

**MASTER IN MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

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**TITLE**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF VIRTUAL TOURISM IN REAL TIME AS A GLOBAL INNOVATIVE  
TOOL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF FUTURE TOURISM MODEL**

**FINAL MASTER PROJECT**

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## **Glossary**

**Perishability:** Products and services cannot be stored and sold next time

**Tailormade:** Made for personal preferences

**Telepresence:** Virtual presence on a remote destination

## **Abstract**

Virtual tourism has gained ground and transformed many sectors in the field of tourism today. Destinations have benefited obtaining stronger positioning and identity constructing the virtual image. The significance influence of virtual technology and innovation applied on a destination approaches the global market adding value to current products and services. This paper investigates the potential of use the virtual travel instead of virtual time in real time on the global destinations. This unique interaction through various stages in tourism generates profits from the global market and approaches destinations without physical presence in real time. The aim of this study is to reveal the potential constructing the new model of tourist through the virtual travel in real time. Apart from this it will be useful to investigate the potential of solving the fundamental issue of world poverty through virtual tourism in real time innovation model. In order to explore the case study an exploratory research has been conducted on focus groups and individuals. The qualitative research has divided in two segments. Frequent travelers have selected on the focus group and individuals have selected for less frequent travelers. To create real time experiences on a destination, among others, several issues need to be analyzed. In pre-visit experience, in the home destination, the other two phases (transit route and final destination) can take place in real time without physical presence. Research results provide a significant correlation among the perceptions of potential virtual travelers and destinations and pave the way for this new model in travel and tourism industry.



## **Introduction**

Ever since the emergence of online communication, it has been important to investigate and understand the influence of this new interaction among various sectors. This new interactive communication model has transformed the massive information to a personalized level and created new dimensions for stakeholders and markets. Online global connectivity has strongly affected the tourism sector and changed the relationship among supply and demand. Tourists have the potential to interact with the supply providers and other stakeholders directly. Through several devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and virtual reality devices, they can create a communication network with different stakeholders. The majority of the destinations and markets on a national or international level have encountered the double face society of communication. Traditionally, real communication message was designed passing through several channels. Due to the rapid technological development, the virtual communication message has direct influence to potential tourists and stakeholders simultaneously.

To date, virtual interaction has been used in the context of businesses providing advanced and comprehensive tool for virtual images and product's promotion. Tourism destinations have benefited by interactive virtual communication tools. This valuable model of virtual exploration has added value to the current products and contributed to the increase of destination's image. During the last years the dramatic increase of virtual tours and social interaction has affected providers and tourists that have developed a virtual relationship relied on social media network. Online platforms and applications offer the opportunity for navigation, accessibility, travelling and planning through destinations and businesses. Consequently, they are the connection tool between the provider and the customer.

The evolution of virtual tourism pushed visitors to experience destinations virtually before booking. This realistic environment has become the motivator factor for the decision. In the light of virtual tourism model, the possibility to obtain real-time experience could provide superior experience and stimuli for potential tourists. Even more, if the real-time consuming spread in travel, accommodation and other businesses the benefits might be able to come from the global market instead from the local market. Considering the market communication in real time, fascinating results can be emerged. A combination of senses takes place virtually on an interactive destination in real time. The destinations image, the experience, the market benefits and more need to be researched and analyzed in order to identify the balance between the physical presence and the virtual presence.

Virtual tours are becoming popular for marketing purpose. In many cases user interacts with the virtual environment using body moves. Eye view and also hearing are taking place during this stage on a virtual level. The final overall sense is

enhanced and behavioral insights can be emerged. Based on this tactic it would be very impressive if we replace the virtual time interaction on the real environment with the real time interaction. On a marketing level, customer's insights exploration will be shaped and delivered at the same time. Provides might be able to utilize instantly needs and prevent negative effects. Observation in real time can be used as a powerful implement for real time primary data collection.

The interface of a destination and the potential visitor is the key motivator factor for the experience. This major connection activates a range of global opportunities for the destination. Scheduled routes and day tours, theme tours and all type of visits are reachable sitting on a chair. Depending on the equipment used the obtained experience can be maximized on the highest level. Virtual touring in real time allows visitor to personalize and build the experience. This immersive technology paves the way of creating a tailor-made preference as a scheduled tour on the destination of preference. The concept is assured through real time benefits the destination. Linking the personal interest with the destination, an opportunity for a virtual job creation has emerged.

In the context of socio-cultural tourism, virtual communication in real time is able to transform and spread the culture directly to the globe. And although it can be emerging through social media, real time interaction is opening the path for customs and events that capture the moments and are not able to be explored in virtual time. At the same time profits can be developed through peer to peer interaction. In the scope of destination marketing and strategic planning, it is an innovative tool that approaches new ways of selling intangible products and generating profits.

Increasing internet access has transformed the markets' profitability. Peer to peer transaction should be investigated in the light of using real time shopping during the transaction. This interaction with the real product and possible service advances the potential of buying to the maximum level. Heeding to the senses using virtual interaction and real time consumption is a dream network that generates profit for local entrepreneurs from the globe without physical presence. How close the object is the key element in contrast with how far is the buyer that cannot affect the process.

The embeddedness of technology triggered the accelerating growth in tourism industry. To make real time tourism possible it is important to examine more elements such as intangibility of products and perishability of products and services. Virtual travel has managed to assist reducing the perishability by enhancing the motivator factors and providing easy access to the destination. However, virtual travel in real time is able to utilize products such as an empty hotel room or a bus seat observing and providing qualitative data.

This paper examines the significant possibility of the creation of a new tourism model based on real time interaction. Apart from the previous references about the sectors in tourism industry, a major issue for research of poverty alleviation emerges in the field of virtual tourism. Real time can contribute in poverty tourism alleviation utilizing an enhanced way of interaction. This could be happen on individual way or scheduled tour offering specific services in real poverty destinations. Several studies have researched the contribution in tourism sector. UNWTO examines the GDP as well as the jobs creation and the resources.

Beyond this field, community based tourism has enhanced the participation of local communities on alternative development. It occurs when tourism activity is driven by the host community and contributes to local prosperity. This mechanism maximizes the potential of eradicating poverty for indigenous and local communities. In many cases it has been called as pro-poor tourism and researched by several cases. At the same time the ICT in poverty alleviation gains ground with global commercial programs. The question is how technology can generates economic growth and development. E-strategis aim to control the cost and provide smart ideas for destination development. Moreover, rural areas acquire accessibility, web-mapping and information through internet. It works as a stimuli and pursuit the interesting for new market exploitation that can bring investors and funds. (Haris and Vogel, 2020).

On the other hand, virtual tourism is well known field the last years. Latest researchers have identified the importance of virtual tourism in the connection between demand and supply. (Kim and Hall, 2019) explore the field of visitors and non-visitors, while (Tavakoli ans Shara, 2019) develop the netnography in tourism. Several authors have investigated the effects of virtual reality on destination's image such as (MS Fee, Mayrhofer, Baratova, Neuhofer, Larson and Ankoma, 2019). Virtual travel affects the destination induces a higher elaboration of image experience. Thereby branding strategy acquires stronger attribution.

The emphasis of smart tourism destinations is conceptualized and based on technology. Virtual reality concept has examined in the field of Telepresence. This model represents the virtual image formation on the destination of preference. (Hyum and Keefe, 2012). The environment can be with or without mediators and configures virtually the image. The influences of virtual tourism in several cases have proved the importance of the destination's benefits as well as the other sectors benefits in tourism. Based on this, virtual travel opportunities on a destination or during the trip emerges. It is useful to investigate how real-time on tourism a virtual environment can become a global tool that can change the way people travel and produce tourism today.

The local development based on tourism has wide explored in several cases. Sustainability is a source of various elements created by economic impacts, environmental impacts and socio-cultural impacts. Local market benefits from global tourism are a major reference could be studied further. The effectiveness of the approach in a local market form the global market is generating profits and is a powerful implement that can only be based on ICT. However, virtual tourism in real time could be the demand of the global market in this case. Recent studies are based on community based market profits derived by tourism distribution channels and connect the enterprises with the market. (Schott and Nhem, 2018). However, this cannot replace the powerful of the global market instant approach.

In the area of tourism and culture, the global model has been widely analyzed. In recent researches, the multi-level cultural product approaches tourism demand as well as local wealth and culture preservation. Thus education, environment and mass tourism among other elements needs to be on a balance. The overall concept shapes the destination's sustainability and creates valuable experiences for visitors. (Chen, 2018). However, this balance cannot be the same as many factors affect the destination and culture simultaneously. Virtual tourism in real-time utilizes the unbalance approaching the culture on a unique way by offering the potential of participation without physical presence.

A new emergence of the sharing economy model has affected most of the tourism traditional activities. In the light of innovation and technological development, fast growing transactions have started avoiding intermediaries and generating individual profits directly. Exploring the potentials of a destination it is useful to identify how effective is to adapt the virtual model in real-time in a destination in order to generate profits on an individual level. Based on that, global market can be approached as well as mass tourism effects can be avoided.

Finally, the tourism value chain has widely explored. Today products such as a hotel room or a seat on a mean of transport cannot be stored and used another day. This fundamental loss is usually referred as perishability. On a smart destination, virtual travel possibly can assist reducing the unsold services using the potential of buying them and observing them in real-time for qualitative purpose. The overall consideration contains parameters such as features, service quality, statistical issues, product's changes and comparisons. This valuable experience can be used in many sectors in tourism in order to reduce the perishability and increase the quality of the service. However, travel, accommodation and activities sectors need to be explored for this reason.

## **Background**

In the virtual travel world, the effectiveness of virtual reality is mainly observed in shaping consumer's behaviors and attitudes. This niche technology has managed to connect the devices with travel experiences anywhere in the world. In this sense, it has been characterized as a substitute of real-life travel, powerful tool for marketing and management. Virtual destinations are benefited and can easily control environmental sustainability. (Tussiadah et al, 2018).

Virtual tourism is a contributor to the smart destination development. Accessibility, identity, information, local community and stakeholders have the potential to be connected. Despite technology has a high cost, smart development enhances the accessibility and resources' utilization providing higher opportunities for visiting with lower cost. ICT and virtual communication develop social network between stakeholders and contribute to the instant communication. (Huertas et al. 2019). In the era of smart development small and big cities are facing challenges. Residents and visitors have easy access through applications in several virtual and real time activities. This engagement provides important real time information for the destination enhancing the potential for improvement. Smart destinations can use cultural and natural resources creating valuable information throughout the virtual projection offering superior experience and capturing visitors' demand. (Buhalis and Amaranggana. 2013).

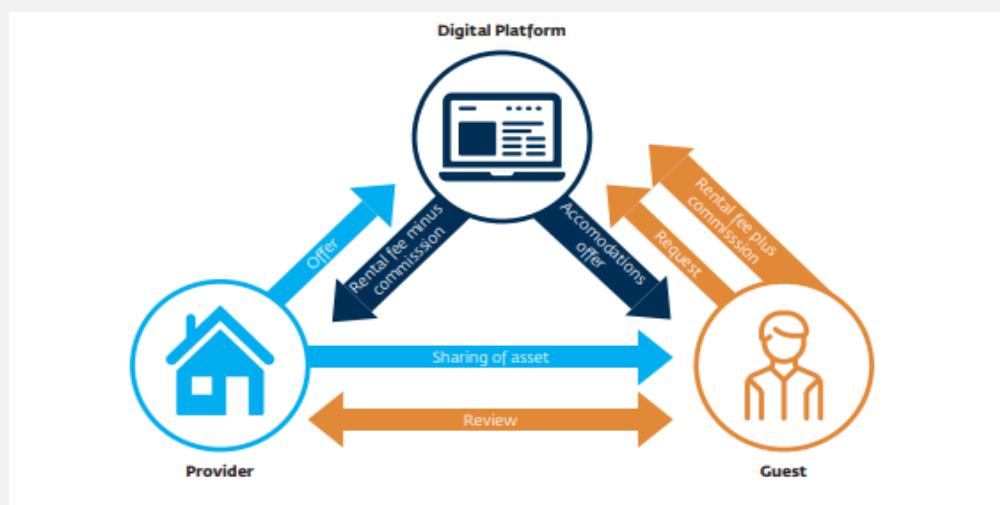
Many programs have designed for virtual tours focusing on historical sites and culture. This capstone experience has used for learning and leisure purpose reducing the financial costs and providing significant information. (George, 2018). Other authors have focused on virtual tours using drones enhancing the experience with 360o cameras. In these specific cases numerous of factors dealing with the destination such as protection, preservation, special needs for accessibility and enhancement of real image. This could also be in real time with the appropriate supportive network. A major advantage is the feedback information can be received according to user preference in real time. (Skondras et al, 2019).

Virtual travel sustainability has explored in the field of how virtual experience can replace the authenticity of real experience on the destination. The characteristics of the virtual travel experience can add value to the real experience and work as stimuli for the destination. Psychological factors are taking place and shaping the attitude of potential visitors. Conceptualizing, virtual travel supports the real visits, enriches the travel experiences and assists the sustainable tourism planning. (Kask, 2018).

The evolution of e-tourism has transferred most of the services on a personalized level. Direct communication and information has provided the opportunity for consumers to buy most of the travel, accommodation and leisure services from

home. (Lazar, 2019). Hence, this experience allows tourists to interact more closely with local residents, businesses, stakeholders and the destination. (Yalcinkaya, 2018). Online market is gaining ground fast the last years. Global digital travel sales in 2018 were 564.87 billion dollars. The growth of travel sales reached the 15.4% and the hotel sales 10.3%. (Statista, 2018). The importance of approaching the destination businesses online has enhanced the potential of consumption. Social media and other digital communication networks generate revenues on a virtual way from anywhere in the world. (Statista, 2018).

For both public and private sectors, tourism has witness a powerful management, value chain, marketing and accessibility though the digital Era. This has created opportunities for new entrances and players from the global market. Destinations gained competitiveness and stakeholders are facing the challenge of innovation in order to play protagonist role in the global market value. (UNTWO, 2018).



(Source: World Bank)

#### *Virtual tourism and culture:*

A different approach of the virtual tourism in digital age express the term of digital culture where ICT adaption with cultural elements takes place. (Herdin and Egger, 2018). This interaction in most cases it generates high quality of detailed description and images. The engagement of virtual technology in cultural and heritage activities enables the visitors to interact autonomously and obtain related information. (Owens, 2013). However this happens, the knowledge about virtual reality in culture spread through events is not widely researched. Virtual events communicate through various media and offer increased value and experiences in visitors. In addition events can be viewed from sides, visitors and suppliers as valuable tourism activity. (Getz, 2007). Virtual events watch is provided through devices from several applications nowadays. Although is happening, cultural events for tourism purpose have not the similar potential. The importance of virtual reality technology in the

field of culture is identified in accessibility, information and preservation. In addition the role of culture spread through the events and heritage sights reinforces the identity providing economical benefits in local entrepreneurs. (Richards, 2001, p. 5). Besides that, interaction is appeared enhanced and adds value to the visualization of the tangible or intangible product. (Yiyu et al, 2018).

The ability to stimulate complete interactive virtual environments can provide means to experience the past cultures. This communication has limits in terms of specific places related with history. (Ch'ng et al, 2017). In this field of research, preservation of the culture, environment, historical sites replace the actual visits with inaccessible by the virtual visit. Virtualization of sites and other cultural themes are interconnected by visitors and create this interactive experience adding value to the place. (Guerra et al, 2015).

*Virtual tourism and perishability:*

One of the main factors in tourism industry faces in the perishability in services. Marketers encounter such kind of problems in many sectors. In other words services have zero inventories and cannot be stored for future selling. Considering the demand in tourism this is a crucial issue of the capacity utilization. (Bhasin, 2017). Most of accommodation and travel services can be characterized perishable. Airline seats, other transport means seats and hotel rooms for instance can be only available for a definite period. That means it cannot be utilized and charged after this period. (Service Marketing, 2018).

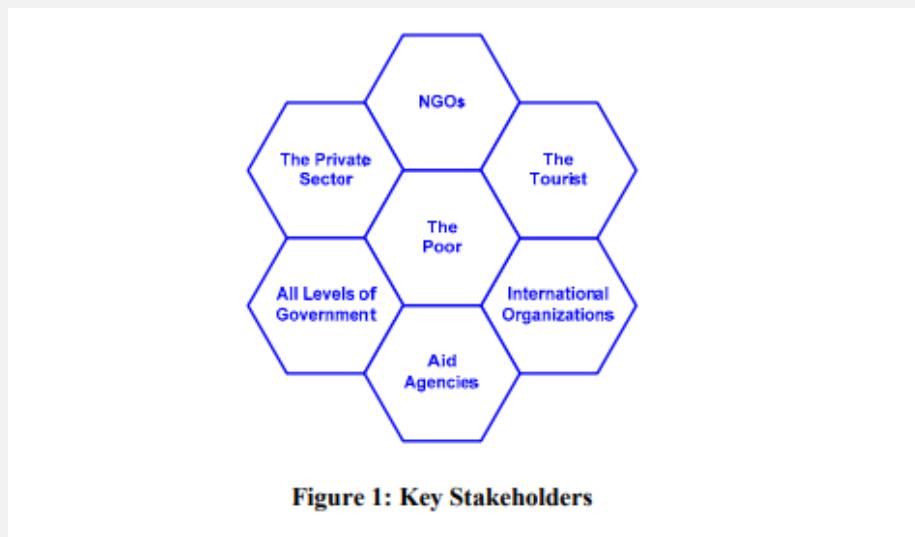
Booking applications have reduced the perishability of the services overcoming the barriers of accessibility directly to the demand. (Cram, 2008). However, virtual travelling cannot guarantee the avoidance of perishability. The potential traveler remains at the origin destination. Nevertheless, potential visitor using booking tools is coming closer to the destination and has the chance to utilize the service. (Cram, 2008). Virtualization enables supply chain actors to control, monitor, plan and optimize the business process remotely and in real time through the internet based on virtual objects. (Verdow et al, 2016). Virtual reality technology has improved the connection between supply and demand. However there is a little knowledge about how this technology can assist perishability.

*Virtual tourism and poverty alleviation:*

Sustainable tourism can be one of the few development opportunities for the poor. Let us use it wisely and soon. (UNWTO, 2002). With this phrase UNWTO approaches the fundamental issue of the world poverty linking the tourism industry. As it is explained further, low revenues of tourism stay in local market with the result of low impact in regional development. Policy and decision making strategies can pave the

way of poverty alleviation. (UNTWO, 2002). Pro-poor tourism strategy has also referred as significant benefit for poverty. This flexible planning allows poor people to participate in decision making and several actions related with the tourism policy and activities. It is also highlighted that tourism in poor countries is a significant economic sector that generates profits. Small-medium businesses have the opportunity for funding and development. The main goal is to obtain the maximum returns to the community. Nevertheless, there are many references for the relationship between environmental development and sustainability. Destinations might be able to provide benefits for poverty alleviation utilizing natural resources. In that case, balance should be always considerable. (Macbeth et al, 2007).

The field of virtual tourism in poverty elimination has not explored yet. However, governance planning is working under the same purpose. The core is the poverty and the governance cluster is all levels interact with poor. (figure 1). (Jamieson et al, 2004).



Digital technologies and platforms are disrupting the way tourism sector operates from end to end. Platforms allow providers to enhance the development and standards in tourism sector. Many low-income economies can be benefited by digital transformation. (The World Bank, 2018). This disruption has affected the industry and low-income markets striving to leverage tourism for development impacts. More specifically, digital platforms provide opportunities and challenges to achieve the boosting prosperity eliminating poverty. (World Bank Group, 2018). Furthermore, despite the poverty in many destinations such as Africa, digital platforms increased the demand of the destination reducing the market access barriers. It is clearly seen that digitalization has increased the demand and pushed the development of supply. Communities' engagement as a third party using digital platforms on a sharing economy model can contribute to mitigate the poverty acceleration and boost the local economy. (World Bank, 2018).

*Virtual tourism and destination experiences:*

Drawing the tourism model towards the natural path, Leiper has identified 5 main elements that generate tourism. The system consisted of tourists, generating regions, transit route, final destination and tourism industry. (Hall and Stephen, 2010). Based on this model, it is mandatory to be focused on generating region and connect the motivator factors with it. Decision about the transit route and final destination is taken in the generating area. Hence the importance of understanding and the home destination is mandatory. There are some factors which influence tourism demand at the destination from the generating area. Time, cost and promotion are mainly the major issues affects the destination's demand. Taking place at the original destination, internet tools dominates the demand and promotion as they enable tourists to utilize personally the availability. Supply on the other hand, control marketing tools in order to add value to the destination. Considering the cost and time, they are major factors that can affect the demand in long distance destinations. The fastest the most popular tourist product will be. (Page and Connell, 2006, pp. 43-46). Virtual tourism has no significant reference on how time and cost can add value and promote the destination from the generating region.

With virtual travel model, users have been changing the way live and consume. In tourism industry virtual travel has minimized the time and costs thus promoting grater consumption. Internet on the other hand, opened doors for online services for transport and accommodation and more. The possibility to explore the destination without being there is a fundamental issue that provides superior experiences for final destinations from the generating area. (Amara, 2019). Most of the experiences take place in the destination of origin. Virtual reality on travel is a process that consumer choose the destination virtually. Hence the quality is an important issue. Decision making and reservation are passing through emotions stimulating users and create a great opportunity for destinations.

With virtual reality you almost feel be at the destination. Although it is happening, comparison with actual reality in real life traveling has different experiences. In the second case you are in the final destination 24 hours generating profits. In the first case the profits could be motivation or information from the home destination. Individual planning from the generation area is technological try before you buy. It is a unique experience that is obtained quickly instead of using traditional ways that might take weeks to obtain the same experience. Virtual travel can be useful even in the final destination for exploring the area and discover new experiences. Tourism is experiences. Usually they are obtained during the trip and can be expressed after the trip. On a virtual travel environment, destination experiences can start from the home area and can be one of the major factors of promotion with the word of

mouth. (Mashable, 2019). Hence, the whole world could be home destination and used as a global market.

*Virtual tourism in real time:*

Live streaming in tourism industry for social events, virtual travel and business purpose is in the initial step. It has started as an idea for vacation time for all persons. In many cases physically is unfeasible to travel. This invention of virtual travelling brings the destination to the person instead of the person to the destination. The main platform connects the visitors across the world. It provides the opportunity to have live streaming being part of a tour and planning the vacation. The potentials offered have a wide range of services. The interaction can be between visitors and guides creating a community and a group on the same way of physical presence. The satisfaction is enhanced as well as the e-tourism community of visitors. Through the implementation, virtual visitors are able to visually and aurally experience foreign locations under the direction of a local service provider. On the other hand, Clients also can provide guided tours inviting visitors from other detonations individually or under a different entity. (Shivaram, 2015).

Virtual tours in real time have provided by few companies in the past. Most of them are focused on decision making process importance and how live tours can contribute. There is another aspect about stakeholders that are not always able to visit in person locations. Hence, virtual tours in that case are an essential tool. The main goal is to obtain the real information in real time. Personalized information and demand enhances the decision making and provides accuracy for the customer. (Georama, 2019).

According to Georama, virtual experiences in real time allows tourism organizations, educational institutions and travel brands to offer interactive tours of destinations and travel products. It is a superior tool for marketers and brands seeking to engage potential visitors with the detonation. Georama argues that most people are satisfied with a simple virtual experience. Nothing replaces the real thing. Deeper insights for marketers, DMO's hotels and educational institutions can be achieved with virtual tour in real time. The technology familiarizes the viewer with the place and adapts him replacing the real visit. It leverages the preview for an actual trip and can be a great alternative for those who cannot travel physically. The potentials go further. Visitors compare virtual experiences and can have a better choice of hotels, transportation companies and destinations for decision making. (Vivion, 2014).

While other companies have explored the virtual travel as travel the world without shoes or bags. Enlyvo, suggest this slogan and offers virtual tours across the globe in virtual time. Virtual events and destinations can be available anytime virtually. Saving money and time. Virtual travel on real-time is the money one can save. No

tickets or hotel rooms. The only investment is the virtual tour guide. Stay safe is another issue Enlyvo explores. People with disabilities, Elder people, children and possible unsafe destinations can find a travel solution through virtual tours. Furthermore, destinations that have difficulties to approach such as high mountains can be easily accessible with virtual travel. (Enlyvo, 2019).

4 Experiences has a deeper explore in virtual technology. It provides a wide range of virtual opportunities. Among others, it focuses on Doctors without borders providing training on a virtual way avoiding risks. In this way virtual seminars can be provided for a specific period. In addition, 4 Experiences provides the virtual trend in shopping. This solution can be achieved by connecting virtually the supplier and the customer. Customer has the potential to recognize the brand and express the interest to buy the product or service. This intelligent way enhances the possibility of bringing the global market to the customers place virtually. It also adds value to the products and increases the image. Visitors can also take a virtual tour and in the end buy a specific product from the virtual shop. E-commerce is a unique tool that connects the real market with the virtual buyer. The aim is to abolish the borders in the global market. (4 Experiences, 2018).

Virtual technology has affected almost every sector globally. According to Amadeus, virtual experiences could change the way travelers shop and purchase trips, assisting airlines and other travel companies become the next generation retailers. This innovation allows travelers to spin a globe of the world, visit a destination, search for a flight, walk through the plane to select a seat, pay for the trip and more. This is an idea of entire booking through virtual reality. This experience starts when traveller stands on a platform and selects the destination and the product. In the future, hotels booking and social functions could have the same potential. (Amadeus, 2017).

The virtual travel gains ground constantly. A real-time tour can be seen below from Georama. This tour took place in MacKinac island in Michigan. The interaction is characterized as unique and the feedback was positive in both sides, virtual visitors and guide. This tour was a test of success and had 845 interactions with more than 3500 viewers from 22 countries. (Pure Michigan, 2015).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrWaUQPBon0>

Exploring the real time data derived by virtual tours and more, there is a significant reference in qualitative data can be obtained. Qualsights refers that real time interaction provides the ability of instant data and deeper insights. It maximizes the budget by reducing the travel expenses. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to save time and analyze instantly the data. The feedback also is accurate comes from the real time experience. Based on this, valuable service and products can be selected in real time and satisfy the visitor. This interaction is one of the most

important elements for marketers. The interaction can solve many future problems as allows participation for both sides. Visitors can ask questions or demand different service. They can be surveyed in real time and record the data for future use. The studies about customer insights can reveal behaviors, cultures and perceptions instantly. Based on this, perishability can have an opportunity of reducing. Moreover, video surveys in real time can catch faces reactions and multiple other reactions useful for real qualitative data. (Qualsights, 2019). The quick capture and analysis of consumer perspectives generates a journey to the global market for researching new deeper perspectives and qualitative evidences. Customer experiences and satisfaction are enhanced and the feedback that obtained is mostly based on natural reactions. Live participation has significant fast and accurate insights comparing other traditional methods. It is a challenge to create and support marketing planning and strategic design based on real time data. Communication can be benefited and become faster and accurate. Future tools should be useful to adapt the communication tools with such kind of technology in order to obtain richer qualitative data and provide instant solutions.

*Virtual tourism, destination image and sustainability:*

Constructing the virtual image of the destination, studies have revealed the importance of the travel information. Web information has significant contribution to the accessibility of the destination. More specifically, web design in a promotional way can lead to the image formation. This communication tool through the web is an important mean of strategic development for marketers and DMO's. (Jeong et al, 2012).

Nowadays, web allows people to interact virtually with the destination. It is possible to travel virtually with two or three dimensions virtual tours exploring the destination. Such kind of experiences can stimulate real visits that can lead to the creation of destination image. Most marketers have developed the "Telepresence" which is the feeling of how close is the virtual reality with the real destination. This communication with the virtual tour can be the driven key of understanding how destination images are formed by potential tourists. It is also important to identify the relationship among the real image and the virtual image of the destination and how virtual image affects and changes the real image. (Hyun and O'Keefe, 2012).

A destination can be explored in travel, accommodation and other services. Virtual reality provides a better destination image that is a belief in the mind of tourist. This positioning leads to the better experience and a positive word of mouth about the destination. Hence, it is a beneficial tool that helps tour operators and the destination for sustainable growth. Destination builds the image based on products and services such as accommodation, accessibility and amenities. The quality of services when meets the perception of visitor creates the destination image and the

strong positioning. In this case virtual tour enhances the pre-visit perceptions and pre-image for the destination. (Jayendran and Rejikumar, 2018).

Broadly, destination image can affect visitors' choices before travelling and become the factor for negative pre-visit experience. The satisfaction level is derived from the experience against the expectations. Returning visitors usually have shared their experiences with friend and families and this loyalty constructs the destination's image. This behavior has vital role for sustainable tourism and strong influence to the sustainable image of the destination. In several studies the satisfaction level explored in order to identify after the pre-visit virtual experience there is a perception of real visit. (Griffin, et al) have identified positive effects regarding the virtual travel and image for the destination. Besides that, there is a less concern of visitors to be conducted and travel in reality to the destination. In other words virtual travel had not strong affect in constructing the experience that can operate as stimuli for the destination. The destination's image has benefited but there is no strong influence through virtual travel and the construction of such a strong image related with it. However there is a possibility of visiting the destination based on virtual experience. (Griffin et al, 2017).

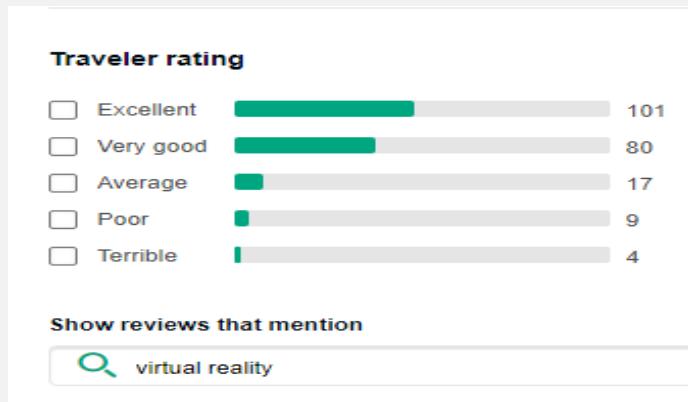
Understanding the online communication in tourism industry, there is an increasing attention in visitor's experience evaluation. Common social media with a focus on trip advisor allow visitors to create an after visit evaluation with significant power in influencing others. Increased online communication feedback contains a danger and presents a constant management challenge for the destination. Feedback comes from the experience perceived. Falling to respond visitor's feedback it may provoke negative effects to the image. Planning should take in account feedbacks in order to prevent negative effects and build a sustainable strategy. (Thomas, 2018).

#### *Virtual tourism and feedback:*

Several examples of virtual tours using trip advisor shows the feedback and can provide valuable information of the experience perceived and the positioning. The historical part of Brugge in Belgium shows the high average score of the experience perceived. In this virtual tour 181 participants have voted with excellent and very good. The satisfaction here constructs the image of the place and provides possibly a valuable word of mouth.

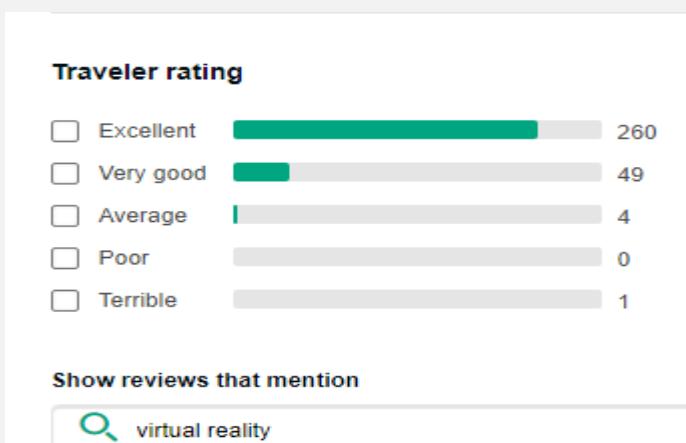


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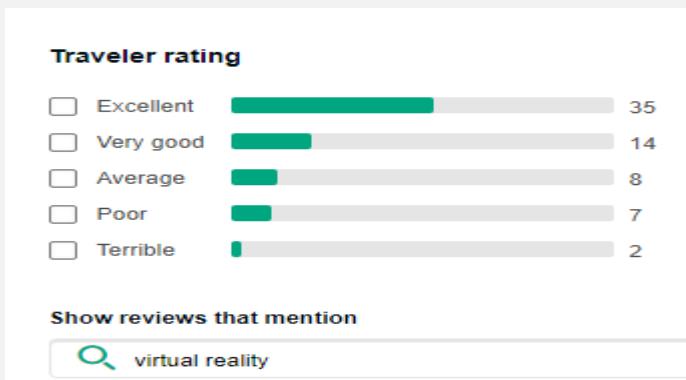
(Source: trip advisor)

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tourist Facility is a unique tour inside this small plain. This experience travels visitors in the past telling stories and providing virtual images. With 260 ratings of excellent it shows the significance of virtual experience regarding the information when is combined with innovation technology. Furthermore, negative opinions should be considerable in order to identify improvement points.



(Source: trip advisor)

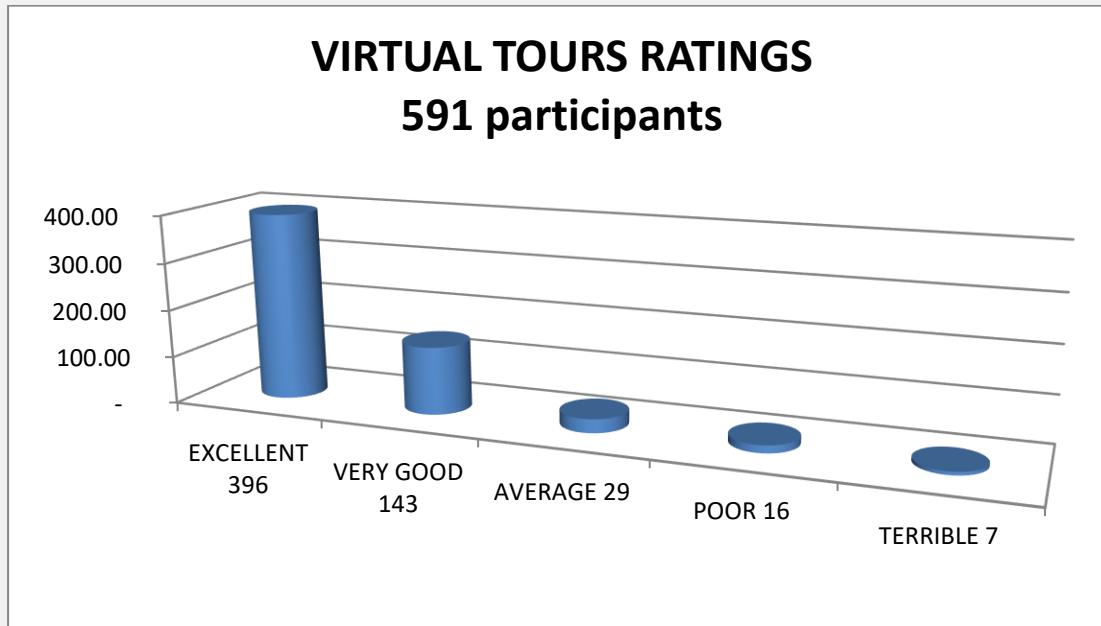
The riddle tour is an excellence of the experience takes place in New York. It provides experiences from the past the present and the future. The adventure explores most of the historical parts in the city on a virtual and real way. Technology offers audio-visual equipment that enhances the experience and provides unique scenery. This tour has very good and excellence ratings in most cases. Virtual reality on a real destination is appeared strong and different in terms of the classical tour.



(Source: trip advisor)

Virtual reality becomes an integral part of vacation segment. It is a valuable pre-visit and during the visit experience. It influences travelers for the decision making and provides information and images simultaneously. (Pcquest, 2017). Comparing these examples it can be easily identified the importance of satisfaction perceived. We have selected randomly three cases. New York represents the city case. Royal flight doctor is a case of a tourism facility and the Brugge case is an ancient and historical center. From the overall 591 participants, 396 voted virtual experience as excellent. This number is significant and represents the 67% of the total participants. 143 participants in total voted the tours very good. It represents the 24% of the total participants. The average vote came from 29 participants and represents the 4%. The other two remaining is the poor that has received 16 votes and represents the 2.7% and the terrible has only 7 votes in total and represents the 1.1%. It is valuable to see the first two scales, the excellent and very good that represents the most significant number of this sample. 539 of the 591 participants which number represents the 91% are satisfied with using virtual technology in tours. Building experiences and

tours virtual reality during the visit enhances the destination's image. Moreover, it can become an alternative way of touring the destination and facilities offer.



### Hypothesis

Virtual travel has been connected with many sectors in tourism industry. It can be applied in several facilities providing fast and reliable service. Moreover, as a marketing and management tool it contributes to an innovative planning and increase the attractiveness of the destination. Exploring the advantages in this field, there is a question that has been aroused. How virtual travel in real time can contribute and transform the destination and the experiences? This new model of travel experiences has a wide range of common elements based on virtual travel innovation.

As it widely explored, culture has been one of the major sectors in tourism industry that generates experiences and destination benefits. Richards 2001 and Getz 2007 have referred the importance of virtual technology in terms of the culture and events. However, it would be valuable to explore and adapt the potential of real participation in such kind of events. Real time observation enhances the communication and interaction among the cultural product and the visitor. It allows the senses to react in real time observation. Moreover, Guerra et al, 2015 and Ch'ng et al, 2017 connect this experience with the value of the destination. Communication in real time is a challenge for destination managers and suppliers that enable them to approach virtually the global market. This advantage is crucial as provides the opportunity of approaching segments that physically cannot be in the destination.

Demand is the driven key in tourism development. Booking tools and internet have managed to control and reduce the seasonality and increase the demand. However,

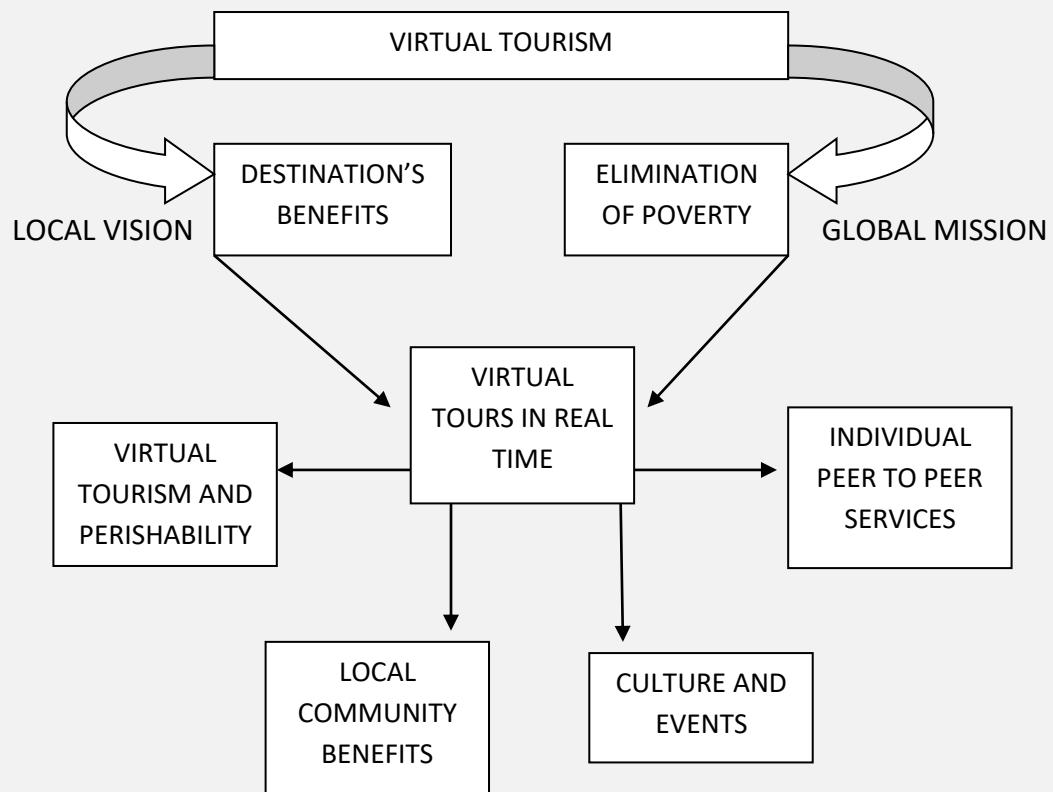
the connection of main services with the customer is a major issue. Cram, 2008 has explored how booking tools have reduced the perishability of services and utilize the demand. Virtual travel has improved the whole value chain and supply in one hand. On the other hand, hotel rooms and transportation seats can be controlled and be sold by utilizing real-time travel as a research tool. In this case the virtual connection between supply and demand could be useful for research purpose.

Digital technology has created new ways of transactions in tourism industry and beyond. Disruptive model according to the World Bank 2018, has provided benefits in low economies' development. Individuals can be connected with several platforms virtually and gain real money in local market. Based on that, a real time model in sharing economy could be able to apply in global market. The potential to generate profits offering specific tours or other services in real time is a challenge for individuals and local entrepreneurs. This interaction can take place from the generating destination through virtual touring in real time. That is a crucial point that connects the destination of origin with the destination of interest without any intermediary. Demand and supply take place among group of people, businesses or individuals and provide the potential to obtain real time experience without physical presence.

Virtual tours have gained ground the last years in many sectors. Georama provides real time experiences in the field of tourism. There is a connection among real time and virtual time experience. Accuracy and information could be the same but in terms of experience according to Vivion, 2014 nothing can replace the real. Exploring the destination in real time is an advantage of real reactions and real connection with the provider. In several cases virtual travel operates as a tool for saving money according to Enlyvo. However, travelling virtually in real time the possibility to interact with local businesses buying exists. This connection allows a live interaction among local market and global visitor. The successful real time virtual tour in Mackinac Island shows the potential of using virtual tours in real time in various travel and leisure facilities. In addition, accommodation industry such as hotel tours, leisure activities inside the hotels, events in a destination, real time transportation for research purpose and destination sightseeing are some of the activities can be used in real time travelling. The case of three virtual tours compared shows the satisfaction level of virtual reality in tourism industry. A historical exploration of Brugge in real time instead of virtual time could provide the opportunity for global visitors to participate. The journey in royal flying doctor is a magnificent opportunity for using a real time interactive tour. People from the globe can watch the story in real time asking participating in the experience without being there. Destinations benefits using this model have no limits. Global tours such as the riddle in New York can become globally available using local guide in real time. This valuable pre-visit experience can become the stimuli for real visit experience.

In global tourism industry sustainability is one of the major issues that drive the development. On the other hand, according to UNTWO poverty alleviation is a global challenge for tourism industry. World Bank refers that digitalization has managed to control the supply and demand and provide benefits to poor economies. Based on that, there is a crucial question of how virtual travel in real time can contribute to this major issue? The aim is to utilize the global market offering the potential of assistance through the internet and providing economic resources for poor destinations. In this case supply will be direct in the destination and the virtual communication can be the world market. Although technology exists, barriers in terms of destination development can be emerged. Lack of infrastructure could be one of the main problems in designing such kind of development. However, personalized participation from the global market can increase the demand and the interest of investing in poor destinations. Virtual tours in real time can contribute in awareness in poor destinations and become motivator factors for global interest. Digitalization has a lot of advantages in terms of local communities and especially in poor countries. The virtual touring enhances the potential of using more senses and interacts with others providing services and experiences.

*Comparative analysis:*



Virtual tourism supports the local communities offering the potential of new markets development. In the case stakeholders' network offers the possibility of applying it to the market plays the key role. Virtual tourism is a powerful tool that approaches the global market. Poverty alleviation is highly connected with tourism industry and virtual reality technology is a strong implement that can assist the poor economies. However, stakeholders' perceptions is a major factor in order to build the network that contributes to the poverty assistance.

Real time touring could be the driven key for virtual tourism. Comparing the potential of virtual time touring in the city and beyond with real time touring, it can be seen the advantage of participation which in virtual time does not exist. Global market brings global knowledge and demand. Possible training and infrastructure should be considerable investing in virtual tourism. Virtual tourism influences most of the parts of a destination. Destinations and local communities have the opportunity to interact with visitors from other countries in real and virtual time. It would be useful to understand this direct communication and analyze the feedback. The possibility of creating jobs creating a peer to peer transaction can be characterized as major advantage in real time in terms of virtual time touring. Destination's sustainability and image have a strong connection with virtual tourism and gain stronger positioning with virtual and possibly real time tourism. However, there are other elements that can affect negatively the final image such as virtual service quality and lack of equipment.

Events and culture regarding the virtual tourism have been enhanced enough in several cases especially historical sites and museums. Culture spread is a comparative advantage using virtual tourism. Real time tourism can play the key role in spread more of the public and private events of a destination and provides the potential of spread the local culture without possible conflicts. However, technological support and funds might be based on stakeholders and governance network decision. Based on this, perishable services regarding the transportation, accommodation and other services have the advantage to be connected with the virtual technology and avoid such kind of situation. In most cases real time appears stronger positioning for the destination and the product. Stakeholders network is crucial in order to create a common ground for local market and the global partners. Collaboration might create clusters and assist the virtual tourism to reach the mission of poverty alleviation.

#### *Virtual travel in real time: Constructing the new model of tourism:*

In virtual world of travel, interaction appears lack of participation. In virtual world of real time travelling participation is appeared enhanced and plays the key role in visitor's experience. Taking the advantage of booking a sightseeing tour, visitor through smartphones, tablet, laptop or virtual reality glasses has the opportunity to

begin a real time tour from his home. Visitor participates from the beginning till the end of the tour speaking with the guide, participating in activities asking the guide to do specific preferences and building the experience without physical presence. There are a lot of benefits for the destination and the local entrepreneurs using real time tours. Virtual presence replaces the real presence on the destination assisting to reduce the overtourism in case of such kind of situation. The whole tour can be utilized by one guide at a time with limited virtual participation without using busses as the presence is not physical. The tour can be scheduled and the participants can be from the globe without any restrictions. Participation enables virtual visitor to speak, hear and see what the guide sees and buy local products in real time from the market. Theme tourism can be used in several cases in virtual tourism in real time. For instance, wine tourism can take place virtually visiting the fields and the winery learning and collecting data for the local varieties and wine. During the visit participants can collect photos, discuss with the staff of winery and buy products where seeing them in real time. Real time can be used in various tours and activities. Visiting a city and taking a walking or other scheduled tour. Exploring a tourism business taking an inside tour of the company. Exploring the nature taking a trekking tour in real time. Visitors in real time touring use more senses than virtual time travel and have the potential to travel the world from their homes. On the other hand, providers can reduce the cost offering a competitive price as they do not need to use big means of transportation and a lot of staff to support it.

Local destinations benefits obtained by virtual travel in real time can be seen in a wide range of sectors. Local events and customs can have real participants as well as virtual participants. On a personal level, events such as wedding and other ceremonies can be presented virtually on real time. A personal wedding for instance can have also virtual participants in order to attend the whole ceremony and collect data learning the local traditions or participating interacting with others. Events of the city presented in the globe is a source of spreading the culture avoiding social conflicts and gaining money from the global market. Local gastronomy tours, local food and wine producers can offer real time tours and lessons in order to provide traditional recipes. Moreover, historical sites and routes can become popular in the global market using real time interaction. Monuments and museums as well as historical places can be visited taking pictures and gaining knowledge in real time. In any case the interaction with the staff and locals is an important advantage in real time communication. The capacity in terms of the place is another major advantage as virtual visitors cannot affect the real capacity. In addition many tours can be scheduled the same time using virtual travelers and at the same time travelers with physical presence.

A model of sharing economy is useful to be examined by creating peer to peer transactions from the global market. In this case tailor made experiences pave the

way of gaining individually money from the global market. In real time peer to peer individual touring, virtual visitor express the interest of a specific tour in the destination. Provider accepts the challenge and provides the tour according to visitor's preferences. The interaction is in real time and experience is based on provider's skills and professionalism. On an individual level the usage of an online platform such as Uber or other similar is mandatory. Visitor needs to be under a regulation safety and also the provider under a security of privacy. This individual level of tourism can generates money and boosts the virtual tourism identity of the destination. Individual tours can be also connected with culture and tradition. Personal ceremonies, celebrations and attractions can be used in real time touring. In addition, social media resources can be a helpful tool for feedback and evaluation of the quality of the service.

Destinations can be benefited and local market can be enhanced from the global interaction. Local entrepreneurs in collaboration with guides and individuals that offering virtual tours can interact in real time with virtual visitors. Through the guide visitors have the opportunity to buy local products virtually in real time. However, shopping could be spread in the whole market. On an individual level there is a potential of expressing the interest of going in a destination and select a tour for shopping. The tour provider accepts the challenge and provides the opportunity to the visitor to see and buy in real time the product and in some cases the service interacting with the local shop staff. Sightseeing or other theme tours can offer this opportunity during the virtual tours for souvenirs and other products related with the tour that provided. Based on real time tours destinations have the opportunity to gain global customers without physical presence. Visitors also have the opportunity to interact with the global market avoiding intermediaries and have direct communication with the market.

Travel and accommodation industry encounter seasonality and perishability in many cases. A real possibility for unsold hotel rooms could be the real time observation. Quality of service, cleaning as well as observation of other parts of the hotel can provide instant quality feedback related with the service. Real time facilities observation means real time data. Perishability can be reduced and insights about the services can be enhanced using real time observation. This service is useful in travel industry using unsold seats on ground and sea transportation. Quality of service is based on service that offered. Training staff and service improvement might be able to rely on real time observation. Marketers can have the potential to utilize this service and provide essential tools for travel and accommodation services. It is also an implement for research purpose that can assist to reduce the seasonality based on real time data and offer the potential for quality upgrade.

The general purpose needs to meet the opportunity to start eliminating the real poverty. A network of collaboration between stakeholders using real time touring is a major implement in order to achieve this goal. Global online virtual travel companies are able to offer and manage virtual travel services in poor destinations. They can create the tour of poverty for instance in destinations such as Yemen, Ghana and any other destination that similar poverty exists. The poverty and tourism has widely explored. Virtual tours in real time in this specific case must be designed and scheduled for specific services. Providers of the tour might be focused in basic needs offering the tour. Food, medicine, cloths and accommodation services constitute the vision of the tour. Virtual visitors have the potential of seeing the person they have paid for the tour. The price might be varying depending of the service they want to provide. There is an important interaction among poor people and visitor that has provide the service. The itinerary design offers for each poor person services according to the price the visitor has paid and it can be seeing in real time for the whole tour. For instance a tour might includes a day trip from the place the poor person lives to a restaurant for a meal, a shop for clothing, visit the closest station of aid or hospital for possible medicine and in the end back to the home place. The major advantage for the virtual provider is that it can see the money that paid where in real time goes. Another advantage involves the interaction of help from the global market virtually and directly without physical presence.

In order to achieve this goal and start eliminating the poverty a network of stakeholders need to create a global cluster of aid. Restaurants and stations of food as well as local hospitals near the areas and aid stations must be in collaboration with the virtual companies that offer tours. Local market can also be benefited by this tours increasing the sales and having the opportunity for possible development. Tours can be scheduled or individual in terms of the demand and the options of services must be based on basic needs. Destination planning should include resources of the area and accessibility in order to identify possible barriers in approaching the places. Itineraries and time of the tour as well as poor people approach are some of the issues that need to be considered before the scheduled tour. Technological development might be a challenge for these areas as internet connection is mandatory for this service. Lack of infrastructure might be a barrier in this case. Local authorities should be also approached for policy issues and regulations that can provide for assisting the project. Safety of the tour staff and participants is another issue which in most cases is based on regulations and training. Local guides should be used as they are more familiar to the destinations. Poverty is a global issue that can be assisted using technological innovation such as virtual travel in real time. This type of interaction can become the global tool in order to start eliminating the world poverty.

## **Methodology**

This research has focused on a focus group of frequent travelers in a small conference room in the city of Ioannina in Greece. The language of speaking was in Greek and the general ages were between 30 and 45. The selection of the participants was randomly and the time overall time was approximately 80 minutes. Regarding this research, focusing on specific issues in virtual tourism the selected group was one. Individual participants were also randomly selected. The interviews took place in local places after appointment. The general age was from 39 to 50. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes long under an open discussion on specific issues. In terms of the general virtual tourism many sectors and other issues in tourism industry can be selected for future researches.

The exploratory research has conducted in order to identify the possibility of people to use this specific model of virtual tourism. This research has selected in terms of the flexibility in changes and effectiveness in qualitative data collection. (Research Methodology, 2019).

The second part of this study is to identify to the perceptions of potential tourists for virtual traveling in real time. In the first stage a primary research using interviews took place in several destinations. This research is carried out on a deductive way trying to identify visitors' possibility to use this new model of travel. Interviews have selected in order to gather information about people beliefs and perceptions. Aiming to collect qualitative information, interviews offer the potential of detailed information instead of other methods such as surveys and observations. (Driscoll, 2011). Interviews have conducted face to face randomly. Individual people and a focus group have selected in order to divide the sample in two parts. Focus groups have used in order to specify the sample in frequent travelers and individuals for other non-frequent travelers. In the case of focus groups have the advantage of gathering information in a short time approaching experiences and segmenting the interviewees selecting criteria. On the other hand, individual interviewee expresses feelings and experiences easier than in a focus group. (Morgan, 1996).

Capturing the individual point of view, qualitative research is concentrated on catching experiences and insights. The relationship between researcher and interviewee is important in the process of interview and reveals major qualitative elements. This qualitative data telling what society thinks and how communicates with ideas and issues. In the case of virtual travel in real time opinions, feelings and perceptions are valuable data to discover travelers' aspects. A rich description offers a valuable social aspect according to the empirical approach of the interviewee. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Based on that, uncovering life experiences and believes through qualitative research we constructed the image of potential travelers for the new model of tourism.

The analysis used is a content analysis. An exploration of the interviews in order to see what interviewees spoke about and themes where have emerged. Similar speeches and points of view have categories and codes specifying the analysis. Content analysis has selected as is a useful tool to describe and analyze focus groups as well as individuals. It can reveal patterns, trends and public opinions on an empirical basis. Content analysis is one of the most used in qualitative research and counts words of potential interest testing the consistency of usage. (Stemler, 2001). The sample has divided and analyzed identifying perceptions and categorizing the aspects. In both case focus groups and individuals results are provided using graphs creating a map of aspects.

*Selection criteria:*

Over the last decades under the globalization impact mobility has increased around the globe. In tourism sector, mobility has created major consumption in several markets around the world. (Salazar and Schiller, 2013). In this research design we focused on two dimensions for selecting the sample. The criteria of selection were based on frequent travelers as a focus group and non frequent travelers on an individual level.

Frequent travelers are a valuable group providing experiences expressing feelings and opinions about travel industry. The way they act and thing inspires the industry leading the market to improve services and enhance the innovation and creativity. Familiarity with trends and technology provides an important factor of researching this segment. Knowledge and opportunity acceptance are mostly skills that frequent travelers present. (Tullis, 2019). Familiarities almost with each sector of the industry characterize frequent travelers. In virtual travel a valuable start researching this segment could be effective in order identify similarities and differences among other travelers with less frequent travel activities.

On the other side, non frequent travelers constitute a potential segment of travelers. Decision making process passes through various stages affecting the potential traveler to his final action. The motivation factors followed by the information research and the choice lead to the decision making. Experience starts from the first stage and behavioral attitude plays crucial role regarding the final decision. (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). The influence of a new model of travel in consuming the intangible product and service virtually might be a potential for several reasons to travel in non-frequent travelers even for regular travelers. This segment has selected as it can be an alternative market for destinations and a new segment for travel industry.

The sample of the focus groups and individuals selected and varies in demographics. The selected age regards travelers from the age of 20 to the age of 65. Perspectives

among new and older age could be useful in order to recognize trends and consumption behaviors. (Cleveland et al, 2011). The relationship between information and visitor's behavior is an important variable in terms of the age as it provides beliefs, aspects and perceptions usually based on personal experience. In addition, globalization approaches different values and shapes the way people act. In this term, frequent and non-frequent travelers are valuable to express the perception of interacting with different environment and people around the globe from the home destination. Constructing the new model of tourism background of travelers helps to provide a comparison of traditional market and contemporary market based on experiences.

*Interviews:*

The formulation of the interview questions is based on previous experiences in traveling as well as in destinations. Behavioral elements that can construct the image of the destination and also the potential of future experience through virtual traveling have been included to the interview questions. Opinion value has significant gravity revealing the perceptions of future visitors using this model of tourism. In this topic experiences in comparison with perceptions create a valuable result for the research topic. Questions are designed in order to provide opinions and develop qualitative data. Thoughts about specific topics for virtual tourism are provided such as the feelings about a travel in real time on a destination of preference and real time interaction. For this case open-ended questions have been used in both cases individuals and focus groups. Expressing feelings and knowledge is mandatory and used in designing this interview. In his field, knowledge is a tool for the previous experience and creates expectations for the potential virtual visitor. Based on that, the future experience needs to cover the expectations and develop a gain feeling for the future virtual visitor. Motivation and expectations about poverty and virtual tourism as well as aspects about virtual travel on a personalized trip used in the interview in order to understand how travelers think and act in a virtual travel environment. The part of demographics has designed for middle-age travelers that can use such kind of technology and be familiar with it.

Fundamentally, the depth of detail from interviewees captures interests, senses and comes closer to the core point of the research. This interview has forced interviewees to develop opinions and play a general role in the ongoing discussion. The main goal is to uncover meanings and perspectives to gain qualitative results. Each question has designed in a specific topic in virtual tourism in order to obtain useful information and deeper understanding of aspects. A general question about virtual tourism has set in the beginning to pave the way for specific topics. (Hermanowicz, 2002). The project research has a predetermined question so that interview questions are focused on it. This process allows focus groups to develop

opinions and compare prior fields of the interview. (Morgan, 1996). The interview format has used is a semi-structure model. This option has selected in order to provide a base for exploration and an area of developing opinions and aspects. Elaboration of finding in specific virtual tourism issues was the key that emerged during the interviews. Comparing with structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews conduct the interviewee only to the general issue allowing the development of a wide range of ideas and expressing feelings. Moreover it influences participants to go deeper in the case through own experiences. (Gill et al, 2008).

## Research

The following sample presents the interview questions have selected for groups and individuals.

1: What comes in your mind when you hear virtual tourism?
2: What are your expectations about virtual tourism in real time?
3: What similarities and differences can you think on a virtual tour and on a virtual tour in real time?
4: Do you feel you could take a virtual tour in real time for a specific destination for sightseeing or other reason?
5: Do you feel you could buy a product from any destination in the world virtually in real time?
6: Can you define how possible is to provide a personal event or a cultural event of your destination in the global market virtually?
7: In case of a tour in real time could help the global poverty. Can you describe your feelings and your expectations about that?
8: Do you believe a virtual travel on a bus or train or a virtual stay on a hotel room can help to improve the services? Would you buy such kind of a service?
9: Have you ever experienced a virtual tour? Do you think it could be a mean for individual profits and destination sustainability?
10: Would you advice people to use virtual traveling as stimuli for real traveling?

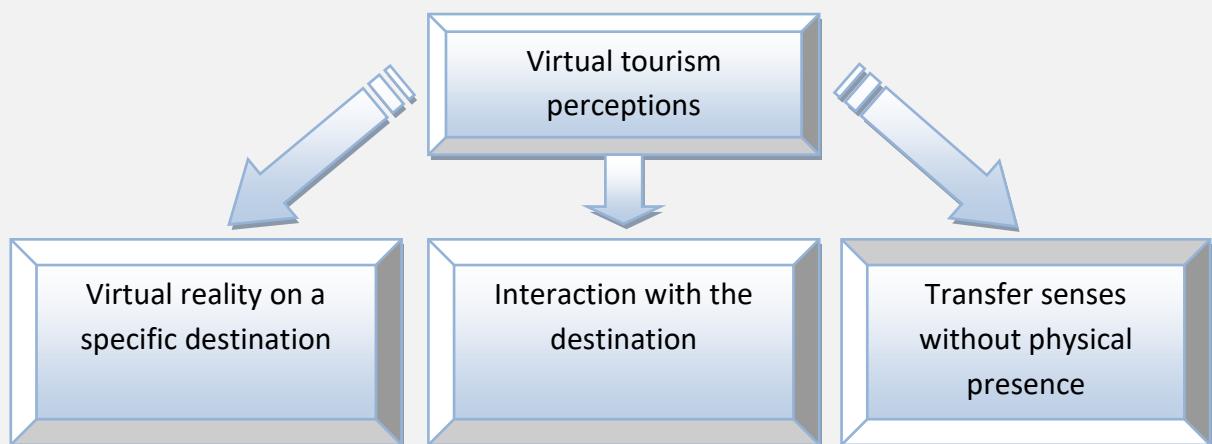
## Findings

### *Summary:*

Highlighting the results of interviewees it is clearly seen the understanding of innovation regarding the virtual tourism in real time. The experience of traveling or visit a destination or a local business without physical presence creates memories and unique experience. Virtual touring is appeared as a strong element for a destination's identity and increases the virtual positioning in visitor's mind. Image construction is built by several services offered through the touring and is one of the main factors that contribute to the sustainability and development of the

destination. In terms of the service, destination's finds an assistant tool for choosing the place observing it in real time. This is characterized by the potential to avoid choosing places cannot cover the real expectations and are well presented on the internet. Virtual touring has expressed as a feeling of exploring the world without being there. It can be characterized as incentive for discover a lot of destinations around the world that cannot be approached for various reasons. Technology seems to have the key role in travelers mind in order to achieve this communication among the destination and the virtual visitor. It is the connection tool that enhances the real interaction providing the potential to meet different cultures and people. Safety feeling is mainly major factor of virtual tourism. However, in terms of a personal level, there is lack of experience in virtual interaction and create a feeling of awareness. Regarding the activities, security issues appear absence and most travelers mentioned the significant advantage of time and tour preference control. Destination's rumor is based on visitors' feedback as well as market's profitability. Visitor's interaction provides an experience and useful information that allows them to give instant feedback. Most travelers' feel they can utilize the demand of the market of touring and the destination's image. According to interviewees, benefits for the destination can be seen in many cases. Culture spread interacting with different places as well as less known destinations can become popular using virtual travel in real time. Service plays the key role in enhancement of the quality of the product. Well trained staff is essential in order to achieve a service can meet the visitor's expectations. Tourism can assist increasing living standards. Poor countries can be benefited through innovation and there is a willingness of offer in such kind of tourism activities. Virtual tourism in real time operates as motivator factor for real visits and proper choice of a destination among other factors. It adds value to the destination and local communities providing value to the general product. Moreover, it enhances the real interaction of the destination and visitor meeting the expectations most of frequent and non-frequent travelers.

#### *Results:*



Virtual tourism has been translated from respondents as an action of virtual reality on a specific destination. This is characterized by a virtual way of touring the destination. It can be seen the distance is not a factor that can keep the destination away from the potential visitor. By far, virtual reality has a real connection with the destination and is recognized as a mean that offers a distance tour. Network through internet gives this opportunity and connects the demand and supply providing the potential and the experience to move from place to place through it. This virtual transportation is an important perception that allows visitors to move, search and discover the destination of interest. The interest of exploring destinations is rising and the demand for many destinations has already emerged due to the convenient of virtual tourism. Choices can be characterized increased as interests are rising and opportunities for destinations in terms of virtual visit create ground for real visit in the future. Another important element is based on World Wide Web and the identity of communication. Internet communication is the link between virtual tourism and communication. This perception is appeared strong. Communication cannot be achieved without this link of internet technology.

Virtual presence can be seen as a first step that develops feelings. **George said:** "I am doing tourism on a virtual world". This reality is characterized by the first experience by traveling on a virtual world. **Helen** connected this with the online bookings also that demand knowledge of internet use. In this field the experience of a virtual tour needs to have educated user in such kind of technology. Virtual reality is the main image exists in interviewees mind. This image is constructed by the internet tools that offer virtual reality in tourism and other sectors. However, according to **Chris**, there is a perception of virtual presence on a destination even through the booking using the internet technology. The whole procedure creates an experience of designing the tour creating the virtual itinerary as an image in mind. This connection is a valuable element that conducts the visitor in the destination of interest.

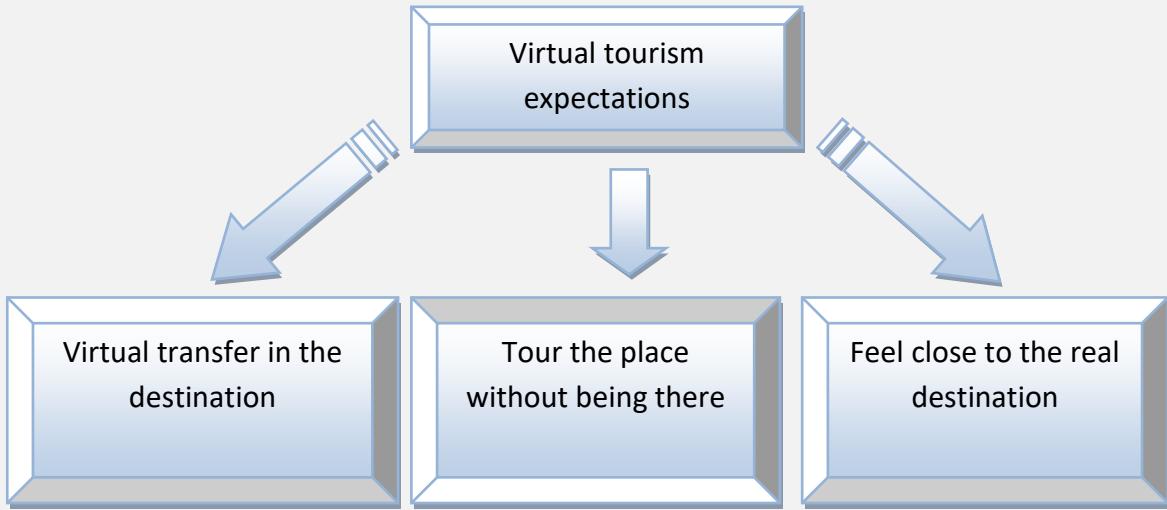
Virtual tourism in most of interviewees has interaction with the destination of interest. This significant category provides elements about the virtual product identity and the quality can be offered. **Rania** has mentioned that a virtual tour needs to be translated in local languages in order to have global value. The global market has different demands. Guides need to have skills in order to lead a tour with global virtual visitors. Virtual tour appears more detailed demand than a real tour as the audience can be from anywhere and not specified till the time of beginning. Awareness is something which has physical appearance during a virtual tour. Lack of experience creates awareness and is something should be analyzed and reduced before the tour.

Exploring the virtual tourism identity, it can be seen the destination's image is also based on quality of interaction among virtual visitor and service offered. **George** has

mentioned that internet plays important role in the creation of virtual reality on a destination. Quality has the same role in a real or virtual tour. Guides play the same role and need to be well educated in both cases. The service offered appears similarities and is the most important factor in decision making and image of the virtual visitor. Virtual intermediaries such as internet providers, virtual guides, booking tools keep the key for the strong identity of the virtual tour image. On the other hand, destinations can be benefited by having a strong virtual service increasing the virtual identity and brand name. Nevertheless, **Helen** has characterized this type of tourism as a way to travel not in reality but in a perception of transfer you in a real destination. Interaction enhances the connectivity and creates the ground for a valuable virtual image and destination recognition.

Virtual reality in tourism brings the experience of the connection. The link of the destination without physical presence with the visitor produces feelings and memories. **Rania** has noticed the feeling of memories created by the destination in a virtual tour. Journey on a virtual way allows you to travel in the past in some cases using augmented reality and refresh memories. Memories create a significant part of the mind image regarding the destination and the virtual tour. **Chris** has mentioned travel in the world without physical presence is the main character of a virtual tour. Frequent travelers mentioned the home destination as a base of a virtual travel decision. Emotions can be developed from the original destination before taking the virtual tour. According to **Anthony** this is the motivation and the virtual tour is the mean to reach the product. The feeling of not being there is the main feeling according to **Arthur**. Travelers have the wonderful opportunity to travel in a wonderful place without being there.

The feeling of being virtually on a destination is expressed in the perception of a virtual tour almost from all interviewees. Frequent travelers have mentioned the important of the experience on a pre-visit virtually in a destination. Less frequent travelers recognize the value of a virtual tour and appear a significant interesting in discover new destinations. Apparently, there is a virtual identity that is constructed gradually far away from the real destination. Travel is almost live on a virtual time and is able to create emotions before and during the trip enhancing the image of virtual visitors. In the world of virtual travel, the experience has been obtained through virtual time. Nevertheless, it works as stimuli creating virtual images and enhances the real visits in many destinations.



Virtual tour approaches the real using the real time interaction. The possibility to observe a virtual tour in real time offers the opportunity to participate and interact with the guide. Group of travelers characterize this interaction as a transfer in different countries at any time. The opportunity to discover the history of a destination comes closer. Time is not a matter of concern during this virtual experience. There is a flexibility of transferring among destinations and learn the culture and the history of the place. This convenience is highly described by the frequent travelers as a great expectation of a real time tour. Places are coming closer and destinations that cannot be visited are coming closer creating stimuli for virtual visit. People of different destinations according to **Rania** have the opportunity to speak learn each other and create a pre-visit friendship. **Yiannis** mentioned that the experience creates the same feeling as on a real tour during the virtual tour in real time.

**Chris** from non-frequent travelers expresses the interest of traveling and represents the virtual tour in real time a strong motivator factor for traveling. Similar virtual experiences appear absence in non-frequent travelers. The main reason is the motivation of try a new way of traveling. There is a need of approaching many destinations without specific preferences. **George said:** "I want to go everywhere". The flexibility of the time allows the potential traveler to choose the destination of interest at the time of preference. Non-frequent travelers found this incentive to explore their dream destinations. The idea only according to **Chris** is stimuli that enhance the possibility to approach the place I dream. Virtual tour in real time seems to have the ability to transfer the senses directly to the real destination approaching the reality closer than a virtual tour.

Approaching the reality is a strong feeling. Experiential touring offers pleasure according to **George** and represent many of the aspects in frequent travelers. Travel virtually in real time according to Helen creates the sense of being there without being there. Product comes to the home destination and many of the interviewees express the interest to try this. Travelers feel ready to try and buy a real time tour

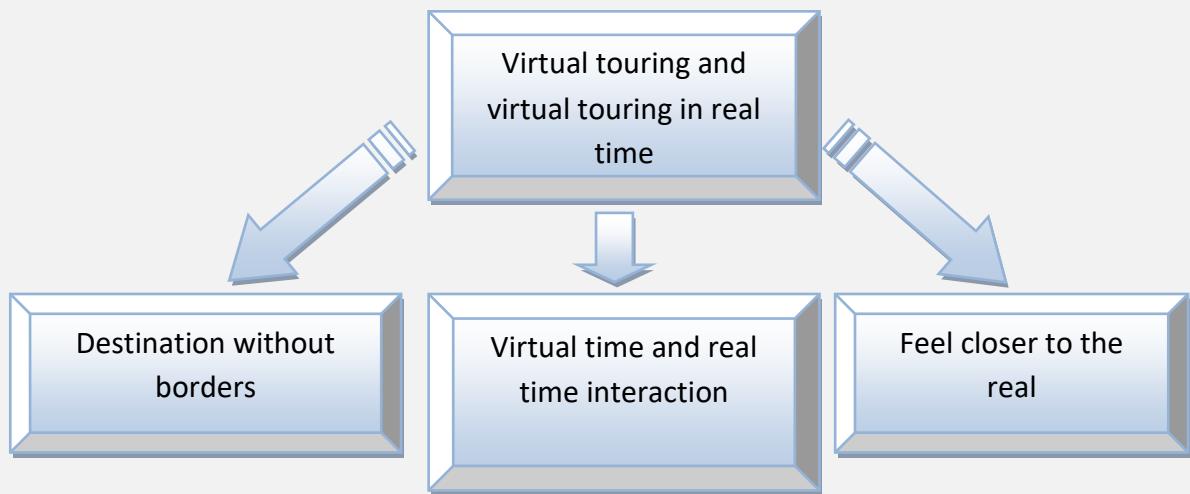
having created an image of the destination of interest. In most of respondents there is a sense of living something close to the real. The main description of such kind of tour gives the sense of reducing the distance between the real and the virtual. However, there is a willing of participation as this way of traveling offers this opportunity. Travel without being there has mentioned many times and can be characterized as the main idea using a virtual tour in real time.

Virtual touring in real time provides a real time data and real time reactions. **Chris** has mentioned the importance of travel in real time. Virtual tours in real time cover the expectation of provide the feeling of live image. The closer to the real the greatest experience is an important notice of **John** from the frequent travelers. The expectation of a substitute of the real observing the real creates the sense of being there. Live image comes closer to the real image and utilizes the senses offering a virtual experience. The transfer to the destination virtually in real time touches the sense of sight and sound allowing the virtual traveler to obtain images and sounds live. This sense has described as the most valuable experience comparing with the physical presence on the destination.

Another important element has described by **Tasos**. Security feelings trying something new always exist especially from non-frequent travelers. Safety transactions as well as records regarding the live interaction can be emerged. The interaction passes through the web and issues such as personal information and image should be considered. Virtual touring in real time according to frequent travelers should face quality issues. Service passes through various stages and companies and last minute audience. Standards should be high and even higher than a tour with physical presence. There is a concern about the final feeling and possible after sale feedback. Opinion after the real time touring is an important concern for travelers that express the feeling that the interaction can keep on after the tour. **John said:** "The experience is what I live; the opinion is what I was expecting". There is a significant expectation regarding the virtual tour in real time that affects potential travelers before, during and after the tour. It seems travelers create a virtual image for the destination that has created by the service offered and the interaction with the destination.

Guided tours provide the opportunity to follow the schedule on a specific destination. Frequent travelers have connected the touring with a skilled guide that conduct a tour and provide information. There is a sense that the guide keeps the key for the successful virtual tour in real time. However, **Arthur** mentioned that I need to feel before I take the virtual tour that I am ready to go in reality. This experience has described also by **Anthony** that refers the most important thing in terms of the experience is to live something that I never lived before. Expectations are creating feelings and needs. Virtual tours in real time can create experiences and

feelings that can be obtained by interacting with the destination. Frequent and non-frequent travelers expect to obtain such kind of experiences by visiting the world without physical presence.



Among virtual touring in virtual time and virtual touring in real time there is a significant advantage regarding the sense of reality? Real time is happening the time of observing and uses the sense of sight and hears transferring the destination to visitor. **Rania said:** "I can see, hear and speak as I was there". The distance feeling does not exist as this interaction allows you to speak in real time. Comparing with the virtual time tour there is a significant different that makes the destination having no borders. **George** mentioned that in both cases there is a transfer in a destination. There is a virtual transfer in a destination that visitor can imagine what is happening in virtual time. In this case willingness takes place only in mind as there is no interaction with the real destination. On the other hand, willingness becomes action when the tour is in real time. Frequent travelers express the interest to live inside this feeling and refer the advantage of technology has helped to improve the interaction between the destination and the visitor.

On the other side, non-frequent travelers have concern about the new way of travel and the security of traveling in real time. **Chris said:** "I need to try first to be sure how it works". There is an absence of experience in similar actions. Comparison in terms of virtual and real time touring needs to be tested in order to obtain a valuable experience and loyalty especially in non-frequent travelers. Although is essential, touring in real time remains stimuli for non-frequent travelers. Adaption with internet technology has changed the way even non-frequent travelers act. It gives the potential to prolong the preferences and gain experiences according to the opinion of non-frequent travelers. It seems the difference is determined by the participation which exists only in real time touring.

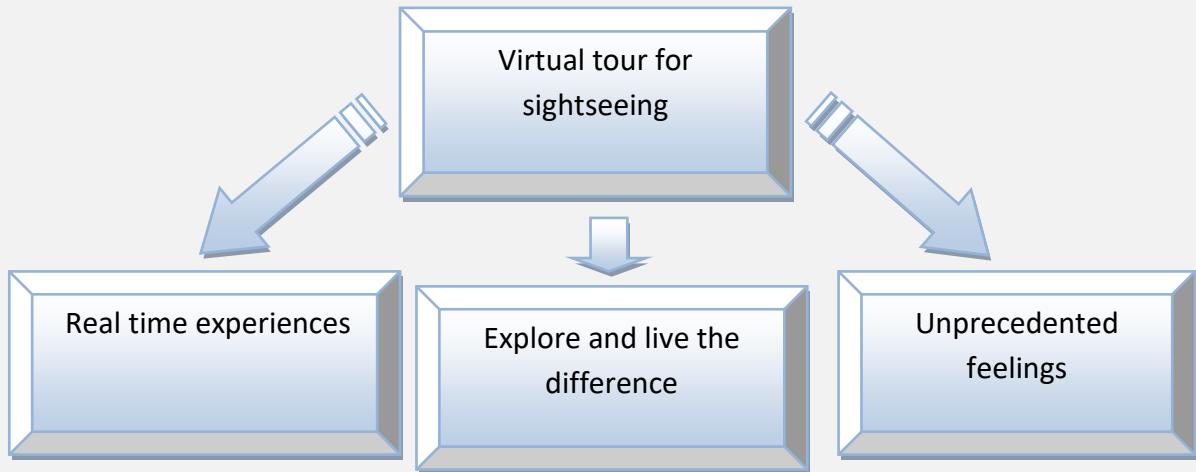
Exploring the similarities among virtual and real time touring, opinion of frequent travelers have distinguished the option of time. **George said:** "I can be in a tour in virtual time having the potential to stop and start again without time issues". In terms of a real time tour the time is fixed and there is no possibility to change it. **Helen** spoke for the flexibility of the time in both cases referring the ability to take any tour in real time the time of preference searching for availability. In virtual time the time is free. Another aspect can be characterized as advantage according to frequent travelers is the home destination and the non-action activity. There is no demand of walking or taking a mean of transport in such kind of tours. The travel tour with physical presence demand many other things before the tour such as accommodation travel and booking activities. However, the unpredictable is most common in tours with physical presence rather than in virtual tours. There is always a concern in travelers mind virtually or naturally.

Feel closer to the real is the sense that exists in virtual touring in real time. This feeling appears absence in virtual time tours. **Chris said:** "In virtual time tours have senses but most are virtual". In virtual tours in real time senses awake the time of the tour and are real. This sense describes the approach of the real which is closer when use the real time in virtual tours. The vacant of the virtual reality and the virtual reality in real time has described as the distance of the real destination and the virtual approach of it. There is a willingness to reach the real destination with this advanced way using innovation technology. Nevertheless, real time participation enhances the motivation during the tour and creates a path for exploration.

The importance of real time information is appeared as a necessary tool for virtual tours in real time. In virtual time tours information is also important and affects the final decision. Real guide interaction has mentioned from non-frequent and frequent travelers as significant difference in virtual tours in real time. Human interaction in a new service is an essential tool. **Helen said:** "When you see something first time I might have many questions and I need someone to conduct me to my real preference". Virtual touring in real time is highly connected in travelers mind with the real guide. It works as a complementary service and adapts the real image with the information in real time. **George** mentioned that is a piece of the puzzle and has no difference from the real tour with physical presence. A destination can be benefited by such kind of structure using real guides and providing real time information in virtual travelers.

Technology has gained ground in travelers mind and appears a strong connection with virtual tours. **Arthur said:** "This will bring me closer to the real world". I need to feel it first and then I will be a part of it. In many cases virtual tours provide this feeling even in virtual time. Information comes closer also and the destination gain potential travelers. Memories can also be created using virtual tours in real time that

have strong affect in terms of the virtual time tours. **Anthony said:** "You cannot be tired traveling as you are traveling from your own home". I can have the same experience and memory from the tour as I was there. Memories, feelings and experiences are appeared enhanced in virtual tours in real time. Flexibility of time is a variable that is appeared more flexible in virtual time tours. However, destination is appeared to be benefited more in real time than virtual time tours.



Travelling in real time with physical presence cannot be replaced. Touring the destination virtually in real time for sightseeing approaches the real as mentioned. Group of frequent travelers believe that if the tour could not be real then it could be in real time. It can cover a wide range of activities someone can take on a real tour. **Rania said:** "Virtually travelling is stimuli instead when covers visitor's expectations". Virtual travelers need to satisfy their needs. Virtual tours in real time can be used for several reasons such as theme tours and activities. Touring the destination enhances the knowledge for is an advertisement for the area according to **Chris**. Potential travelers construct the image of the destination using virtual tour in real time. It is a motivation that can operates as push factor for real visit in the future. Observing the real destination has the same influence as visiting the destination. Participation enhances the feeling of being there without physical presence. Knowledge and experience could be derived by skilled guides and upgraded service through virtual touring on a destination.

Travelling virtually creates great emotions. **Chris** mentioned that this is the purpose of a real time and virtual time traveling. Approaching the senses traveler creates emotions and memories. Virtually it can be developed in any destination in the world as the potential of traveling has no limits. In this case traveling is the main purpose and the destination is the product that creates emotions and experiences. **Helen said:** "If I am on the destination virtually I feel safe". Security plays fundamental role. Virtual traveling in real time enhances the interaction among different people and cultures without having security issues. Individual non-frequent travelers have accepted the challenge to buy and try a virtual tour in real time. There is less concern

of safety issues and the adventure feeling of knowing other cultures has covered the feeling be unsafe.

**George** has focused on obtained experience. This is the difference said. In order to acquire the real experience it is mandatory the sightseeing tour to be valuable. **John said:** "I need to learn about the destination and have the same treatment as I was there". Several reasons such as economical issues might be incentives for virtual travel instead of classical travel way. Loyalty is based on expectations that are created by the first interest and experiences obtained during the tour. Another important element has mentioned by all interviewees is the time. In many cases absence of time for traveling could be a barrier to select a destination far from home destination. Most interviewees accept the advantage of traveling virtually in real time gaining a lot of time in order to select the destination of preference and possibly for future travel. **George said:** "There is less free time from my job and my family obligations". I have no time to make frequent trips. Hence this operates as stimuli for me to travel around the world. A different way of traveling is always an adventure that I could be a part of it.

Frequent travelers are most focused on touring a destination for sightseeing virtually in real time. **Chris** mentioned the two stages of traveling virtually. The importance of willingness for a destination comes first and then the interest for the specific destination. Interest for traveling and buy sightseeing or other tour has significant meaning on pre-visit and pre-decision for the destination. Virtual identity construction as well as and service quality keep the key role in decision making regarding virtual tours in real time. These stages should be considerable in order to measure the satisfaction of virtual visitors and the destination product itself.

**Tasos** characterize this tour as an evolution of contemporary technology. This action of buying online a virtual tour for sightseeing has gained a lot of interest. Younger ages are fully adapted with internet technology and it could be a major incentive for knowing the real world using it. Frequent travelers approach a specific tour as a way of traveling on a destination like a game in real place. Using glasses or other technological equipment the interaction is enhanced and the reality is coming closer. All interviewees found major incentives. It is worth seeing and trying as you gain time, money and you feel safe. Moreover, most respondents have distinguished the stages the virtual tour in real time passes. **Arthur said:** "First I will try the virtual tour then I will try it in real time and then if I like it I will go with my physical presence". At this point feedback is another important issue that affects the service quality and the destination loyalty. Satisfaction of a virtual tour in real time is based on technology and staff training. Destination gains visitors cannot affect the real place. It is a real challenge for unknown destinations to provide tours in order to construct a virtual

image and be a part of the global market. On the other hand, there is no instant affect regarding the real place which developing this specific activity.



Global market interaction paves the way building paths for interaction among virtual visitors and local entrepreneurs. Group of frequent travelers responded positively in buying products and services using online platforms. It is something exists on a different way using virtual time interaction nowadays. **Rania** mentioned the significance of the ability to buy tangible and intangible goods through this way. Technology has provided the potential to see, the product and at the same time to ask information in real time. Nevertheless, **Rania said:** "There must be a combination several things such as language communication, safe way of buying and guide at the specific destination". Guide for the execution of interaction is mandatory especially in tangible products. Visitors according to **John** need to speak and see the same time the good in order to decide. Information and view of the tangible good are the two most powerful tools for virtual shopping in real time. On the other hand, intangible goods need to have more information from the guide to provide safer feeling for buying according to **Rania**. This interaction might be more suspicious and is based on guide skills.

Aspects from individuals differ and are mostly based on feelings of trying something new. **Chris said:** "I am thinking of buying something from China for example and for me real time shopping attracts my interest". When I see it live there is the sense of be there and touch the product. Virtual shopping in real time satisfies the need of security for all travelers. It can attract the senses and can provide the potential of global market interest for shopping tangible and intangible goods simultaneously. The sense of sight seems to cover this feeling and creates a strong base for interaction for buying goods virtually in real time. Frequent and non-frequent travelers expressed positive feelings and the security issues have reduced regarding the quality of this service.

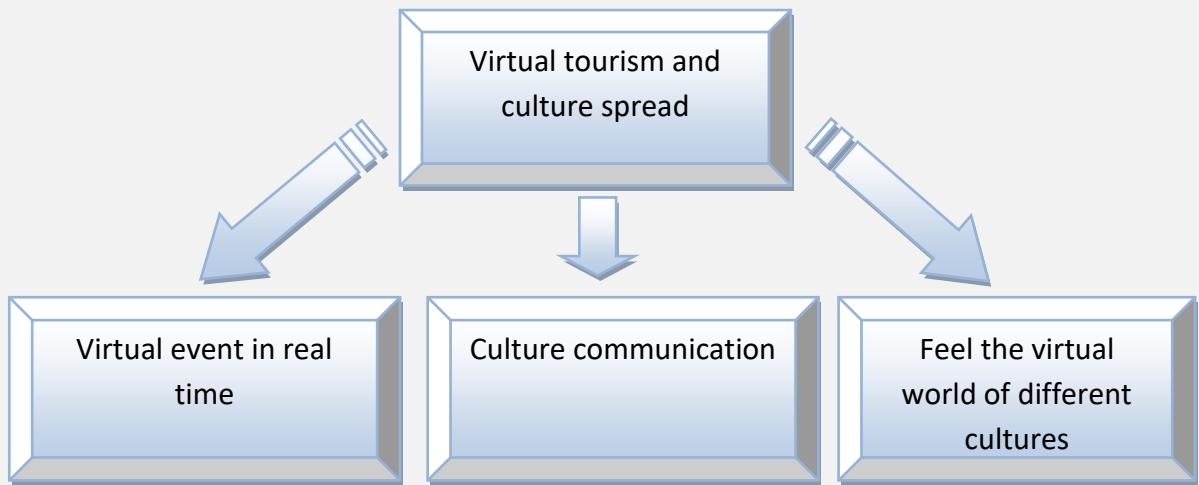
Positive aspects derived by safety feelings. Local entrepreneurs will be benefited in many cases according to **George**. They can have buyers from any place in the world and make money. This is a significant advantage for local destination's market development. Funds from other places in the world enhance the local economy without intermediaries. **Helen** referred in the way it happens. I would like to buy a product like I am there and try it in reality. This feeling is important for me. This feeling increases the probability of buying goods from several local entrepreneurs that cannot spend huge funds for advertising the businesses in the global market. Information is also important using distance shopping in real time. This interaction according to **George** needs to have skilled staff as they need to provide information to the virtual visitors and possibly in a different language. Another fundamental issue regarding the education and well-trained staff could be possible enhanced the local market demand for virtual shopping in real time.

Virtual shopping appears absence of real time interaction. **George said:** "in virtual shopping in real time I obtain directly the information from the real market". It might be virtually but the information is direct and real. In any doubt virtual visitor can ask explanations and more information about the product. It sounds more interesting comparing with a virtual shopping that has not the potential of real time information. This difference has mentioned from all travelers as an important path for future shopping and as a good way to buy products from other countries.

Internet according to **Tasos** has changed the way we buy products and services. There is always the possibility to buy a product using the classical way online. This can happen on virtual time and place. **Chris** mentioned that in real time but virtually, shopping is different. When I see someone live I need information and I need him to be my guide. It is the best way for me to buy the product from any place in the world. Product description seems to be a major expectation interacting with the staff for shopping. It enhances the probability of distance buying at the highest level. Moreover, it provides insights for the entrepreneurs regarding the visitors' profiles and preferences in real time and this can be used as a real time data for improvements.

Product has mentioned by **Anthony** and **Arthur**. In terms of the quality, product should cover my expectations in order to spent money to buy it. In both cases virtually and virtually in real time product's quality plays important role for buyer. Transaction is also another issue **Zoi**, **Anthony** and **Arthur** have mentioned as important part of the virtual shopping in real time. Security of transaction is mandatory for virtual visitor. There must be a digital wallet with all information about the visitor and the entrepreneur according to **Anthony**. This can build a trust among the visitor and the market. There is a significant interesting for buying products from the global market. Although this works as an attractive mean that

connects instantly the global market with buyers, safety of transaction as well as market reliability are based on security and information of the transaction provided.



Culture spread in personal or society development has mentioned several times regarding this question. Frequent travelers are appeared ready to support the idea of giving an event of their destination virtually. Promotion is the first word comes to their mind regarding the local community and the culture also. However, individual event has seems to be more considerable in order to be provided online. **Rania said:** “Culture is a significant element for foreigners that enrich their knowledge about the destination”. People that are immigrants and have left the country may also be a part of such kind of an online culture event of their country. On a personal event in most cases interviewees prefer to have friends and relatives. Frequent travelers are much more open to a wider audience in terms of individual non-frequent travelers. Individuals mentioned that this is something we hear first time and it might be a good advertisement for the destination and the local society. The idea looks innovative according to the frequent travelers and enhances the communication of local community with the world. Culture through events is becoming popular outside of the local area and assists the people to increase their concern about the destination and the people there.

The possibility of presenting a personal wedding has referred as an example and has found many concerns regarding the privacy of the personal moment. The possibility of presenting such kind of events exists only in frequent travelers. **Chris said:** “It is a very interesting way to see people from abroad”. I have seen virtual events but not in real time. Virtual events have the potential of attract many virtual visitors especially when they are presented in real time. On a personal event it seems the online presentation in real time creates ethical issues that need to be handled by providers. **Chris** from non-frequent travelers said the idea of present something

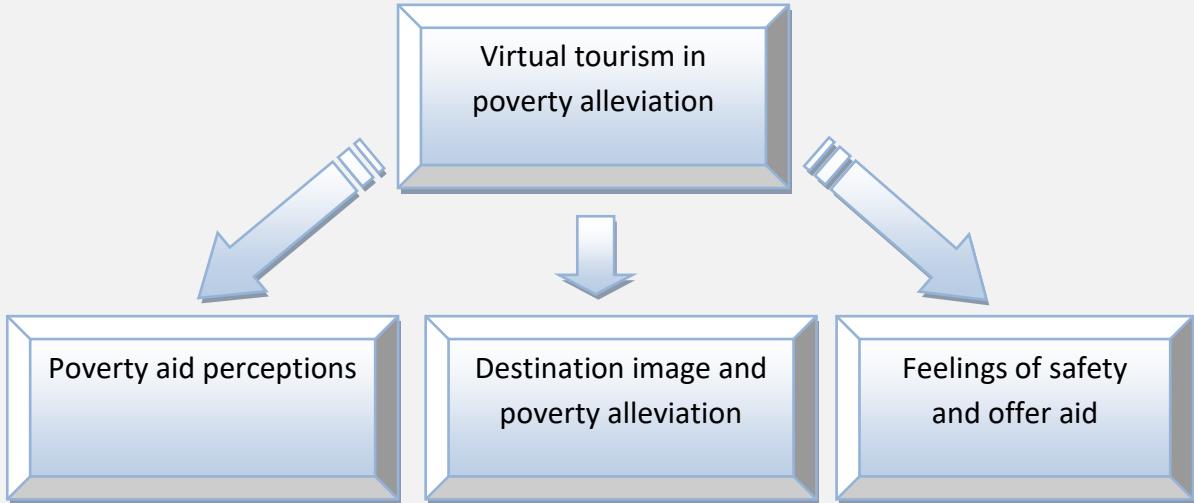
personal and can be seen by million people might be good and attracts me. However, I need to be sure for the audience because it is a personal moment.

In many cases frequent travelers and non-frequent travelers have provided the interest for virtual culture spread. **George said:** "Providing a personal event is not in my character". However, this could be happen in a public event I could take place such as a restaurant or in a place that provides the civilization or even for tourism purpose. Public events correlated with the destination and the history of a place has most common interest for travelers in order to participate. **Helen** mentioned that the participation in a culture or public event enhances the image of the area and personal knowledge for the history. Public virtual event in most cases are adapted with personal habits of travelers and there is willingness of more participation and spread such kind of events globally.

Tourism purpose is a significant element recognized by most travelers for virtual event presentation. In common local events there is a connection with the culture ideology that enhances the potential of spread the culture virtually.

**Tasos** has referred mainly in globalization that takes place virtually. This is a practical way to provide the globalization idea in tourism and culture he said. There is a concern of losing the culture values by spreading globally every part of it. However the potential of development has more interesting and can develop the interest for foreigners to see and support the destination according to **John**. This might be a starting point for investments and develop the destination providing jobs and tourism opportunities for locals according to **Zoi**. This crucial issue can become a part of virtually recognition of a destination for global interest in several cases for tourism and other sectors' development.

The experience of e virtual event has described by **Anthony**. First I need to see an event and then I could decide what feelings and experiences provides he said. This experience is stimuli to participate and present an event. Previous experience seems to have major meaning regarding the willingness to provide a cultural event virtually in real time in an unknown audience. In personal level ethical issues can become barriers several cases. **Arthur** has mentioned another significant part of the virtual presentation. Unlimited people means unlimited price for revenues. Individual events as well as local areas' events have the potential of gaining money from the global market observing events. The potential of having funds for the destination development could be based in virtual events even on a personal level. The ability of spread most of cultural elements virtually seems to have many advantages regarding the image and development. Travelers have provided the willingness to be a part of it enhancing the destination development and the personal well-being.



Poverty alleviation is a major issue in tourism industry. Both frequent and non-frequent travelers accept the challenge in assisting in some way the real poverty. Safe transaction in order to reach the money to the appropriate people is a major concern according to **Rania**. There is the perception of money stealing by intermediaries and companies using current methods for poverty assistance. Frequent travelers refer the importance of seeing where the money goes. What I gave and where it goes is mentioned also by **Rania** as the most important element for assisting poor people through tourism activities. Transactions should be safe receivers should have the opportunity to interact with the providers in order to provide the feeling of real and safe transaction. Furthermore, regulations of such countries should be an issue for real time interaction. Frequent travelers mentioned that ethical issues might emerge during the live interaction. In this case barriers should be considerable and regulated by local governance in order to avoid possible conflicts.

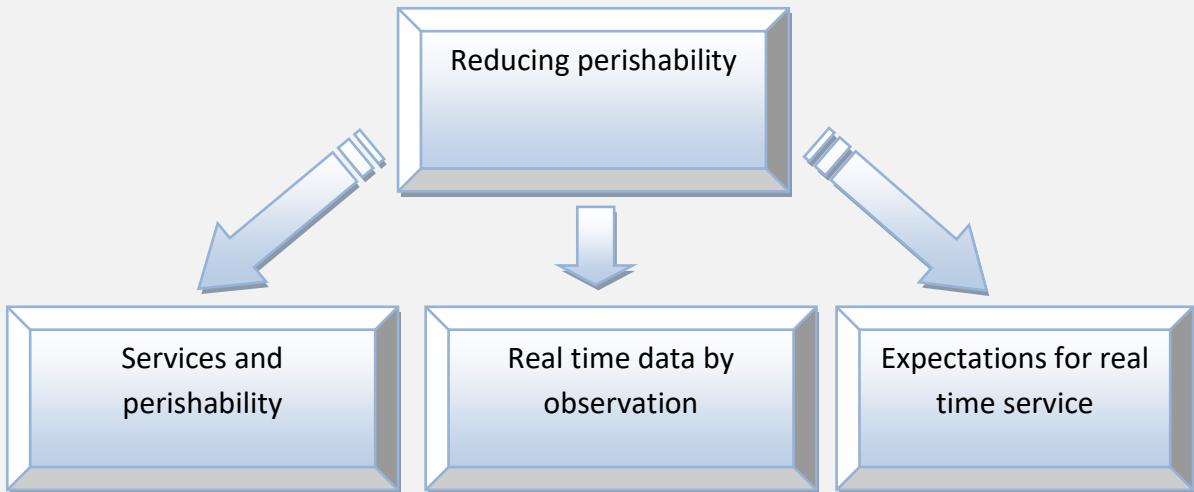
Non-frequent travelers encounter this challenge positively. **Chris said:** "I have good feelings for this". Whatever contributes to the poverty I am ready to support it. There is a lack of information about the way it will happen but travelers are mostly focused on the result which has major meaning. Assistance nowadays is based on volunteer tourism and other sectors according to frequent travelers. It could be a nice opportunity to be personalized and provide the potential for individuals to contribute. Instead of giving money to a private organization, money can go directly to the person of choice. Many people according to **Chris** do not trust big organizations that help poverty. This is a good way to avoid them. Feeling of trust plays important role in the choice of transaction and provides direct experience for providers and receivers.

**George said:** "I haven't heard anything similar" I need a service to provide instant assistance and to have direct contact with the person who has this need. The way of providing help is characterized as exceptional form frequent travelers. Service is provided directly and the transaction has instant benefits for the poor people.

Poverty alleviation can be based on the global market and find virtual visitors' contribution according to **Helen**. Result that can be viewed is mandatory in this case. Many interviewees mentioned whatever I could do I would do it for poor people. There is a significant perception of acceptance and a willingness of offer regarding poor people assistance. In this direct communication there are no channels using the transaction. The sense of view together with the direct communication enhances this service safety and makes it have good demand. Another important issue is the sustainability of this service according to **Helen**. Continuity could bring sustainability and might be the step for poverty alleviation. Destinations have the opportunity to provide poverty assistance based on global virtual audience on a constant way bringing sustainability and reducing poverty simultaneously.

**Chris** mentioned the need of a database of people. It is a personalized tour with people of choice. It needs to have a list of people for choice in order to avoid paying the same person and become a game for cheating virtual visitors. Security of internet website and transaction are crucial issues that might affect the results of the service. Direct communication in real time and transaction can solve most of issues regarding the tour for poverty. However, tailor-made power of choosing people is appeared as a significant part of the service.

Travelers in general have expressed the aspect of the global inequality and the lower living of standards especially in 21<sup>st</sup> century. **Tasos said:** "It is an incentive for me and others to provide assistance in the poor world". Undoubtedly, it could increase the living standards of the people and the country generally. This service in travelers' perception can contribute to the elimination of real poverty gradually. Development has mentioned by **Tasos** as a sign of tourism assistance in such kind of countries and is a significant factor for local communities' prosperity. This word of poverty nowadays should become a past and be eliminated from the dictionary. **Anthony** mentioned the role of tourism in poverty is like a good provided in service. Visual contact and first experience seems to play the role of building the image of this service. **Anthony** puts this specific service in three categories. Safety, understand and help. Knowledge and experience are both important for virtual travelers in order to use this service. Both can lead to the safety and loyalty for such kind of tours. **Arthur said:** "I can spend money on the way I could not thing to spend and the destination brings me the product I ignored" Destination comes to the virtual visitor. This aspect is very important and presents both advantages for the destination and the local poor people together. There are no limits of offer in this service and the destination image as well as poor people can be benefited simultaneously. **John** and **Zoi** mentioned the image of the destination might be different after a period as the destination might be world known. It seems to be stimuli for locals and foreigners to invest in the construction of the image providing assistance to the poverty.



Frequent travelers feel observers regarding the possibility of booking a specific empty seat in a restaurant or during a trip in order to see how it works and the quality for choosing it. **Rania said:** "I feel as observer that criticizes the service". It is a different way to see things instead of posting opinion in social media. In real time observation the potential of instant data have mentioned from frequent travelers also. Social interaction can be at the time of the virtual service in real time and provoke changes at the same time. Most non-frequent travelers find this service as a specific service for companies and good for individuals that also seek for specific quality. **John** mentioned that virtual travelers and especially companies that offer the service can see how it looks like in their eyes and adapt it to their expectations regarding the quality instantly.

**Chris** is seeing this service as an upgrade challenge. It is a good idea that can provide upgrade opportunities for companies he said. Products can be passed form quality control without physical presence of the company or the visitor. It looks as an assistant tool for companies' real time data and marketers for designing the plan based on real time needs. Economical benefits can be enhanced reducing expenses for such kind of quality researches according to **George**. Instant reactions and data obtained by virtual visitors can reveal detailed analysis of negative feelings and they can contribute to the instant correction of the service. There is a positive perception of using this service from most travelers. **Helen** has mentioned the visitor's benefits referring the ability to see few places of preference in order to decide the best option for you. The contribution in choices for a destination or a place seems that can reduce the perishability in several cases using this service. However, the quality of the service possibly needs to be high in advance and meets the virtual visitors' expectation.

**Chris said:** "It is a way of saving money for companies and visitors" This can be used for real or virtual visitors and helps in both cases. It is a great way also to see if the

advertisement and the information you obtain for the place is real. In real time observation there is no opportunity of presenting an enhancement service and a better quality for the product. **Zoi said:** "If the reality is the same as the advertisement I could go virtually or with my physical presence" The whole idea contributes to the individual choices and companies to save time and money. It can assist companies to observe and upgrade the service they offer and educate the staff properly the same time. Non frequent travelers mentioned the significance of the services exists. **Tasos said:** "It is a good idea but services need to be upgraded especially in tourism industry" I can trust services as they are. There must be public or private regulations and companies that control and provide such kind of services checking other companies. Tourism industry appears reliability regarding services and products offer. However, quality of products should be considered and be upgraded in order to reach the global standards. Reducing perishability according to **Anthony** is a good way for business to start growing and provide top quality of services. **Arthur** mentioned the ability of staff to control the needs of the customer and provide the professional service. Knowledge and training seems to have a significant role in services and together with the real time observation can contribute to the development of the place and the quality upgrade of the businesses.



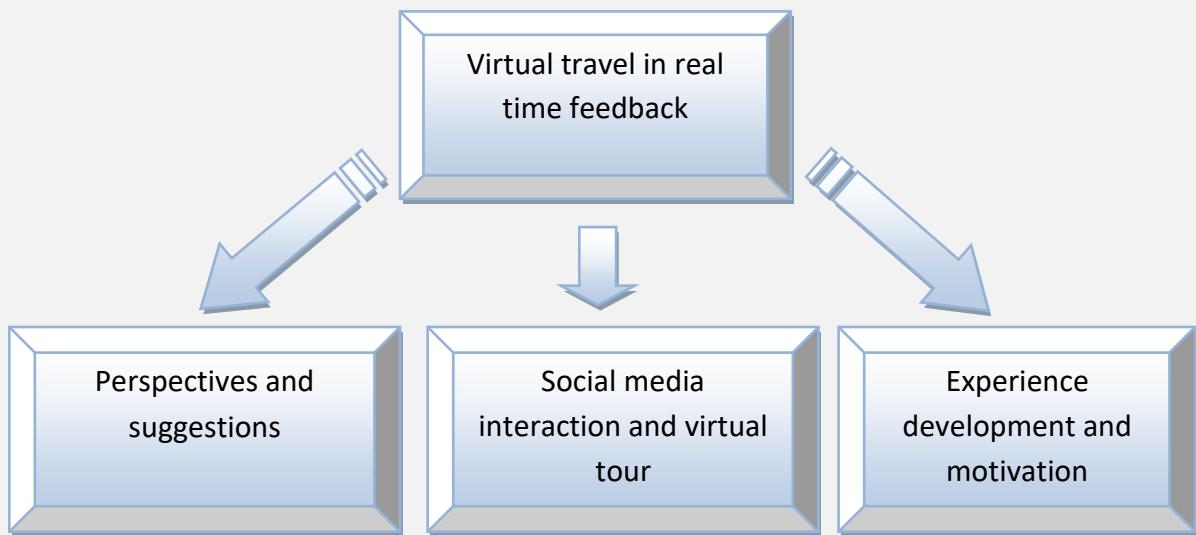
Most frequent travelers have experienced a virtual tour usually on a museum with augmented reality and other technological innovations. Nowadays advanced technology has gained ground and brought the past closer using interactive ways to communicate with the present according to frequent travelers' perception. **Rania** mentioned the important help of a virtual visit on a historical destination as a tool for the development for the society. Civilization includes the history of the place according to **John** and can develop global interesting for the destination. "This

advertisement enhances the image of the destination and constructs a global culture identity" **Zoi said**. Virtual visits as a tourism activity seems to have the opportunity to develop a cultural identity for the destination and pave the way for sustainability. Frequent travelers find the real destination as a virtual meeting point for the civilization with the other world. Culture spread can be achieved through virtual visit of a destination and it can also be the initial step for virtual identity construction.

On the other hand, less frequent travelers have no similar experience of virtual tour. **Chris said**: "Technology can help the destination to develop such kind of visits". It seems to be an innovation that increases the visits from several devices such as cell phones and computers. Nevertheless, they recognize the value of the service for the destination and the society. **George** has referred in the development of the destination and the local community as well as local entrepreneurs. It is a huge opportunity for local business to become global players and increase the value of the local products. This perception is based on the interaction among the local cultural product and the community well-being that can be benefited by the global interest. It can be applied in visitors and locals also according to **Helen**. Unemployment might find a solution in many destinations and living standards can be increased **George said**: "Travelers believe this service offers the potential of a sustainable development for a destination based on culture and technology". It is a great experience that helps locals to interact with foreigners and meet other cultures according to **George**. Meeting new people there is a great opportunity to develop new ideas and provide evolution. Differentiation regarding the product offered is the characteristic of this service for the destination. **Chris** mentioned the importance of seeing the destination that could not be seen on another way. Economical reasons and other reasons might be barriers to visit the destination. "It could be the place I was dreaming to live" **Chris said**. In a virtual visit the position is rented and the visitor is interacting in real time. This makes the destination a recognizable place and favorable for many new visitors.

**Tasos** from non-frequent travelers has mentioned the significance of the policy. It is very important to have specific regulations flexible in order to provide this service on a professional way. It must belong to a specific policy agenda he said. This policy should be based on collaboration between countries as the service has no real borders. According to **Tasos**, the potential to offer on a specific time a specific service needs to have a specific policy that covers all countries. Governance is probably on a supernational level and regulations should be based on common goals for all players. Tourism industry according to frequent travelers is a global industry. **Tasos said**: "Tourism must become more flexible and free than today in order to achieve sustainability and development"

Advertisement brings the stimuli and the visit brings the experience according to **Anthony**. Decision must be valuable and meet my requirements he said. New technology motivates potential visitors to try this service according to **Arthur**. Experience of a virtual tour on a destination is appeared as a fundamental factor for the destination's image and opens paths for sustainability and loyalty regarding the product and serviced offered. Travelers have expressed the willingness to visit virtually the destination and described it as an important experience.



Virtual travel in real time for frequent travelers' perspectives is mostly positive and appears strong advantages regarding the stimuli for real travel in the future. **Rania said:** "I can recommend it if the cost is low and adapted to my preferences" Price together with the other prerequisites such as language availability and trained staff are compulsory elements for virtual tours in real time. A virtual tour can allure the senses and provide benefits for the destination that might be the stimuli for real travel experience according to **John**. An experience that has covered my expectations is stimuli to suggest the tour to others according to **Zoi**. It is clearly seen the experience has built from a virtual tour in real time is a powerful incentive for attract more visitors and provide a positive feedback.

**Chris said:** "Provided I have explored the destination virtually and I have a positive feeling It would be stimuli to visit the place with my physical presence". Virtual presence on the destination is a significant advantage that motivates visitors to visit the real destination as it constructs the virtual image in mind. It is a perfect way according to **George** to choose the destination for real visit after a virtual tour in real time. Satisfaction plays an important role in decision making for visit and suggests a destination. Quality of services should be in the highest level in order to provide a strong product and loyal customers. **Helen said:** "The first experience determines the decision". If the destination had offered a great experience my desire would be

focused to go with my physical presence and live it in reality. If the tour would not meet my expectations I could choose a different destination.

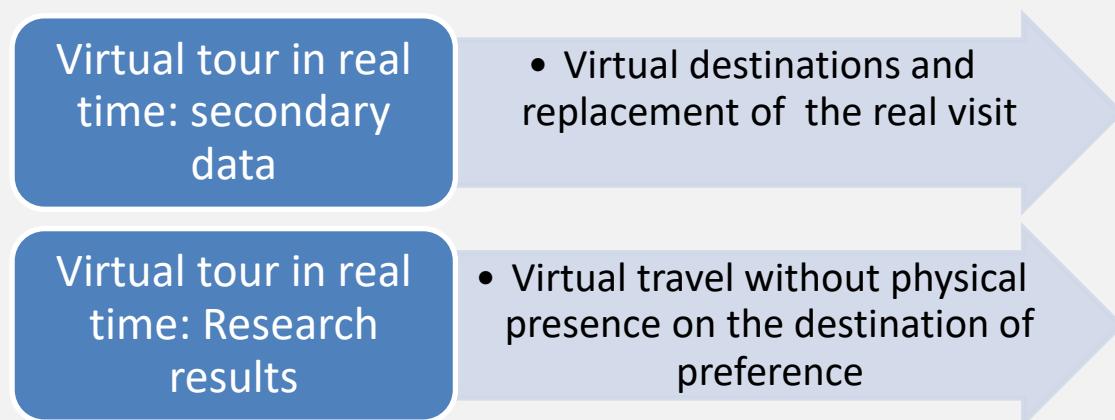
**Chris** mentioned that these kinds of tours are costless providing safety visits with very low budget. **Tasos said:** "This could be very popular in social media". There is a strong correlation between social media and virtual tourism according to many travelers. Social media have no borders and can spread easily the service globally. It can become an occupation for everyday life that people can adapt to their lives according to **Tasos**. Many people would emulate it and be a part of their lives globally. There is an aspect of world spread though social media for virtual tour in real time. If the experience is good then there is a high possibility to suggest it to others through word of mouth and social media.

**Anthony said:** "It is a good way to check if the reality worth its money". Virtual tour in real time provides a solution to the value of a destination. It can reveal the reality and distinguishes the virtual image and the real image providing real time experiences on the destination. It is a good tool for choosing a destination according to **Arthur** and it can become the most popular way to test the reliability of the place.

#### **Discussion: Data connection and analysis**

Constructing the virtual model of tourism in real time literature review and primary research have revealed common issues and several new perceptions. A secondary data analysis together with the primary results provides valuable evidence for the construction of the virtual tourism in real time. Both analysis below appear positive results regarding this new model of tourism.

*Secondary data and primary research results analysis:*



Virtual travel creates virtual destinations reducing the cost of real travel and creating real time information and feedback. This virtual transfer has described by travelers as a journey without physical presence. Travel without being on the real destination can replace the real visit on the stage of pre-visit and can affect the decision making for real visit. Travelling virtually in real time according to many researchers adds

value to the experience and provides information for the destination. Travelers feel the opportunity to participate referring that this works as stimuli to visit many dream destinations. It is a step closer to the reality in terms of a virtual travel in virtual time.

### Virtual shopping in real time: secondary data

- Enhancement of the consumption, stakeholders interaction and market profitability

### Virtual shopping in real time: Research results

- Virtual interaction, safe transaction and real time communication

Markets can be benefited by global consumption using virtual shopping in real time. Virtual shopping has increased the global shopping in many sectors. Travel, accommodation and other companies on a destination can be reached personalized having detailed description of the products and services. Travelers have described this virtual interaction as familiar and technological evolution. Consumption is the main characteristic of the virtual transaction that offers the potential of increasing demand and destination local market development. Safety of transaction seems to be enhanced by real time communication among virtual buyer and businesses' staff.

### Virtual tour in real time and culture spread: secondary data

- World culture accessible and local community benefits

### Virtual tour in real time and culture spread: Research results

- Local community profits by culture spread and global opportunity for cultural communication

Meet the world cultures using global interaction is one of the benefits that make the destination's customs accessible. In terms of benefits travelers and previous researches find the culture spread as a global opportunity that provides significant benefits for local residents and destinations. This type of communication demands educated staff and upgrades the destination's product and services quality. Technological improvement has digitalized most of activities. However, personal events in the global market have not the same feeling of safety for travelers as there is lack of similar experience. There is a common characteristic of the destination image that is believed it can be constructed by culture. Virtual touring in

combination with culture enriches the virtual identity and makes the destination popular to the global market.

Virtual tour in real time and poverty alleviation:  
secondary data

- local community and decision making. Technology and cost reduction

Virtual tour in real time and poverty alleviation:  
Research results

- Direct communication with poor people and safe transaction

Poverty alleviation has been analyzed by many researchers and practitioners. There is a perception of adapting local residents in decision making which is described as one of the keys for boosting the destination's prosperity and development. It is believed it can control the demand and reduce the costs for the destination as well as increase the consumption. Travelers express emotions and desire to participate virtually in order to help the poverty alleviation. Key for boosting the poverty elimination is mainly adapted with the direct contact that increases the security avoiding intermediaries. The goal according to many travelers is to enhance the interaction among poor people and virtual visitors providing a safe communication and real assistance.

*Findings and theory analysis:*

Exploring the virtual travel model in real time it can be seen the intention of travelers to participate on a virtual tour for several reasons. The travel experience starts from the home destination and creates memories that construct the virtual product and services of the real destination. During the interaction travelers develop feelings which create a strong positioning in virtual visitors' mind. Communication in real time is the tool that utilizes the senses and upgrades the experience. The concept seems to significant ability to the improvement of the services and products' quality. Real time interaction is able to prevent mistakes and provide instant information regarding the visitors' preferences. Undoubtedly, real time data assist the destination after the visit to reduce the possibility of negative feedback and gain loyalty visitors.

Virtual tours in real time can transfer and connect the virtual travelers from the globe during the tour offering the destination experience. The tour operates as a social network that enhances the real communication between people creating common interests and changing opinions. Virtual visits in real time can be used in virtual shopping obtaining real time information for the product or service provided.

Travelers have obtained as a virtual interaction with real staff controlling the purchase. This interaction has born safety issues and a huge opportunity for the destination to gain money from the whole world. In the field of culture there is a challenge of advertising the destination and spread the culture in the virtual world. Differentiation regarding the product and knowledge spread is gaining ground through this virtual culture world. Undiscovered destinations have the opportunity to move instantly their products to the global market and gain interest in many sectors.

Companies and individuals can obtain in real time information about a product and services. Saving time and money for future researches reducing perishability is one of the major advantages using real time observation. The potential to make the proper choice observing in real time a place and the ability to improve the service observing an empty space such as a restaurant seat is characterized as a significant advantage to save money and time. In virtual tours in real time the sense of offer is enhanced regarding poverty alleviation. Living standards with the aid of innovation through virtual tours in poor destinations have the potential of upgrade. Personal contact with the poor people in real time constructs the trust between virtual visitors and local poor people. Virtual tourism in real time presents a new model of tourism that replaces the traditional way of virtual tourism allowing the interaction without physical presence. Virtual growth visualizing the destination connects the real products with virtual customers and this can build a sustainable development without having negative effects to the destination.

Virtual participation in real time has significant acceptance in many cases in travel and accommodation industry. Many sectors can be benefited from this interaction. Stakeholders' connection is a useful implement that can be achieved by virtual collaboration in real time. Entrepreneurship and education could be both important sectors in order to research the possibility to create a virtual interaction in real time. Students are able using virtual interaction in real time to collect data from another place or university in the world and at the same time to have a virtual exchange with other students. It could be useful to develop a future research in education based on that. In the field of entrepreneurship, working on a destination without physical presence could be achieved by hiring staff in order to participate in specific tasks are provided from a different place. Entrepreneurship and education are both major sectors contribute to the destination's sustainability and create a path for higher living standards. Virtual tourism is highly connected with the development of both sectors that can become parts of the virtual identity of destinations and local entrepreneur's development.

Virtual tourism as a model of travel in real time without physical presence adapts the classical travel and activities on a virtual interaction. Day tours and routes design

based on themes such as wine tourism or sightseeing or even activities in nature offered virtually in real time create a new model of travel and participate in the field of tourism. Virtual experiences in real time take place in accommodation sector especially in hotels may present virtual events such as weddings combining virtual and real visitors. In addition, packages for virtual vacation are a combination that can be used for virtual activities. Taking a theme tour and having a wellness activity or having a virtual activity lesson and being invited on a virtual custom create a complete virtual package. Moreover, personalized packages and virtual travel and activities through the platform develop a network of interests that allow individuals to have revenues. Personalized preferences for tours, shopping and activities are created from individuals and expressed through the platform. Such kind of interests is executed by professionals or individuals from the destination of interest creating a real transaction and revenues. A network of several stakeholders' collaboration is taking place in virtual tourism in real time. Online travel companies offering tours and packages have the opportunity to provide virtual tours and packages. A platform that connects the virtual visitor and the destination or guide is the tool for the communication among them. Travel industry executes the tours and activities for virtual visitors that might be on a different destination or even in the destination. Accommodation industry can offer various activities and events that can be presented in real time such as celebrations, concerts and weddings.

Virtual tourism is useful and can include many types of niche tourism activities. Wellness tourism, medical tourism, photographic tourism activities, cultural activities, natural activities and virtual shopping are some of the activities virtual tourism in real time can be used. This experience should be provided through the hotels for visitors who stay in order to have the potential of travel virtually and make a personalized tour design before the real visit. Restaurants and tour buses have the opportunity to improve the quality using the empty seats for online observation in real time. Empty seats can be offered with a small price collecting real time data. Hotel rooms might also be useful to use this service for empty rooms observing the cleaning process and decoration process. Local entrepreneurs should be useful to invest having employees that can offer a virtual shopping experience for tangible and intangible goods attracting people from the global market. Travel agencies and hotels providing a tour for visitors that have already booked the trip or potential visitors offer a pre-visit virtual experience. Tourism industry assists the poverty creating several jobs in the global market. Tour companies in collaboration with non-profit organizations and local entrepreneurs as well as public organizations can offer tours based on basic needs for poor countries. These specific tours are applied for poor people offering medicine, clothes, accommodation and food during the tour. This interaction gives the opportunity for individuals to offer virtually and at the

same time observe the result in real time. This offer might be the stimuli and the motivator factor to start eliminating the poverty approaching the global interest.

### **Further Research Development**

Applying the virtual communication in real time many professions have the ability to collaborate eliminating distances. Beyond tourism industry, education for instance acquires significant benefits. In many cases, universities collaboration is based on information technology that allows the instant external communication between them. Future researches should be valuable to start measuring the added value of the real time communication among universities without physical presence. More specifically, students could gain the advantage to have a real time exchange and studying without being there. The differentiation of making researches on a specific place interviewing people and even more making experiments and working with other students, exchanging knowledge without physical presence, generates a huge question? How far is the globalization between the professions and how this can contribute to the elimination of cultural and personal barriers?

Virtual communication in real time allows students not only to study but to participate and develop projects around the world collaborating with other students. In the field of tourism for example, interviews of destination's stakeholders, speaking with locals, even more exploring the natural environment of the destination can be achieved without physical presence. Other students or researchers of the destination can become parts of the research and execute the same project. This could be a virtual exchange of students that avoids economical, political and ethical barriers in terms of the knowledge.

Education is one of the major sectors that characterize the living standards of a country. It would be useful to answer the question of how real time exchange education can contribute increasing the living standards of the destination. Moreover, the globalization of knowledge might affect the real market value in terms of the traditional merits and local customs. All these asymmetries should be parts of future researches using such kind of virtual communication and participation.

### **Conclusion**

Virtual world of travel has gained ground since technological evolution adapted to everyday life. Several opportunities emerged for destinations and travelers using such kind of technology. Future destinations will be adapted and driven by virtual communication and based on real time information. Undoubtedly, virtual tourism in real time upgrades the travelers experience allowing them to participate and interact with the destination and local people. Virtual travelers in real time are able

to create personalized experiences using travel in real time. This interaction operates as motivator factor for visits and best choices for destinations. Following this path, destinations' products in terms of culture, nature and entrepreneurship obtain virtual interesting and transactions gaining strong positioning. Real time data assist the virtual image of the destination by virtual travelers which provide instantly feedback. Virtual tourism technology has the potential to connect stakeholders and provide a global hub that is able to assist poverty alleviation. Most travelers are adapted with virtual technology expressing a willing to be parts of this new travel experience. Safety and security regarding the real time interaction can affect the quality of the service on a virtual tourism activity in real time. However, barriers regarding financial reasons or time can be overcome by using virtual travel in real time. Travelling without physical presence provides opportunities for development connecting the global market with the destination. In addition, virtual travelers are able to build and control the world of travel and based on personal preferences. Moreover, there is a potential of revenues on a personal or professional level. The overall project involves a lot of professions, stakeholders and approaches the global market virtually. Generating a research, approaching the real through the innovation technology, personally there is a huge change of build a communication keeping the values and expanding the knowledge. Tourism destinations have the potential of booming and control of natural resources using such kind of technology. Local residents are open to the global market and keep the customs avoiding overtourism and other destination's issues. Finally, virtual visitors have the opportunity to travel, learn, assist and share experiences from the home destination feeling the travel experience closer to the reality.

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## Appendix

### *Exploratory research:*

#### FREQUENT TRAVELLERS-FOCUS GROUP

NAME	AGE	PROFESSION
YIANNIS NTANAS (JOHN)	44	FIREFIGHTER
ZOI DIMOPOULOU	42	TEACHER
RANIA KRIKONI	32	JOURNALIST
ANTHONY HATZOPoulos	45	DEVELOPER ANALYST
CHRIS ATHANASIOU	41	BANK TELLER

DAY	TIME
05/05/2019	12:00 PM

#### NON-FREQUENT TRAVELERS-INDIVIDUALS

NAME	AGE	PROFESSION
CHRIS LAMPROULIS	40	UNEMPLOYED
GEORGE PAPPAS	39	TRANSLATOR
HELEN TRICHA	42	SELLER
TASOS DIMOS	44	RESEARCHER
ARTHUR KAPETAS	46	RISK MANAGEMENT

INTERVIEWER	DAY	TIME
CHRIS LAMPROULIS	10/05	11:00PM
GEORGE PAPPAS	10/05	15:30PM
HELEN TRICHA	12/05	12:00PM
TASOS DIMOS	14/05	14:00PM
ARTHUR KAPETAS	18/05	12:00PM