

Brand Personality of Tourism Destination: The Case of Nepal

Gaurav Pathak¹, Yan Zhi Jun²

^{1,2}School of Economics & Management, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Nanjing 210094, China

Abstract: In an increasingly competitive tourism market, destination personality is considered as an important aspect for building destination brands and crafting a unique identity for tourism places. Destination brand personality can create a unique identity and led to enhance a tourism destination image.

Destination brand personality has led to figure out the dimension of Nepal. In this study it shows the brand personality of tourism destination of Nepal. In this study it shows that there exist of five different brand personality dimensions for a tourism destination. “Solidity”, “Attractiveness”, “Excitement”, “Honesty” and “Hospitality” dimension are analyzed.

With this dimension it can led marketers to position their destination and better understanding of the scenario and can leads to increase in the number of tourists and make the markets more favorable.

Keywords: Tourism Destination. “Solidity”, “Attractiveness”, “Excitement”, “Honesty” And “Hospitality” Dimension.

1. INTRODUCTION

Destination boost the similar branding characteristics, such as beautiful scenery, golden beaches, blue seas or friendly places in their advertisement (Ekinci et al., 2007; Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007b; Usakli and Baloglu, 2010). Nevertheless, there are number of destinations using such characteristics (Uskali and Baloglu, 2010). At present it won't make a vast difference. If a destination wants to be recognized with a distinct brand, branding personality can be seen as a viable metaphor to succeed. (Ekincy and Hosany, 2006). To build a different brand image the focus must be given to the various attributes.

The unexampled enhance in the tourism across the globe has posed some major challenges for tourism marketing. The accelerative number of tourism destinations worldwide has result into the complexity of making a decision when choosing a particular destination. Due to increase in the disposable income, media and increase in the leisure time and efficient transportation which has led to choices on offer to travelers. Due to extremely raise in the tourism sector it has become essential for destinations to be differentiated and be able to promote their unique characteristics. To succeed tourism marketers need to position destinations differently in the mind of individual. A separate brand personality shapes memory for consumer and strengthens brand equity (Aaker, 1997; Lee and Suh, 2011; Park and Jung, 2010; Sung and Tinkham, 2005; Yi and La, 2002). In current marketing, brand personality is playing a highly important role in the sector of brand management. People are represented in terms of their sensed personalities; so are described the brands in terms of detected human characteristics known as brand personality (Aaker, 1997). Aaker (1997) found five brand personality dimensions for the consumer brands and termed as brand personality scale. Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale includes “sincerity”, “competence”, “excitement”, “ruggedness” and “sophistication”, dimensions.

Brand personality of a tourist destination creates a unique identity (Ekinci and hosany, 2006), and can led to enhance a tourist destination image (Hosany et al., 2006; Hosany et al., 2007). Brand personality can distinguish tourism destinations (Murphy et al., 2007b) and it is important to build any tourism destination as a brand (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006). Brand personality can provide users symbolic effects (Aaker, 1996b) and make a holiday of a tourist destination to

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a status symbol and expression of a life style (Aaker, 1996b; Clarke, 2000). A destination brand personality can affect the preference and choice of tourist destination (Crockett and Wood 1999, 2002, Murphy et al., 2007a), and raise interest for a tourism destination (Crockett and Wood, 2002). Visitors are more satisfied with a holiday visit, when the tourist's self is in accordance with the perceived brand personality to tourism destination (Murphy et al., 2007a). Brand personality of a tourism destination can also upgrade the tourist's loyalty (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006).

Now, destinations are more attractive than what they used to be. Nepal is one of the exotic destinations for the nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts. Nepal is a tourism capital of south Asia having a 60 year of handling tourist experience. Out of the many countries it has been receiving 10% growth in the tourist arrival growth rate in past 6 year. Nepal has got some unique feature too such as it has a highest summit know as Mount Everest and 8 out of 14 tallest 8000 meter are present in Nepal. Naturally niche (23.23% of landmass is protected with 10 national parks, reserves and conservation areas). Nepal has a very unique and wide diversity (103 ethnic groups, 93 dialects, 2% of all the flowering plants in the world, 8% of birds, 4% of mammals on earth, 1 of the world's 15 families of butterflies, 600 indigenous plants, 319 species of exotic orchids). Some of the major attractions are: 10 UNESCO listed world heritage site, trekking Mount Everest a lifetime experience, rafting, kayaking, cannoning, bungee-jumping, sky diving and many more.

Number of sites can be observed in Nepal. Some of the majors are:

Kathmandu: It is capital and the largest cities in Nepal, the decaying buildings in the center of the city are area a contrast to the lively gloominess that penetrates the streets. The attraction of Kathmandu has long been durbar square, temples and monuments of varying shapes, styles, sizes and faiths.

Bhaktapur: It is one the old trade route to Tibet and it was an arterial link and major source of wealth. Major attractions are the royal palace and several temples. The whole area is a UNESCO world heritage site.

Pokhara: It is located at the base of foothills and surrounded by some of the highest mountains in the world. For many trekkers, Pokhara is the gateway to Himalayas. Even those who are not going off for a hike can enjoy the beautiful scenery and fresh air of the city. Major attractions are the lake and boating activities, restaurants, and shops is perfect for relaxation.

Trekking in the Annapurna region: It is one of the most popular trekking regions in Nepal. To complete the circuit it takes around 21 days to complete and is incredibly popular with people who have a long duration of time. This route is sometimes called the "Apple Pie Circuit" in reference to that fact that most of the tea house along the route serves their own version of fried apple pie.

Chitwan national park: It is the place for wildlife viewing and a safari-type atmosphere. The park is home to rhinos, Bengal tigers, leopards, deer, buffalo, and sloth bears, and many more. More than 500 species of birds make this place a paradise for ornithologists.

Trekking to langtang region: It is fabulous area for hiking, with some very high passes, old monasteries, extensive views, and beautiful mountain scenery.

Swayambhunath monkey temple: it is located on the hilltop to the west of Kathmandu. Due to the resident monkey that inhabits parts of the temple, it is more affectionately known as monkey temple. The swayambhu Stupa, painted with the eyes of the omnipresent god, forms the centerpiece of the temple complex.

Everest and the trek to base camp: It is the highest mountain on earth, reaches 8,848 meters high. Trekking in the Mount Everest has become so popular which has allure the climbers in large number. Since it's not possible for everyone to climb the highest summit they can trek to Everest base camp and enjoy the glimpse of the peak.

Lumbini: It is renowned for being the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, the historic Buddha. In this pilgrimage town, there is a feeling of tranquility. Most of the visitors are Buddhist pilgrims from around the world, retracing Buddha's footsteps through the station of his life. The Maya Devi Temple, dedicated to Buddha's mother, is believed to be the spot where Buddha was born. It contains an ancient stone relief from the 2nd century AD depicting Buddha's birth.

Destination branding is concerned with the promotion of the tourist of a country (Szondi, 2007), contributes to the improvement of the overall image and to the creation of a strong brand (Anholt, 2008). Ritchie and Ritchie (1998:103) defines a destination brand as "A name, symbol, logo and word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely

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associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience". Destination branding is more like an umbrella brand because it permits the individual operators' brands of destination to have certain characteristics (Gnoth, 2002). In other words, destination affiliated products not only carry destination brand image but also characteristics of the products themselves. This type of branding plays a major role in creating a "halo effect," i.e. consumers transfer their country image to the product when evaluating unfamiliar products and the country image serves as the halo effect on the products (Han, 1989).

This study was conducted among the tourists resting and site seeing the Kathmandu, Pokhara and lumbini. The respondents were familiar with the destination. Research on destination brand personality is an exploratory stage (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006) and the measurement scale seems to be unstable. So, it is important to eliminate the external sources of variability in the data through a range that is consistent and easy to control.

The study was made a sample of 30 respondents was asked to describe Kathmandu if it were a person. This resulted 7 new items (Romantic, Magnificent, Superb, Sexy, Awesome, Peaceful and Love-at-first-sight) other than 27 personality traits as described by Ekinici and Hosany (2006). In the second stage, questionnaire related to the "Destination Brand Personality of Kathmandu" were distributed among 393 international tourists.

The factor analysis was conducted; the data were analyzed using a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) and Barlett's test. KMO of 0.799 indicated the sample size is adequate for the number of traits in the study (Hair et al., 2010). The Barlett's test with a value of 0.000 shows that there is sufficient correlation between the measurements of personality traits in the study (Hair et al., 2010). The KMO and Barlett's test are the bases to make the following factor analysis.

An exploratory factor analysis with a VariMAX rotation was used to identify the underlying dimensions in the data. Aaker (1997), Ekinici and Hosany (2006), Murphy et al. (2007b), Li (2009), Usakli and Baloglu (2010) and Kim and Lehto (2012) all used exploratory factor analysis to examine the relationship between personality traits. Factor analysis identified five factors with eigenvalues of 1.0.

Five factors explained respectively 37.2%, 27.6%, 7.1%, 6.3% and 5.9% variance in the analysis. The total of 84.3% variance is explained by these five factors.

Traits	Dimension				
	solidity	attractiveness	excitement	honesty	hospitality
Down to earth	.773	-.092	.101	-.009	.047
Spirited	-.008	.070	.867	.005	-.151
Sincere	.255	-.236	-.041	.832	-.090
Wholesome	-.012	-.046	-.389	-.073	.785
Original	-.157	.785	.040	-.021	.042
Daring	.003	.044	.881	-.016	.025
Genuine	.162	-.142	.028	.899	.064
Family oriented	-.023	-.055	.113	.044	.916
Up to date	.888	-.215	.002	.052	-.006
Independent	.777	-.064	-.081	.088	-.048
Reliable	-.171	.919	.054	-.040	.042
Intelligent	.959	-.171	.058	.110	.016
Secure	.951	-.175	.057	.112	.016
Confident	-.173	.955	.043	-.093	-.052
Upper-class	.962	-.169	.061	.117	.025
Glamour's	.962	-.170	.066	.124	.035
Good-looking	-.195	.899	.040	-.090	.002
Outdoorsy	.767	-.165	-.226	.040	-.134
Masculine	.817	-.215	-.063	.036	.010
Western	.767	-.150	-.216	.030	-.133
Tough	.962	-.170	.066	.124	.035
Rugged	.956	-.163	.067	.132	.044
Romantic	-.185	.962	.032	-.086	-.038
Sexy	-.183	.954	.036	-.105	-.039
Awesome	-.181	.964	.034	-.081	-.051
Love at first sight	-.159	.904	-.050	-.106	-.074

2. FACTOR ANALYSIS OF NEPAL

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on 34 personality items to reduce data and identify the underlying dimensions. Principal component analysis with the Varimax rotation was used. According to Hair et al. (2005), factor loadings greater than .50 are considered; therefore a cutoff point of .50 was established to include items in the interpretation of a factor. After the factor analysis, 8 items exhibited low factor loadings (<.50) and were removed. The items eliminated from the analysis were "cheerful, friendly, imaginative, charming, peaceful, successful, magnificent, and superb." After removing these items, the analysis was repeated. All items exhibited factor loadings greater than .50 and no items were cross-loaded.

The first factor has twelve personality traits that charge high cross loading on it; Down to earth, (0.773), Up to date (0.888), Independent (0.777), Intelligent (0.959), Secure (0.951), Upper class (0.962) / Glamorous (0.962), Outdoorsy (0.767), Masculine (0.817), Western (0.767), Tough (0.962), and Rugged (0.956). "Solidity" is chosen as the name for this factor because this term seems to be adequate for the twelve personality traits. It has an eigenvalue of 12.04 and has the explained variance of 37.2%.

The second factor has eight traits that charge high on it; Original (0.785), Reliable (0.919), Confident (0.955), Good looking (0.899), Romantic (0.962), Sexy (0.954), Awesome (0.964), Love at first sight (0.904). "Attractiveness" is chosen as the name of the factor because this term seems to be adequate for all the eight traits. The eigenvalue of 5.15 and explained variance of 27.6% are represented by the second factor.

The third factor has two personality traits that charge high on spirited (0.867) and Daring (0.881). "Excitement" is chosen as the name of the factor as the two traits are best represented by it. The third factor has eigenvalue of 1.94 and explained variance of 7.11%.

The fourth factor also has the two traits that charge high on it; Sincere (0.832), Genuine (0.899). "Honesty" is chosen as the name of the factor because this describes the characteristics of the two personality traits here. The fourth factor has eigenvalue of 1.42 and explained variance of 6.3%.

The fifth factor has again the two personality traits that charge high on it; Family-oriented (0.916), Wholesome (0.785). "Hospitality" is chosen as the name of the factor because the term defines these two traits. The fifth factor shows the eigenvalue of 1.3 and the explained variance of 5.9%.

3. BRAND PERSONALITY DIMENSION OF NEPAL

Destination brand personality				
Honesty	Excitement	Hospitality	Solidity	Attractiveness
Sincere Genuine	Daring spirited	Family oriented Wholesome	Independent Down to earth Up to date Intelligent Secure Glamorous Upper-class Outdoorsy Masculine Western Tough Rugged	Good looking Romantic Love at first sight Awesome Original Reliable confident

The dimension honesty consists of personality traits such as sincere and genuine where excitement consists of daring and excitement, hospitality consists of family oriented and wholesome. Solidity includes the personality traits such as independent, down to earth, up to date, intelligent, secure, glamorous, upper-class, western, tough, masculine, rugged and outdoorsy. Where attractiveness includes the personality traits such as romantic, good looking, love at first sight, awesome, reliable and confident. With the help of the study conducted by Aakar (1997), Ekinci and Hosany (2006) and Li (2009) and be used to analysis the dimension of personality traits for Nepal.

Personality trait such as honesty which consists of sincere and genuine can be very useful for research in destination brand personality and can be further useful to tourism research on the marketing of the tourism destination. Excitement factor which consists of the personality traits such as daring and spirited is much more type of entertainment can be a common area to be useful to marketing of the tourism destination and branding of the destination. For instance Nepal, has been highly benefited with this aspect since it has an ample trekking route to some of the highest mountain, activities such as river rafting, kayaking, bungee jumping and many more. Nepal has been able to promote their destination through branding "once is not enough". Most of the tourists love Nepal due to the hospitality shown by the people. They make travelers feels like home, welcoming them with a warm heart and love. The factor solidity and its personality traits are also very essential dimension to describe the brand personality of the tourism destination. It helps to analyze the behavior and reflect the social values. Attractiveness can be used as one of the dimension to describe the brand personality of tourism destination. Personality traits such as love at first sight, romantic, good looking and reliable are the specific trait in the dimension. This helps us to see how the traveler feels about the place, whether the destination will make them fall in love or not. Since Nepal is known for its beauty and rich in biodiversity its scenery can't be missed which make traveler to love about it.

With the help of these dimension and factor analysis which has been carried out in the past, Nepal has been able to analyze and improve the factors to promote the tourism industry. Even it has led marketers to improve the situation and is very useful for marketing of the tourism destination and brand personality. With the help of these we can analyze the personality traits of the tourists and can be used to further improvement in the tourism sector. In context to Nepal, they can use these traits to develop and enhance the personality scale. With the help of these you can analyze and monitor the behavior of the tourists. We can measure the destination brand personality by asking the respondent to give their views about the destination. These can be further used to tabulate the factor analysis and get the results in more specific.

4. CONCLUSION

As we can see that the destination brand personality dimension of Nepal is quite interesting and can be applicable for the tourism destination. With the help of these five dimensions of the destination personality, Nepal can analyze and can improve the tourism scenario. With the help of these traits can lead to various dimension of brand personality. It can be used to implement in marketing to build desired brand personality for tourism destination. It gives the clear idea to marketers of tourist destinations strive to create a clear and attractive brand personality for tourist destination.

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