to be tough, to be the provider, to be assertive and to be strong. *Hypothesis 3.a and 3.b should be accepted, despite the weak level of correlation coefficient. Conversely, Hypothesis 3.c should be rejected*.

Finally, tourists from Uncertainty Avoidance countries showed lower Destination Image and Event Satisfaction (even if with a very weak correlation indices) but higher willing to come back in the destination, despite the other perception indices are negatively related with destination evaluation.

This result can be explained by tourists' capability to return a place which already know. Considered the analysis carried out, Hypothesis 4 should be accepted.

5 Limits and future research opportunities

In order to cover the statistically significance limitation is really important to improve research sample. The study can be considered a pilot study of the wider survey that will be collected during America's Cup World Series that will take place in Naples in May 2013. Next stage of field research will allow us to enlarge sample dimension. The percentage of each tourist that came from different country could better represent the strength of the issue. Another strong limitation has caused by the use of Pearson correlation. A structured statistical methods could help to analyze in detail the difference of find indices (i.e. Principal Component Analysis, Structural Equation Models, etc.).

Notwithstanding these limitation, our study has important practical implications. The analysis of cultural influence on destination image and tourist satisfaction can provide a valuable support for destination management to understand tourists values, preference and behaviours (Kozak et al., 2003) in order to implement effective positioning and market segmentation strategies (Reisinger and Turner 2003) and reduce the risk of dissatisfaction. Previous research on cross-cultural tourists behaviour used more often the comparison among individuals that come from different countries, in order to identify the presence of cultural-related factor of tourists' behaviours. Our study aimed to fill this gap, through the analysis of tourist coming from all the world in case of mega sport event.

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Obviously, the responsibility for the contents of the paper is exclusively ascribed by the Authors.

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