

**From tourists' preferences to yield paths of tourism development
The case of the Algarve**

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Abstract

This paper develops new measures of tourism yield in the context of the Algarve region, a mature sun and sand destination in the south of Portugal. The proposal is to use revealed preferences to identify and assess the more high-yield preferences over a four year period. In order to contribute to the discussion of tourism yield measures, we adopt tourists' preferences as a proxy of visitor yield in order to assess the competitiveness of the Algarve. The secondary data used is provided by a self-administrated questionnaire survey applied between 2007 and 2010 to international tourists during their departure from Faro international airport, a total sample of 15542 observations. An additional theoretical contribution of this paper lies in the extended discussion about tourism and visitor yield measurements. The results obtained evidence dynamic patterns of tourists' preferences over the years, which are identified throughout the evolution of visitor yield frontiers. Further, implications for destination competitiveness are discussed.

Keywords: Tourism yield, visitor yield, tourists' preferences, consumer behaviour, competitive positioning, Algarve