

DESTINATION BRAND PERSONALITY OF PORTUGAL FOR THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays brand personality is admitted to be one of the essential parts of brand strategy. It has also become a popular aspect of destination branding due to the fact that destinations are constantly competing for visitors attention in various ways. The term of branding has been first applied to marketing of services or places since the 1990's. Later on it was broadened and utilized by specialists in the field of tourism marketing. Tourism brand personality is a relatively new one and there are only few works devoted to brand personality of countries as tourism destinations.

Keeping in mind the novelty of the research area, this study was planned as exploratory in nature. The stated goal of the research is: to identify the brand personality attributes ascribed to Portugal by the Russian-speaking market and compare the possible existing differences of attributes among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors). The results of this research might be interesting to the local officials and to business representatives as it highlights the main attributes of Portugal brand personality from the Russian speaking people's point of view.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Nation Brand Personality, Tourism Destination

JEL Classification: M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays brand personality is admitted to be one of the essential parts of any brand (Aaker, 1997). It has also become a popular aspect of destination branding due to the fact that destinations are constantly competing for visitors attention in various ways. Differentiation from others is the key to catching attention. Market research, constant attention to the campaigns of competitors, use of modern practices, well-designed and well-targeted advertising campaigns - all these elements enable a place (country, city, resort, tourist destination) to be successful and recognizable.

We started with the study of the theoretic information on "brand" topic, specifically: the definitions of brand suggested by various authors; types of brand contacts and benefits of branding. Then the adaptation of the branding theory to country and nation brands is presented. Being similar to branding of products and services, it also depends on the brand contacts and requires a thorough research. Country branding has some specific goals that are stated here. Arising from branding of a nation, a more particular topic "nation brand personality" is presented too. Some studies in the area (e.g. Aaker, 1997; d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007 and Fournier, 1998) concerning concept and scales to study the brand

personality are mentioned further. Some of the methodologies used to carry out research in brand personality and nation brand personality are discussed.

This research paper is about Portugal, a country for which tourism is one of the main sectors of economy and it is about the choice of the Russian-speaking market as the target market of research. So, the goal of this research is to study of brand personality of Portugal as tourism destination to the Russian-speaking markets. On the initial step, the official touristic website of Portugal was analyzed (the contents and newsletters). After that the Internet search was done to find various data regarding the Russian-speaking market and its characteristics. Upon the completion of that part and the theory review the questionnaire was designed, and created on Google drive (free on-line tool, enabling the creation of surveys with questions of different types; has no restrictions regarding the number of questions or the number of responses). During the period of almost two months the link on the questionnaire was distributed via the social network widely used by the target market – vk.com. The results were translated from Russian into English and analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and WordStat 6.1. The brand personality attributes of Portugal have been identified and compared among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors).

This research paper has both, managerial and theoretical implementations. Due to the novelty of the topic, this work with the literature review and the research methodology suggested can serve as a basis for other papers on brand personality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. From Brand to Brand Personality

Before going to the brand personality concept and its application to destinations, the term “brand” should be discussed. There are several definitions, but here will only be mentioned those, close to the meaning used later on to define nation brand personality. A brand is an impression perceived in a client’s mind about a product or a service. It includes a sum of all the tangible and intangible attributes, which makes the selection unique (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). A more detailed definition is that a brand is not only a symbol that distinguishes one product from others, but also all the tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological attributes and features related to the product that come to mind when consumer thinks about the brand (Kapferer, 1997). Obviously, a brand is sort of personality related to the product, a certain promise of quality and particular experience.

Arising from the given definitions, some benefits of branding are to be claimed: (1) differentiates/separates itself from competing products (Styles and Amber, 1995); (2) creates emotional benefits for the customer (e.g. Srinivasan, 1987); (3) brings long-term strategic benefits (Murphy, 1998); (4) brands direct practical arrangements between companies. People pay for trademarks and brands more than for physical assets (machinery, buildings, warehouses) (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009); (5) enables the connection of responsibility to the producer (Keller, 1998); and (6) guarantees the quality and gives protection if anything goes wrong (Besanko *et al.*, 2005). Given a brand can satisfy both rational and emotional needs and expectations of target customers it can be considered successful. Evaluation of “successfulness” can be made differently: assessing the influence on turnover, brand awareness, to which extend the brand supports the desired image of the product and the company, profitability (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

It is necessary to mention brand contacts while talking about brands. Observations that people make about the surrounding world and relate to a brand are called brand contacts (Schultz and Barnes, 1999). There are 4 categories of brand contacts (Moilanen and Rainisto,

2009): (1) planned messages (advertising, brochures); (2) product messages (physical settings, features); (3) service messages (contacts in the service process); and (4) Unplanned messages (word-of-mouth, reviews, articles). With a flow of time collected, brand contacts lead to a brand relationship, which creates meaning in the consumers' minds for products, services, etc. Each individualized image is based on the bunch of brand contacts one has received (Gronroos, 2001). Not all the brand contacts are of same importance. Word-of-mouth usually has a higher influence on consumers.

Brand personality can be described as personality traits generally associated with humans that consumers perceive brand to possess (Batra *et al.*, 1993; Aaker, 1997). A distinctive brand personality can create a set of unique and positive associations in consumer memory enhancing brand equity (Keller, 1993) and brand personality serves as an enduring basis for differentiation (Crask and Henry, 1990). Brand personality can be considered as the first reaction people tend to have towards a brand when they hear, taste, see or touch a certain product of a specific brand name (Larson, 2002). The kinds of personality dimensions attributed to a brand are important because they can influence the evaluation and consumption of products (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007), consumers will more likely purchase products with the personalities that match the most of his/her personalities (Hawkins *et al.*, 2001). Previous research also suggests that consumers' implicit theories about the malleability of personality influence their acceptance of brand extensions (Yorkston *et al.*, 2010). Brand personality evokes various emotional responses in consumers and influences opinions and purchasing decisions about a brand. Brand personality may develop based on consumers' direct and indirect interactions with the brand, as well as from the marketing efforts of firms (e.g., Fitzsimons *et al.*, 2008).

2.1.1. Brand Personality Research

Jennifer Aaker developed a theoretical framework of a brand personality construct determining the number and nature of brand personality dimensions, namely: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). She also created a valid and generalizable across product categories instrument: the Brand Personality Scale (BPS). The traits that represent each of the five dimensions were identified. The BPS was adopted in many studies (e.g. Siguaw *et al.*, 1999) to learn consumers' perception of brand personality.

Another study in the area to be mentioned is the one of Fournier (1998): the author suggested a framework for understanding and extending brand personality using a brand relationship quality model containing six central factors – partners, quality, intimacy, interdependence, self-connection and love.

2.2. From Nation Brand to Nation Brand Personality

The idea of applying the concept of branding, and brand personality particularly, to destinations is relatively new. In 1990's the terminology of branding has been applied to marketing of services or places (Berry, 2000). In 1998, Simon Anholt wrote an article in which he claimed that the country and the nation can be equated to trademarks and brands (Anholt, 1998). The article caused both interest and disagreements in scientific circles, and within governmental officials. However, the practice of branding countries and nations appeared, and is actively developing and thriving now. From this point of view, a country (region, city, etc.) is to be promoted in a differentiating way, in order to bring more money to the national economy, local businesses, etc. Place selling can be defined as usage of publicity and marketing to transfer selected images of a certain place (geographical location) to a target market (Gold and Ward, 1994) and has different goals, mainly to build a positive image for a place to attract tourists, businesses, events, investors, residents (Kotler, 1999).

To be more concrete these goals can be mentioned while talking about nation branding. In most cases, the branding of the country is done in order to attract more tourists. Most countries' economies depend on tourism at some extent. Not only the income from tourists' spending, but also spreading of a positive image of a country, attraction of investors, and so on. It can be ascribed to obvious pluses of successful marketing campaigns and promotions of country's brands. A "well-promoted" country also helps to sell national products faster and on higher prices. The name of the country works as a trademark promising quality.

A well-established brand personality facilitates differentiation of a brand from that of its competitors (Aaker, 1997). A well-formed image of a country is able to "work" for it for a long time. Creating and maintaining a strong nation brand brings benefits to such sectors as: interest in its culture; interest in particular destination within the country; range of available business opportunities; politics, economics and diplomacy factors (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Country branding plays an important role at leveraging the perceived image of a place and in influencing tourist choice behavior (Crockett and Wood, 2002) and it allows to manage destination image and improve economic performance by attracting international business and tourism (Aronczyk, 2008). Branding allows organizations, individuals and countries to say things about themselves to foreign markets in the ways that language could not express (Pitt *et al.*, 2007).

A nation brand is influenced by all the contacts that one relates to the country: national products, celebrities, art, sports, fashion, inhabitants met elsewhere. The base for the development of a service brand is the customer's participation in the process; planned marketing communications play a supporting role. This means that a negative experience cannot be fixed with planned communication procedures (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Branding should be built on the results of consumer perceptions research. It is vital to understand how existing and potential customers view the country, its products and suggested services; what is the perceived image. Marketing campaigns must attractively differentiate the country from competitors based on this information.

At this point the concept of a nation brand personality must be introduced. As Hosany *et al.* (2007) noted, the term brand personality is frequently confused and interchanged with another one, brand image. The authors aptly conceptualized nation personality as the set of personality traits associated with a destination, while the most commonly cited definition of image is "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Crompton, 1979: 20). There is a school of thought (Biel, 1993: 71), which views brand image as "a cluster of attributes and associations that consumers connect to a brand". From this point of view, evoked associations can be either hard (tangible/functional) or soft (emotional attributes) (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). The study (Hosany *et al.*, 2007) provides some empirical support to this contentious debate over two definitions. Results indicate that destination image and destination personality are two different but related concepts. The findings support the proposition that brand image is an encompassing term with brand personality as one of its components (Plummer, 1984) and brand personality is more related to the affective (softer) side of brand image.

In this study nation brand personality is considered to be a set of personality characteristics (traits) associated with the country and forming the emotional part of its image. The role of nation brand personality cannot be underestimated: the greater the match between the destination's personality and the visitor's self-concept is, the more likely the visitor will have a favorable attitude toward the destination (Sirgy and Su, 2000). In summary, if a consumer can relate his personality (desirable or perceived) to the personality of a destination there are more chances that he will prefer it to other competitors. National products related to the destination can be sold easier if the brand personality of the destination is positive and seems to be beneficial to consumers (prestigious, fancy, reliable, etc.).

Addressing nation brand personality, there is a range of tools to develop a place as a part of place marketing efforts: closer networks, promotion of partners in private and public sectors to develop technological resources; improved business and technical education, attempts to attract local entrepreneurship and investments (Kotler *et al.*, 1999). Before that a strong analysis is to be done; country's products, strengths of the identity, financial resources, commitment from the target group and public-private partnerships should all be used in a motivating way (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

There is no doubt that information shared through social media (networks like Facebook, Vkontakte, Twitter, Instagram etc.) can have a significant impact on shopping preferences of tourists while choosing a destination to travel to, as it endows them with an access to different viewpoints and opinions (reviews, for example) (O'Connor *et al.*, 2008).

Regardless from how vast and successful (or not) promotion campaigns of destinations are, repeating visitors and possible future visitors already have some formed idea about the destination, its reputation and expected experiences. Usually country reputation is based on personal experience from a previous trip or is based on the reputation of its internationally known products and trademarks. Except that, the reputation can also be obtained from word-of-mouth communication or information from the media (Yang *et al.*, 2008). Based on the issues discussed in this section, it can be concluded that, the same goals as for a brand of an organization are set for a brand of a country (and nation brand personality as its essential component): to distinguish it from competitors, to form and consolidate certain emotional associations or to develop desired country's perception stereotypes.

2.2.1. Nation Brand Personality Research

Developing the personality concept to countries, d'Astous and Boujbel (2007) created a scale that differs from the BPS. Their scale was developed particularly for the measurement of country's personality and consists of six dimensions (with no facets within them): agreeableness, wickedness, snobbism, assiduousness, conformity, and unobtrusiveness. While both scales mentioned in this section reflect consumers' intentions toward a country, the former (BPS) predicts product purchase intentions better than the latter (d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007), though the latter outperformed the former in predicting travel intentions (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2008).

Due to the fact that what makes sense for product brands also applies to countries as producers (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2008), common rules for research apply too and the personality metaphor can be extended to nation branding. Nowadays, tourism industry advantageously uses public relations, marketing and advertising to promote destinations around the world (Morgan and Pritchard, 2005). This strategic approach of managing communications related to a brand involves: public relations efforts and identifying target markets; creation of a flexible plan of action that might be changed if needed to reflect shifting realities; and the last but not the least: monitoring feedback to see if there are attitude or behavior changes within the target publics (Tilson and Stacks, 1997). This approach is best illustrated in the usage of Social media, that lets both: state a desirable perceived image for the country; and communicate with consumers and learn about the perception of the brand personality of the country, existing in their minds. DMOs (Destination marketing organizations) can use the Internet to serve their branding needs by selecting brand elements to identify and distinguish a destination by building a positive image (Cai, 2002; Lee *et al.*, 2005) as they are actively involved in an effort to attract travelers because destinations are becoming highly substitutable due to the growing global competition (Pike and Ryan, 2004).

Since this research is devoted to the brand personality of Portugal, several methodologies used to carry out research specifically in the area of nation branding. Due to the considerable newness of the brand personality concept in relation to destinations topic, research is

usually exploratory. The design of the research is either mixed (qualitative plus quantitative) or just qualitative, with content analysis and surveys being the handiest way of gathering information. Data analysis techniques commonly utilized are ANOVA, component and correspondence analysis (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011; De Moya and Jain, 2013; Rojas-Méndez *et al.*, 2011; Van Meer, 2010; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2008).

3. SETTING

This research is devoted to the brand personality (BP) of Portugal. There was research in the area, for example, Santos (2004) conducted an analysis of travel sections in some US newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and USA Today) between 1996 and 2002, about tourism in Portugal and found that it was represented in the US newspapers' travel sections of that time with personality traits such as "traditional", "contemporary", "modern", and "sophisticated".

Notwithstanding, the current study is focused on the existing brand personality for the Russian-speaking market as one of the biggest and most prosperous markets. Portugal is a part of the European Union. The popular tourist portal "Globe Spots" (2013) acknowledged Portugal as the best tourist destination in 2013. In the past years the flow of tourists from China, Russia and Brazil grows steadily. Speaking specifically about the Russian market, the opening of five weekly direct flights from Moscow to Lisbon played a significant role in easing of the transport accessibility and as a result – popularization of the destination. According to the official statistics of 2010, Portugal was visited by 118,170 Russian tourists. The preliminary data for 2011 showed that the number of Russians who visited Portugal was more than 150 thousands (Kapusta, 2013). Nevertheless, Russian operators are confident that the flow of tourists would be more noticeable, but it is almost impossible to find Russian-speaking guides in Portugal: according to the official statistics provided by the union of guides and interpreters of Portugal (Sindicato Nacional da Actividade Turística- Tradutores e Intérpretes - SNATTI), there are only eight officially registered Russian-speaking guides (Kapusta, 2013).

The official touristic website "www.visitportugal.com" provides some information in different languages, though none of the e-brochures is available in Russian. The information is divided within brochures according to themes (that can also be considered as the main things that the destination has to offer) that may interest future tourists while viewing the site: Itineraries, Heritage, Sun and Sea, Nature, Golf, Portugal (with common information).

In spite of the aim of this research was to study brand personality of Portugal and not to assess the image of the country, some common idea on the desired perceived image is necessary. So as to better understand how the team working on the image of Portugal positions the country, a content analysis of newsletters of year 2012 (September, August, June, May, March, February) and years 2010 and 2008 was made using Worditout.com on-line service. WordItOut lets one transform a text into word clouds made up of randomly positioned words, where the most important words are bigger than the others (Forsey and Low, 2014). The service allows creating a cloud from any entered text. These word clouds vary the size of a word with the number of times it appears in the original text.

The first step on this stage of research was to put together all the chosen newsletter's texts to make it applicable for the text input (which has no length limit and has an alternative option of using just *url* or web address for submitting a text for analysis). On the word cloud that was created entries were placed in order of count (words with higher frequencies are closer to the center of the word cloud and are of larger size). Words with fewer than three letters were ignored. The limit of how many words to put in the cloud was set equal to 70.

The word cloud that has been created and consists of 70 most frequently used words (bigger size and deeper color for the most repeated ones) is presented below (Figures 1, 2 and 3) with the maximum frequency of repeating of a word being equal to 6 and minimum - 2. As it can be seen, words on which the stress was made are: come, perfect, home, coast, discover, Algarve, nature, Azores, break, Madeira, wide and waits (this cloud was constructed using online service www.worditout.com).

Figure 1: Word cloud for newsletters 2012



Newsletters from 2008 and 2010 have been analyzed too in an attempt to compare the “message” behind all three years chosen for analysis. Resulting from this two more word clouds have been created (Figures 2 and 3 respectively. The clouds are constructed using online service www.worditout.com). The words with the highest frequency of repeating in 2010 are: Festival, come, great, visit, Madeira, World, best, holidays, discover, islands, music, fun. In 2008: find, discover, Algarve, Azores, come, enjoy, beaches, art, Madeira, North, travel, summer.

Figure 2: Word cloud for newsletter 2008



Figure 3: Word cloud for newsletter of Year 2010



According to the brochures offered on the website the main accent in the image of Portugal is made on nature offerings of the islands and southern coast of the country, perfect holiday break and beach vacation destination. Through all the years reviewed, with a slight change the emphasis is made on “invitational” verbs: come and discover; and main touristic destinations names: Madeira (mentioned in all 3), Algarve and Azores (mentioned in 2 out of 3).

4. METHODOLOGY

As the topic of nation brand personality is quite new, the research conducted is exploratory in its nature, inductive and forms a basis for further research in the field as well as serves to have a better understanding of the problem and generally determines its nature (Lambin, 2000).

The research started with a problem of determination within the field of Tourism Marketing, which led to the current research field determination, being Portugal’s Brand Personality. The next stage was to formulate the research questions. This created focus and required a significant thinning down of the original problem. The main research questions are: identifying the brand personality attributes of Portugal among the Russian-speaking market; studying the differences in brand personality evaluation among subgroups of the research target group. Both stages required a thorough literature review. Design and distribution of the survey for the practical part was a vital. The purpose of the design is to determine a method to create accurate and unbiased data on which conclusions of the study are going to be based. The next stage was data design, including identification of what data is needed and how it will be collected. Choosing the data affects analysis stage (choice of means of analysis and the whole approach) and conclusions significance and credibility. Sampling was used to enable accurate analysis and valid results.

A survey was designed, conducted and analyzed, involving qualitative and quantitative techniques. The design was suggested keeping in mind recommendations on creation of a good, reliable questionnaire and an appropriate cover letter. The questionnaire in Russian

was distributed among the Russian-speaking residents, visitors and perspective visitors of Portugal. The questionnaire consists of three open-ended questions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991, 1993) and a number of multiple choice questions.

This format was used as one of the most appropriate in accordance with one of the objectives of the study - to get the clearer idea of the brand personality attributes of Portugal existing among the target market and answer such questions, as: what are the perceived attributes of brand personality of Portugal for the research target market concerning its functional characteristics and its atmosphere as a tourist destination as well as what are the perceived different characteristics. The approach with 3 open-ended questions was adapted from another research (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011) which included studying unique perceptions of visitors of Istanbul. In the open-ended (qualitative) questions section respondents were asked to list three words coming to their mind in association with: (1) the general image of Portugal; (2) The mood or the atmosphere expected to be experienced in Portugal; (3) Distinctive or unique tourist attractions. Gender, age, occupation, level of education and nationality were asked in order to define the background, the ethnic group and the academic level of respondents.

Proceeding to sampling, some Russian-speaking students of the University of Algarve were contacted with a request to fill out the questionnaire and ask 1-2 friends or relatives, who visited or planned to visit them, fill it out too (as the “word-of-mouth” is named within one of the most effective tools in marketing and information distribution), after that the link on the questionnaire was distributed with the help of vk.com – a major social network for the Russian-speaking people. Taking into consideration the idea that visitors, perspective visitors and current residents of Portugal (due to study or work issues) might be members of thematic social groups at the network, in five of such groups the request to fill out the questionnaire was posted in the second half of March. The groups were:

1. Гид по португалии (Guide to Portugal) (189 members)
2. Россия - Португалия / Russia – Portugal (3415 members)
3. Молодежь Португалии (Youth of Portugal) (920 members)
4. Высшее образование в Португалии (Higher education in Portugal) (199 members)
5. Португальский язык (Portuguese language) (5187 members)

It must be noted that the response rate on the public posts was negligible, so starting from the very end of March personal messages with the request to fill out a questionnaire were sent to those comprised in 3 of these groups (Guide to Portugal; Russia – Portugal; Portuguese language).

A stratified sampling technique was used, where sampling is random choice from a list of members of groups older than 18 (as those can be considered as adult travelers already), Russian-speaking (some members were also Portuguese-speaking or English-speaking), with an open access to private messages receiving, active users - last login not later than a week ago, with the use of subgroups. Subgroups that have been analyzed are: (1) those who study or studied in Portugal; (2) those who work or worked in Portugal; (3) those who visited Portugal; and (4) Those who plan to visit Portugal. A check for “uniqueness” of request has also been done as some of the people are members of several reviewed groups. The aim was to represent a diverse sample of different categories and to study possible differences in perceptions. All the subgroups have mixed genders and ages.

The on-line completion format via “My Drive” from Google was implemented as being the best way to reach out to the target population both currently living in Portugal and in Russian-speaking countries. During the phase of sending personal messages with a link on questionnaire, a total of 758 messages was send. The research resulted in 208 respondents, excluding the non-response; 203 of the responses were appropriate for analysis. All the received answers have been reviewed and translated from Russian into English. The responses

to the questionnaire have been analyzed with the help of software SPSS Statistics 21 and WordStat 6.1. The first one was used to analyze quantitative data; the second one was used for content analysis of the open-ended questions.

The excel file with the responses was uploaded on to the program QDA Miner and analyzed with WordStat 6.1 – content analysis and text-mining software. It is used to extract and analyze information from large amounts of documents. WordStat 6.1 was considered to be a good option for the content analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions not only because of its availability and ease to use, but also due to its previous usage in research works (Stephen, 1999; Sodhi and Son, 2005; Stephen, 2000). Predefined hierarchical content analysis dictionaries or taxonomies composed of words, word patterns, phrases as well as proximity rules have been used. Concretely, these two: Regressive imagery dictionary (RID), “composed of about 3200 words and roots assigned to 29 categories of primary process cognition, 7 categories of secondary process cognition, and seven categories of emotions” and Wordstat sentiment dictionary (Provalis research, 2013).

The basic steps of the performed analysis were as follows: First, the Excel data file was uploaded to QDA Miner program and the “Content analysis” command from the “Analyze” menu was executed; after that, the proper dictionary was chosen (the analysis was done twice, with Regressive imagery dictionary and then with Wordstat sentiment dictionary); finally, the program performed a categorization of words found in the responses and computed a frequency analysis on categories and sorted the frequency matrix in descending order of “Case Occurrence” (by default, the words displayed in the matrix were those specified in the Inclusion list. Words that have been left out of analysis due to the restrictions of the dictionary chosen, for example, geographical names, have been reviewed separately also). Another feature that has been used was “Phrase finder”. It did a frequency analysis on phrases with restrictions on phrase length (from 2 to 7 words), minimal frequency of repeating being equal to 2 and sorted by “Case occurrence”.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Characterization of the Sample

The minimal age of the respondent is 18 and the maximal is 67. Most of the respondents are aged between 21 and 27 years old, which is reasonable due to the average age of an active Internet user and also age of active travelers. The majority of respondents (64.04%) were single; 73.40% were female and 26.60% male. Out of four groups suggested, those who plan to visit Portugal is the most numerous one – 54.19% of all respondents. Almost 18% have already travelled to Portugal; those who work/ed or study/ied are represented by 12.81% and 15.27% of respondents, respectively. Most of the respondents (80.79%) have higher professional education. The second largest group is those who have secondary vocational education (13.30%); 4.43% have secondary general education; groups with primary general education and initial vocational education are less than 1% each.

Most respondents who visited Portugal earlier would like to visit it again (86.59%) and could recommend it to relatives and friends as a tourist destination (91.46%). Though 9.76% of respondents are not sure if they want to return to Portugal; 7.32% have doubts about recommending it. The number of respondents who don't want to come to Portugal again is 3.66%; percentage of those who wouldn't recommend to visit it is relatively small (1.22%).

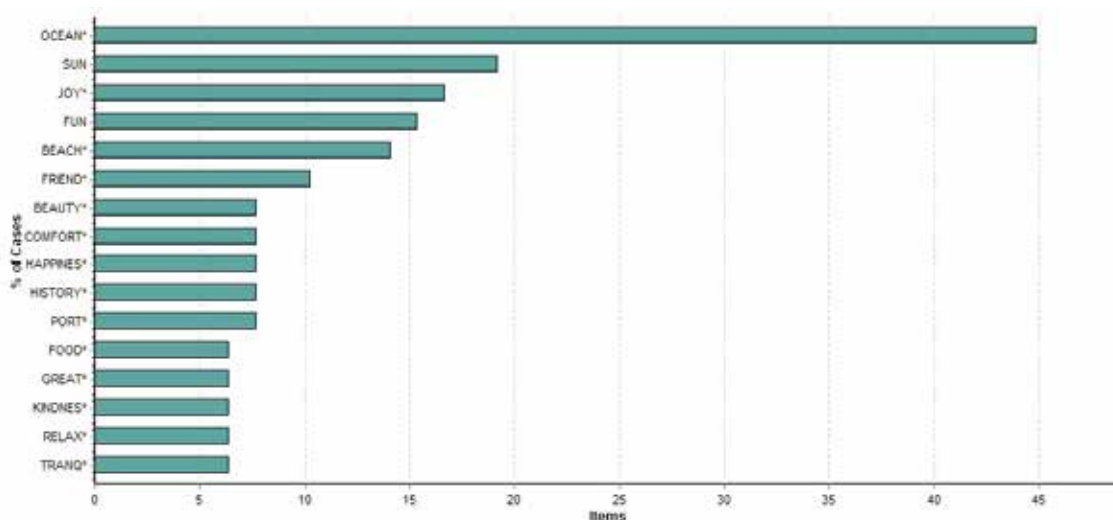
5.2. Brand Personality Attributes of Portugal

During the next step of the analysis the attention was paid to the responses to the open-ended questions:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Portugal as a vacation destination?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Portugal?
3. List any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can mention, speaking of Portugal.

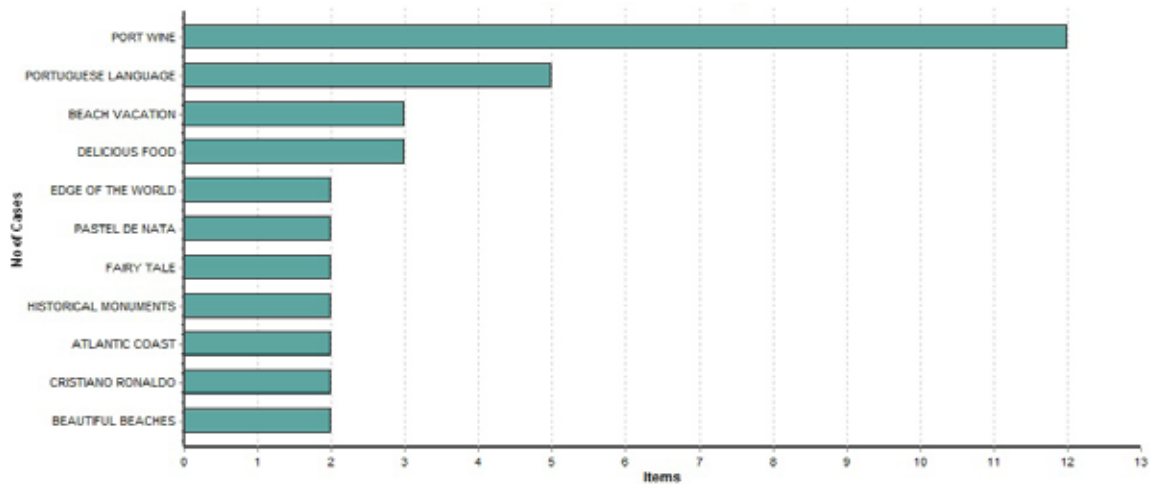
First open-ended questions responses to questions 1 and 2 have been analyzed together among all respondents, then responses to all 3 questions separately within subgroups: those who have already been to Portugal and not – to compare the attributes ascribed to Portugal by actual visitors and possible ones. All the items (words) with case occurrence (each response is viewed as a case) less than 2 have been removed. On the first step the analysis of word frequencies was made. Items that appear at least in 5 cases have been presented in the bar chart (Figure 4. Constructed in software WordStat 6.1). As it can be seen from the chart, most frequently the respondents mentioned the following words, while describing characteristics and atmosphere of Portugal: Ocean (and words with similar meaning or root, as marked with this symbol “*”) – in 45% of cases; sun – in almost 20%; joy* and fun – each in more than 15%. If talking about feelings and emotions, these words should also be mentioned: friend* - in around 10%; comfort* and happiness* – both in around 7%; kindness*, relax* and tranquile* - in around 6% each.

Figure 4: Distribution of words (RID)



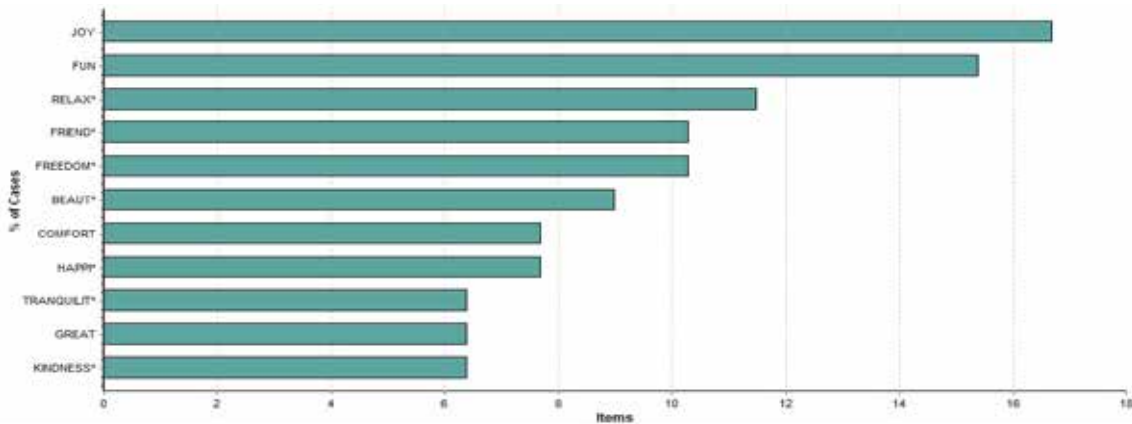
The next step was to analyze the document with the responses in “Phrase finder” (Figure 5, constructed in software wordstat 6.1). There restrictions were: each phrase should have been from 2 to 7 words length and the minimal frequency should have been equal to 2. All the phrases have been sorted by the case occurrence percentage. The phrase that was mentioned most frequently while talking about characteristics, mood and atmosphere of Portugal is “Port wine” (in 12% of cases). Portuguese language has also been mentioned several times (in 5% of cases). Quite expectable those phrases as “beach vacation”, “Atlantic coast” are in the list too. In 2% of cases the exact phrase “edge of the world” was used to describe Portugal, which is also not much of surprise, since it is a faraway destination for the target market.

Figure 5: Phrase finder result



Similarly to the analysis with the previous dictionary, words “joy” and “fun” are one of the most frequently used by respondents – around 16 % of cases include them (Figure 6). In addition to such words as “relax*”, “comfort” and “friend*” a word “freedom*” was included in the list with 10 %.

Figure 6: Distribution of words (sentiment dictionary)



5.2.1. Actual Visitors vs. Prospective Visitors

In order to compare the possible differences in the lists of attributes ascribed to the brand personality of Portugal by those who have already been to the country and those who only plan to visit it, their answers to all the 3 open-ended questions have been analyzed separately (Figures 7 and 8). A greater variety of phrases on Figure 9 is caused by a larger number of questionnaires, filled by those who have not been to Portugal and smaller frequency of appearance (not many respondents used the same phrases).

Differences in charts are easy to notice. Firstly, phrases used by actual visitors in 13% of cases - “Cabo da Roca”; 11% - “Port wine” and 5% - “Pastel de nata” are not even presented in the chart with another group’s responses. Though such tourist attractions as: “Christo Rei”, “Vasco da Gama bridge” and “Pena Palace” are recognized by both groups. Beach vacation (and beautiful beaches), ocean (rocky shores, the Atlantic), history and historical monuments are mentioned by those who only plan to visit Portugal. An assumption about

the expected type of vacation can be made: beach vacation with cultural program, that might include trips to several cities (as the attractions mentioned are from different regions of the country), with Lisbon being a “must see”. Another interesting observation to be made is that one name of a Portuguese celebrity Cristiano Ronaldo is in the list of phrases. Football has also been mentioned by many respondents in their answers. It is useful to know, because people form their idea about the brand personality of a country based on word-of-mouth, country’s products, people they meet from this country and its famous people.

Figure 7: Phrases used by actual visitors

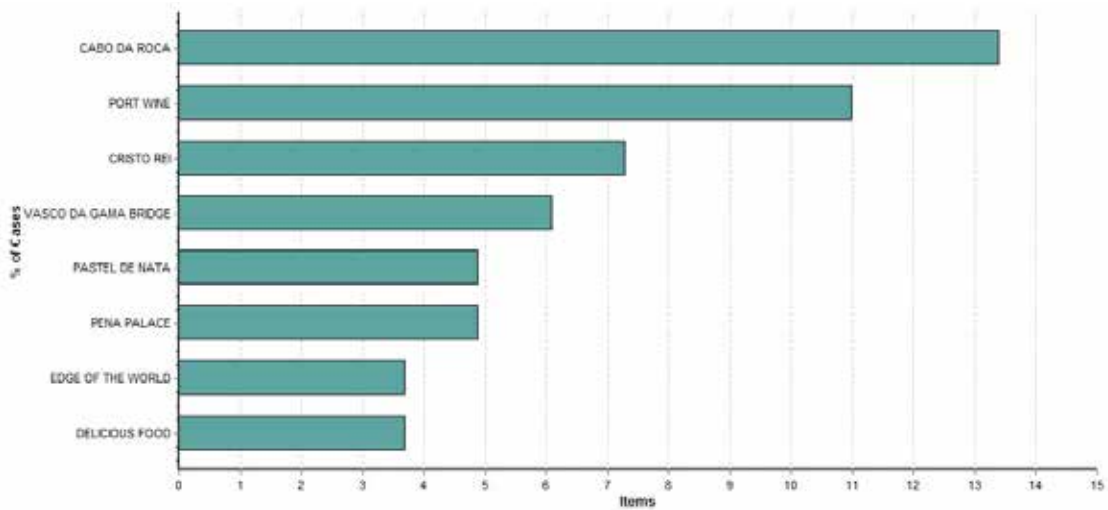
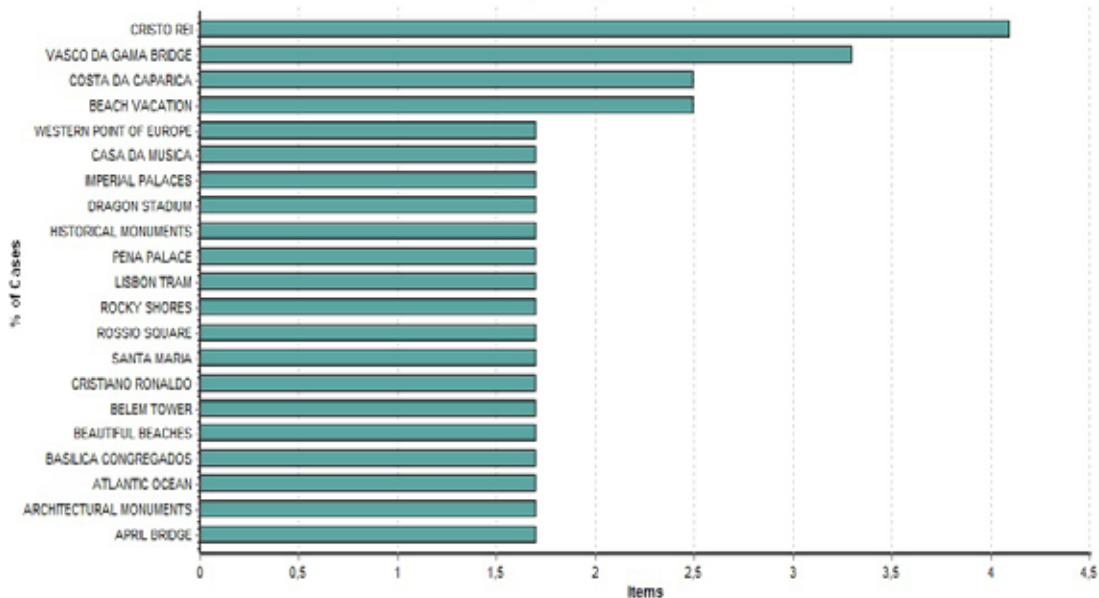


Figure 8: Phrases used by prospective visitors



6. CONCLUSIONS

Starting from 1990s, the terminology of branding has been applied to places too. Anholt (1998) wrote in his article that a country could be equated to a brand. Since then, methods of marketing, advertising and branding are used extensively to countries. There are different approaches to the definition of a brand personality, some of them are presented in this paper and were used to set the definition that is used in this work: the nation brand personality is considered to be a set of personality characteristics (traits) associated with the destination and forming the emotional part of its image.

Many authors (Hawkins *et al.*, 2001; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007; Sirgy and Su, 2000) recognized the influence of brand personality on consumer preferences and willingness to purchase, the applicability of that principle to the intention to visit the country has also been proved. This means that a well-thought promotion policy, strategic planning and active use of social media are of great importance.

The development of a powerful brand must start with an intelligent and reliable market research as well as with an intelligent, in-depth consumer research. For these purposes a wide range of research methodologies exists. The choice of one must be justified with the main aim, target market specifics and resources available to the researcher. When talking about brand personality, qualitative exploratory research is mostly applied.

This research paper has both, managerial and theoretical implementations. Due to the novelty of the topic that has already been discussed in previous chapters, this work with the literature review and the research methodology suggested can serve as a basis for other papers on brand personality. The review of articles on brand personality of places can also be handy, as possible research methodologies are mentioned there.

Practical implementation or managerial implementation is also possible. Firstly, the results of the conducted research might be interesting to the local officials (Tourism of Portugal) and will be suggested to them in a short time. Secondly, business representatives showed their interest to the findings during the survey distribution phase, namely, business marketing worker (consultation of Portuguese companies for entering the Russian market with their products). This can also serve as a proof of the relevance of the topic.

Consequently, one limitation is the difficulty with reaching out to the target population and the low response rate on the Internet requests. There were not many responses resulting from posts in groups, the main part comes from those answering to a personal message, which had a limitation of sending up to 20 people a day not being in the list of "friends". Another limitation is a lack of trust and spam suspicion in a request to take part in academic survey, as well as doing it with no further benefit. Except that, a certain part of those addressed with the request couldn't relate them to Portugal or responded that do not know anything about the country. Other considerable limitations to be mentioned are: limited time on collecting responses (up to the middle of May); chance that some information has been lost in translation from Russian into English (the author was the only person involved in translating the data), certain subjectivity of responses and limitation of the sample size.

Being exploratory in nature this research can be useful for those carrying out research in the field of brand personality of places. As the methodology utilized was amply described and it can be generalized to other research objects, it can be applied in similar studies devoted to other countries, cities etc. Specific possible suggestions for research in this area are worth mentioning. Further investigate brand personality of Portugal (Applying more research tools and approaches, for example, visuals as mentioned in the research paper by van Meer, L., (2010). As well as another target market can be chosen instead of the Russian-speaking to globalize the study). Use the Internet and resources it provides to study tourists' perceptions and impressions of the destination (blogs, posts in social networks,

etc.). Compare expectations and actual experiences of visitors (Choose a sample consisting of those who have not been to Portugal before but will travel to it in a short time and design a two-step research to be conducted before and after the visit). Investigate ways that allow to change the perceived brand personality (or brand image) of the destination.

It can be said that the goal of the research was met: the brand personality attributes of Portugal have been identified and compared among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors). The questionnaire design is applicable for other research works with similar aims. Information provided by respondents under all three sections was used and resulted in sufficient description of the sample (Russian-speaking market). Still regarding improvements, modification of the questionnaire to better study destination's image is possible. For example, applying an approach already used in the field, add a section with categorization questions adapting Aaker's brand personality scale.

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