

## Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations

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# 21 Towards a Tourism Brand Personality Taxonomy: A Survey of Practices

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### Contents

Introduction	2
Personality	2
Personality Taxonomy	5
Interpretation of the Dimensions	9
Personality Applied to the Brand Personality Concept	10
Conclusion	11
Future Research	11
References	12

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## Introduction

The five-factor model applied to studies on personality emerged after several studies from the early 1930s (Allport and Odbert, 1936) and developed into a reliable and valid model to assess the construct personality. The ‘big-five’ model has been the basis of several studies in the field of marketing, especially on brand personality (BP) research. Most studies that can be found about tourism BP are focused on the seminal work of Aaker (1997), namely tourism destinations in general (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006); rural tourism destinations (Cai, 2002); the establishment of the difference between brand image and brand personality (Hosany et al., 2006); the comparison between the development of a product/service brand and the development of a destination brand (Cai, 2002; Gnoth, 2002); and comparisons between the development of a brand and (re)positioning (Gilmore, 2002). Furthermore, the characteristics and concepts related to destination brands (importance of destinations’ ‘identity’, and the use of brand elements) were studied by Cai (2002), and Morgan et al. (2004), whereas the role of emotional relationship with consumers was approached by Gilmore (2002).

Studies on brand personality tend to reduce the psychometric scales used to measure human personality by rewording the items and changing the filling form instructions in an attempt to adapt human traits to product traits. In this context, and according to Milas and Mlačič (2007), a taxonomy of brand personality traits is still missing from the literature. Additionally, constructs such as brand, image and personality are often mixed and often misunderstood (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006). Recent studies recommend that researchers should adopt a stricter definition of the concept of brand personality in order to reach a more exact measurement of the concept.

This chapter offers a survey of practices that serves to clarify constructs such as personality, personality traits, personality taxonomy and the ‘big-five’ model of personality, hence it aims to provide a conceptual framework in which the main personality descriptors can be identified in order to be adapted to the context of a tourism destination. Subsequently a measurement scale can be developed in order to assess destinations’ brand personality.

## Personality

The theoretical framework of personality emerged in the field of psychology. Personality is one of the most central matters of human psychology. This is due to the fact that personality is a multidimensional concept which deals with individuals in contrast

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