Expensive, Cold and Dangerous

IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA AS A DESTINATION FOR DUTCH TOURISTS
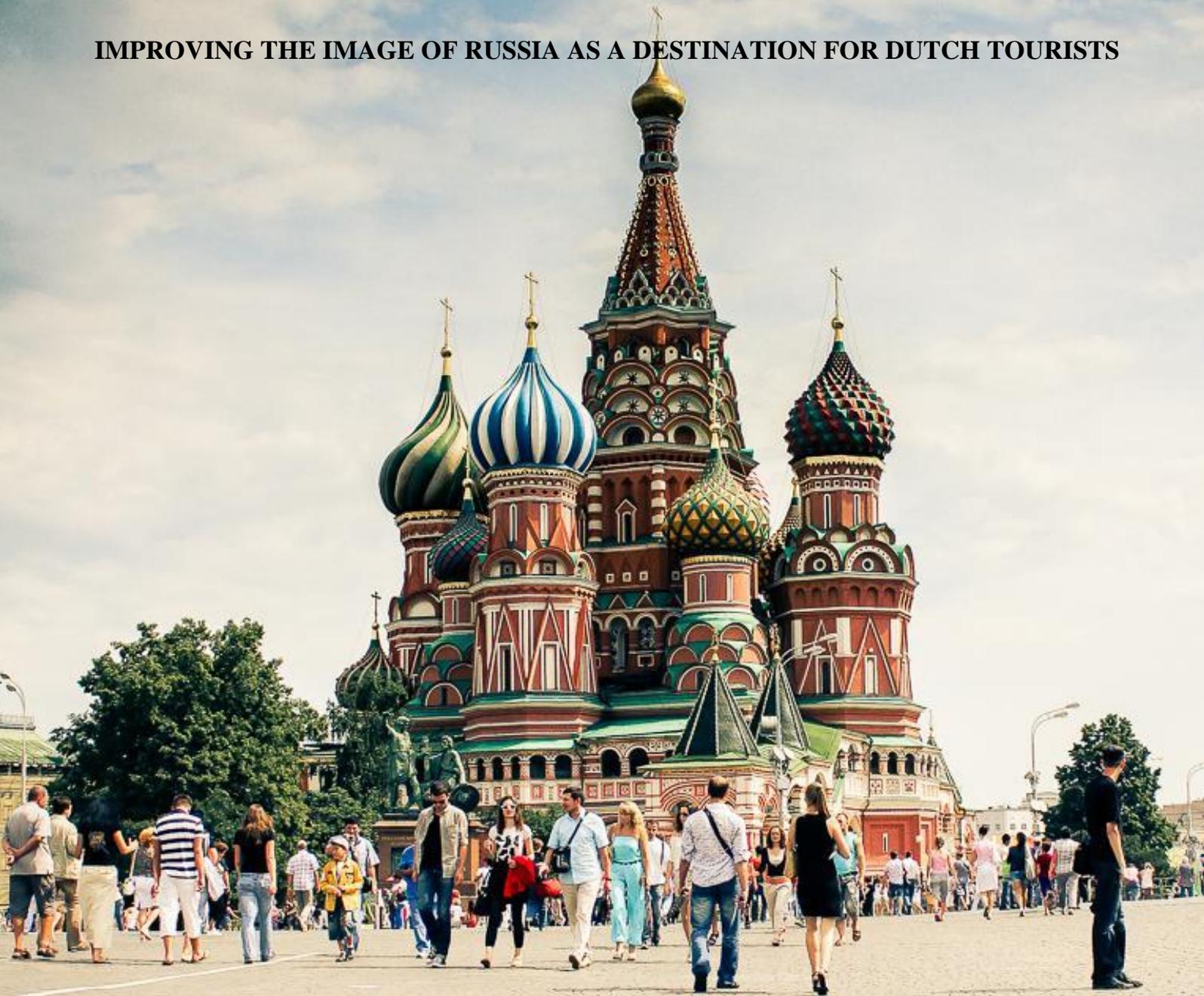
BY

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My country

I love my land, but with a queer passion,
My mind isn't able to absorb it, yet!
Nor glory, purchased by the bloody actions,
Nor peace, in proud confidence inlaid,
Nor sacred sagas of the days of yore
Will stir my pleasant fancies any more.
But I do love - and I don't know why -
Her endless plains' indifference and silence,
Her endless forests' ever swaying wildness,
Her rivers' floods which, like the sea, are wide.
I love to gallop in a cart on roads,
And peering slowly through darkness of the nights,
And idly dreaming of the night abodes,
To meet the solemn hamlets' twinkling lights.
I love the smell of the burnt-out stubble,
The wagons, sleeping in the steppe,
And gleaming of the birches' marble,
Midst cornfields on the hillocks' steps.
And with a joy, that's little known,
I see a full and stout barn,
A cottage covered with straw,
And shutters that are fairly done.
And in the holly dewy evening,
I'm glad to watch until midnight,
The dances, filled with stamps and whistling,
To murmur of the peasants, tight.

Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841)

Management summary

The Russian travel and tourism sector shows a high potential to grow and become a main global player in the field of tourism. The tourism industry contributes about 5.9% to the total GDP of the country. In 2011, the sector's total contribution was 3.4 million Rubles, or $106 billion dollars. (WTTC, 2012) However, there is a significant imbalance within the Russian tourism sector between inbound and outbound tourism. Therefore, the country aims to attract more international tourists.

Russia has a bad image in the Netherlands. Lots of potential tourists perceive the country as dangerous, corrupt and unwelcoming. This image is mainly caused by the media and the high amount of negative publicity in which the destination Russia is involved. The Russians themselves, who visit European countries more frequently for business trips and leisure also have an effect on how the Dutch perceive Russia. Furthermore, the image of the destination is formed through historical events such as the Cold War.

Although Dutch tourists are mainly negative about the destination Russia, they also have positive associations with the destination and show knowledge on the various tourism elements the country has to offer. They perceive the destination Russia as very interesting and even educational, mainly because of its rich history. They think Russia is an excellent destination for cultural tourism and associate the country with beautiful architecture, art, poetry, literature, music and ballet. Dutch tourists also believe the Russian nature is beautiful and variable. They associate the country with adventure and think there are many options in Russia for sportive and adventurous activities.

The feeling of danger surrounding the country is the biggest obstacle destination marketing organizations need to tackle in order to improve the image of the destination Russia. This can best be done by providing clear information on how safe the destination actually is. Publishing stories, or promoting blogs from people who have visited Russia can help to change the generally held image of corruption and violence. Furthermore, big events such as the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi have shown to have a positive, but short, effect on the country's image.

In order to create an actual, long lasting change in the image of Russia, the current political strife first needs to calm down. It is advisable for this destination to combine Destination Branding practices with Crisis Management to restore the image of Russia, but also to be prepared for potential crises in the future.

Dedication

Finally, my years at the Utrecht University of Applied sciences have come to an end. It is a relief to finally close this door and move on towards new challenging experiences in life. These past years have definitely not been easy for me. It was a time for me to grow, to become more independent and to develop myself both mentally and emotionally. Unfortunately, these personal changes often became obstacles for my study performances. While I always was a highly motivated and very confident student in high school, here, at the University I suddenly felt far more insecure, stressed and sometimes even alone. Throughout the third year of my studies, I gained back some of this self-confidence when I got a chance to display one of my core strengths: creative thinking, which made me feel more valuable and appreciated. During these last moments of me being an ICM student, I have tried not to let go of this creative and positive flow of mind, which helped to write this final report.

There are so many people I would like to show my gratitude to. To start off with my graduation tutor Marjolein Koopmans, who has been very busy accompanying me and many other students throughout this last phase of our studies. Although she did not have a lot of time for us all, she still gave me the comforting feeling that she was there for me when I needed any help. My study progress coordinator Dragana Licina also deserves my gratitude, for her confidentiality, and her trust in me.

I want to say thank you to my boyfriend Mark, who not only supported me mentally, but also helped me to create a movie for my final presentation. To my friend Roger, who offered me some of his time to hand out a big part of the surveys for my quantitative research. I want to thank my mother, for printing two of these large packages of thesis paper, and I am thankful to my friend and fellow student Peter for his support and for all of the interesting conversations we've had during this final year of our studies.

Furthermore I want to thank my sister Fabiënne and my brother Michiel for their honesty and the distraction they offered me when I needed that. I am thankful to my grandmother, for all the loving e-mails she sent me in order to motivate me and I want to thank my stepmother for her mindful inspiration and for the delicious meals she cooked for me during my busy study periods.

Last but not least, I want to show my gratitude to my father, to whom I will dedicate this final report. My father probably spent as much sleepless nights as I did worrying about my study progress, report deadlines and missing exam grades. I want to thank him for all of his support and his patience and I really hope my future career will make him proud.

And although my road towards this career might become bumpy, I hope these past years taught me a lesson: to stay strong and positive, and to always keep on learning.

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CBS: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek

CVO: Continu Vakantie Onderzoek

WTTC: World Tourism and Travel Council

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

1 Preliminaries

This chapter starts with a brief introduction to the topic of Destination Branding. Secondly, I will describe why Destination Branding is relevant for the destination Russia and I will mention the problem statement for this research, including the research questions that will provide an answer to the problem statement. Furthermore, the restrictions to this research project are mentioned and the report structure is described.

1.1 Introduction to the topic

This thesis provides a framework for the improvement of the image of Russia as a destination for Dutch tourists. Improving the image of a destination can be done through Destination Branding, which is the main topic of this thesis. Whereas branding, related to consumer products and services, has its roots in economic history, Destination Branding is a relatively new topic. However, there is a lot of literature to be found on Destination Branding, as more and more destinations start to use destination brands in order to differentiate their destinations from competing areas. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009)

1.2 Problem definition

Russia has a lot to offer for tourists. The country that covers huge parts of both Europe and Asia, shows unique architecture, art, nature and culture. According to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), Russia has a potential to become a major global player on the field of tourism. Unfortunately, Russia does not attract as many inbound tourists to meet this potential. (WTTC,2012)

1.2.1 Stable industry growth

According to the research undertaken by Oxford Economics, the travel and tourism industry contributes about 5.9% to the total GDP of the country. In 2011, the sector's total contribution to the GDP was 3.4 million Rubles, or 106 billion dollars. The tourism sector shows the biggest growth of all industry sectors in Russia: a stable growth of 4% per year. The tourism sector plays an important role in the employment of the country, the number of employed people in the tourism industry is almost as much as the number of employed people in the Russian Financial industry. (WTTC, 2012)

1.2.2 Imbalance between inbound and outbound tourism

Research shows that there is a significant imbalance between the amount of inbound and outbound tourists in Russia. The amount of incoming tourists in 2011 was 24,932,000, whereas the amount of

departing Russian tourists was 39,323,000. (Trading Economics, n.d.) Furthermore, Russians spend almost double the amount of money abroad than the amount of money that incoming tourists are spending in Russia. (Index Mundi, n.d.) Therefore, the Russian tourism sector is profiting a lot from internal, Russian tourists, but aims to attract more international, inbound tourism to its country. Tourists now choose the travel to other destinations because of Russia's complicated visa regulations (Ryce, 2014), but also because of the bad image of the destination.

1.2.3 Negative image among Dutch tourists

The negative image of Russia is one of the main reasons for tourists to choose not to visit the destination. Dutch tourists often perceive the country as cold, corrupt and dangerous. One of the main factors that influence the image of the destination Russia among Dutch tourists is the media. Russia is mainly presented negatively in the media and therefore, people who do not have direct experiences with the destination, perceive the country as negative. The Dutch do however form an important part of inbound European tourists for Russia. Not only do they belong to the top-five of incoming tourists in Russia (Index Mundi, n.d.), for years the Dutch and the Russians have had a positive relationship and are stimulating each other in terms of economy, tourism and culture. (NRCe, 2013)

By focusing more on these values and unique assets of the destination Russia, and less on the negative media attention and feelings of fear about Russia, a framework can be made to create a more positive image for the destination Russia, in order to stimulate inbound tourism from the Netherlands.

1.3 Problem statement

Giving the current situation of the Destination Russia, as described in chapter 1.2, the problem statement for my research is the following:

"In order to attract more Dutch tourists to destinations in Russia, the image of the country as a destination for traveling should be improved."

By searching for a solution to this problem statement, I will create a framework for improving the image of the Destination Russia among the Dutch (potential and actual) tourists, who currently have negative associations with the country.

1.4 Research questions

In order to provide a solution to the problem statement I mentioned in chapter 1.1, I set-up a range of research questions to guide me through the process of analyzing and redeveloping the image of the destination Russia. Throughout this chapter I will give a brief description of my policy question, my research question and my sub-research questions.

1.4.1 Policy question

My policy question for this thesis is:

'*How can Russian destinations attract more foreign tourists in order to increase the Russian Tourism sector's GDP contribution?'*

This question focuses on the bigger essence of the research: how this research fits the 'bigger picture' of international tourism. As described in chapter 1.2, there is a significant imbalance between inbound and outbound tourism in Russia. In order to increase the tourism sector's GDP contribution more, the country should attract more foreign tourists.

1.4.2 Research question

In order to provide a solution for the problem statement, as described in chapter 1.2, and in order to answer the policy question as described in chapter 1.4.1, I used the following research question:

'*How to improve the image of Russia as a destination for Dutch tourists?'*

This research question focusses on the Dutch tourists only, instead of the foreign tourist in general. I choose to research the image of the destination among Dutch tourists, not only as a restriction to my research (described in chapter 1.5), but because, since the negative events during the Netherlands-Russia year, I was interested how negative political and diplomatic events between two specific countries influence the image among tourists of one of these specific countries. This research question combines all sub-research questions, as described in chapter 1.4.3.

1.4.3 Sub-research questions

I created sub-research questions that address the different elements I need to research in order to find an answer for my research question as described in chapter 1.4.2. My sub-research questions are listed below:

'What is destination marketing?'

This research question asks for an explanation of the concept of Destination Marketing, including different theories that are linked to this field.

'What does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like? Who is the target group for Russian destinations?'

To get an insight in the Dutch tourist as a target audience for destinations in Russia, it is important to analyze the Dutch tourist industry and the Dutch tourist in particular. An important element of this research question is that one should only focus on the Dutch tourist that visits destinations abroad for leisure purposes.

'What is the current image of the destination Russia, as perceived by potential and actual tourists in the Netherlands?'

As described in chapter 1.2, lots of Dutch (potential and actual) tourists perceive the destination Russia as dangerous and corrupt and are therefore unlikely to visit the destination. In order to get a better understanding of the image of Russia among Dutch tourists, it is important to analyze this negative image and the associations that are linked to this image. Furthermore, it is important to analyze what positive associations the Dutch tourists have with the destination Russia.

'Who influence the current image of Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists and in what way?'

With this research question I want to analyze how big the role of the media is in the formation of an image for the Dutch tourists. Furthermore, I want to analyze what other elements play a role in the creation of this image.

What is the desired situation and how can Destination Branding contribute to establishing the desired image for the destination Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists?

By analyzing the desires of the Dutch tourists and the stakeholders of the Russian destination, and by researching the positive associations Dutch tourists have with the destination, I want to find out how Destination Branding theories can contribute to the establishment of a positive image for Russia.

1.5 Restrictions to the research

Because of time- and financial limitations, I made some restrictions to the research project. The restricted areas can be interesting to research for future projects.

1.5.1 Focus on the destination Russia

Although Destination Branding theories can be applied on all destinations, I choose to analyze the Russian destination only. The conclusions and recommendations of this research project are specifically aimed at this destination.

1.5.2 Focus on tourism

The improvement of a country's image does not only include benefits for the tourism sector of that country. An improved image can for example stimulate the export rates of a country positively, and it can stimulate the establishments of international businesses in the country. However, this report focuses on the tourism sector only, meaning that I will only include the stakeholders of this specific sector in my research.

1.5.3 Focus on leisure tourism

There are different reasons for travelers to visit a specific destination. One could for example visit a destination for business- or study purposes, for free-time pleasure, or to visit family or friends. Throughout this report I will only focus on leisure tourism: tourists who visit another country to spend their free time.

1.5.4 Focus on the Dutch leisure tourist

In order to find more information on a specific type of tourists, and to go more in-detail about the feelings and thoughts of potential and actual tourists on a certain destination for travelling, I chose to analyze the Dutch tourists, instead of a bigger group, such as European tourists or tourists in general. By focusing on Dutch tourists only, It get the opportunity to analyze whether positive or negative news items have a direct or indirect effect on the perceptions of Dutch tourists on Russia as a destination for travelling.

1.5.5 News-related restrictions

Because of time limitations, I had to mark a certain period in which I could observe the news concerning Russia in Dutch news channels. I limited the included news to the period from November 2013, until May, 2014.

1.6 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a framework for improving the image of the destination Russia among Dutch tourists through Destination Branding. The report gives guidelines for the creation of a Russian destination brand, which can be used by Destination marketing organizations that want to attract Dutch tourists to destinations in Russia.

1.7 Chapter division

The report is structured in the following manner:

After the preliminaries (chapter one), the methodology for this thesis is given (chapter two), which describes how the research is carried out. Throughout the Theoretical framework (chapter 3) I will highlight some of the main Destination Branding theories I used throughout this thesis. At first, I will define some of the main concepts of Destination branding, including the concepts of tourism, Destination Branding and destination marketing organizations (chapter 3.1 and chapter 3.2) Secondly, I will describe who the main stakeholders of a destination brand are (chapter 3.3). Throughout chapter 3.4, I will give an overview of theories that describe the Destination Branding process. Furthermore, I will describe the advantages of Destination Branding (chapter 3.5) and the challenges in Destination Branding (chapter 3.6). Chapter 3.7 describes the importance of Crisis Management as a part of Destination Branding and in chapter 3.8 I will mention a few trends on the field of Destination Branding. In the final chapter of my theoretical framework (chapter 3.9), I will describe the concept of successful destination brands, including the key success factors for Destination Branding. Throughout chapter 4, I will give a description of the destination Russia, including an overview of some of the country's core tourist attractions. Chapter 5 includes the findings and results from all of the research I did for this thesis: my secondary research project on the characteristics of the Dutch tourists (chapter 5.1), my quantitative analysis (chapter 5.2) and my qualitative research (chapter 5.3). Chapter 6 draws conclusions from the findings in chapter 5 and provides answers to my research questions as described in chapter 1.4. Throughout chapter 7, I will give my recommendations based on the conclusions I described in chapter 6. The bibliography (chapter 8) is followed by the appendices, which include more detailed and extended information concerning my secondary research analyses and my quantitative and qualitative research.

2 Methodology

This chapter describes all the types of research I carried out in order to provide answers to my research questions, as described in chapter 1. In order to create a fitting framework for improving the image of the destination Russia, I did secondary research on existing Destination Branding theories as well as an analysis of the destination and a quick scan of the presence of Russia in the Dutch newspapers. I carried out both quantitative and qualitative research activities in order to get to know more about the current and desired image of the destination Russia. In order to set up the quantitative research part, I carried out a secondary data analysis on research done by the CBS, CVO and TNS Political and Social, in order to get a better insight in the travel behavior and attitude of the Dutch tourist.

2.1 Creation of the theoretical framework

In order to underpin this theory with professional theory on Destination Branding and to provide an answer for the sub-question *'What is Destination Branding?'* I carried out secondary research on existing articles concerning Destination Branding, Crisis Management and tourism. I used these theories to create a theoretical framework, which can be found in chapter 3 of this thesis. In order to find articles and other literature for my framework, I used the search engines Google Scholar and LUCAS. Both search engines only showed scientific articles as results, which made it easier for me to find valuable, interesting and reliable literature.

2.2 Analysis related to the destination Russia

In order to apply the Destination Branding theories I described in my theoretical framework, I needed to analyze the offerings of the destination Russia, as well as its presence in the Dutch newspapers.

2.2.1 Analysis of the features and attributes of the destination Russia

In order to provide an answer to the sub-research question *'What is the desired situation?',* I analyzed some of the core features and attributes of the destination Russia, such as the country's history, nature, culture, heritage and events. As I will further describe in chapter 3.4.3, the destination performance imagery, including the features, attributes and benefits of a destination form an important source of inspiration for the creation of a destination brand, and the establishment of a positive image for the destination. In order to analyze the destination's offerings, I used information on websites that included information concerning tourism in Russia and Russian history.

2.2.2 Scan of the presence of Russia in the Dutch news channels

According to Pike (2008) negative publicity has a negative effect on the image of a destination. In order to get a view of the presence of Russia in the Dutch newspapers and the negative or positive character of these articles that included Russia, I scanned through several newspapers and news websites from November 2013 until May 2014. The newspapers I read were: De Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad and De Volkskrant. I choose to analyze these newspapers because they are perceived to be the most read newspapers of the Netherlands (Top 10 lijst, 2013). I also searched for articles concerning Russia on the frequently used digital news channel NU.nl and the NOS website. I used these online channels to analyze some news items concerning the Netherlands-Russia year, published throughout the year 2013. The small news overview I created covers the publicity around Russia from January 2013 until May 2014.

2.3 Analysis of the Dutch tourist

In order to provide an answer for the research questions '*what does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like?*' and '*who is the target group for Russian destinations?*', I carried out a secondary data analysis , using data from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Continu Vakantie Onderzoek (CVO) and TNS Political and Social. The CBS, a Dutch market research organization, offers all kinds of national market research data, which can be used freely for different purposes. The organization CVO, is another Dutch market research organization that specifically researches the tourism sector. TNS Political and Social, is an international market research organization that carried out a research project for the European Union considering travel behavior of Europeans, which I used as a source for this thesis.

2.4 Quantitative research: survey among Dutch tourists

I carried out quantitative research in the form of a survey, mainly to find out what the current image of Russia is among Dutch tourists and who influence this image. I also analyzed what the target audience desires when going on a holiday abroad. My quantitative research project provides answers for the following sub-research questions:

- *What is the current image of the destination Russia, as perceived by potential and actual tourists in the Netherlands?'*
- *Who influence the current image of Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists in the Netherlands?*

- *What is the desired situation and how can Destination Branding contribute to establishing the desired image for the destination Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists?*

2.4.1 Selection of the respondents

In order to determine the right population for my research project I analyzed previous research documents from CBS and CVO.

Sample based on age and participation rate

According to research by the CBS, there were 7 566 130 people traveling abroad for more than 4 days in the year 2012. Out all of these tourists, 20.7% was aged between 0 and 17 years old, 37.3% was aged between 18 and 44 years old, 38.1% was aged between 45 and 74 year old, and 3.9% was aged 75 or older. Since people between 0 and 17 years old are unlikely to make travel decisions on their own and are unlikely to travel abroad on their own, especially to locations that are located outside the EU, I decided to leave out this age group in my research. I also left out the population aged 75 and older, considering the very low percentage of tourists traveling abroad in that age category. My research population now consisted of 5 689 117 people, aged between 18 and 74 years old, who travel abroad for leisure for 4 days or longer. My research sample, which helped me to select the right amount of people for each age group was divided according to the percentages of travel participation of each age group.

The data I used for the creation of this research sample is displayed in appendix 1. Table 1 visualizes this research sample based on age.

Sample based on sex and participation rate

According to the CBS, there are no differences between male and female participation in holidays abroad. Therefore I chose for a 50/50 male/female division for my research sample. The sample framework I used for my quantitate research is shown in table 1.

Sample based on educational level

I made a framework in order to select the correct amount of respondents for each educational level. According to CBS reports, higher educational and financial levels have a positive effect on the holiday participation rate of Dutch tourists. Therefore, I decided to select more people with a higher educational level, less people with average educational levels and only a few people with lower educational levels. The sample I used in order to determine the right amount of respondents for each group of education is shown in table 2.

Selection of the research location

Based on the educational level division, I selected three quarters in Amersfoort as locations to carry out my surveys. I chose for Amersfoort as a location to carry out my research, because Amersfoort is a strongly urban area. According to the CBS report I analyzed, strong urban cities score average in terms of holiday participation. (CBS, 2013) A table with holiday participation rates based on level of urbanity can be found in appendix 1.

I also chose for Amersfoort because of my personal connections with employees from the municipality, who helped me with selecting the best fitting quarters for my research. The municipality of Amersfoort provided me with a range of reports called 'Wijkatlassen', which provided me with information on the average educational levels and income levels for each quarter in the city(appendix 2 and 3). I selected one quarter with relatively high financial- and educational levels, one quarter with average financial- and educational levels and one quarter with a high percentage of low income levels and low educational levels. The quarters I selected were Nieuwland, as a quarter with higher income- and educational levels (Gemeente Amersfoort, 2012), Leusderkwartier as an average quarter (Gemeente Amersfoort, 2012) and Liendert as a quarter with a high percentage of low income- and educational levels. (Gemeente Amersfoort, 2012)

2.4.2 Carrying out the survey

I handed out the surveys (appendix 9) for my quantitative research from door-to-door. First of all, I did this so I could better control the educational level sample I described in chapter 8.2.3, but also, because at home, my respondents would have more time to complete the survey. The survey would relatively take a lot of time for my respondents to complete (approximately 7 minutes). Therefore, I decided to hand out the self-completion surveys personally. Having a face-to-face conversation with my respondents, and describing the importance of their participation in the survey for me as a graduate clearly increased my response rate: almost all people I spoke were willing to take part in the survey. I handed out 140 surveys from May 10, 2014 until May 13, 2014. From May 12 until May 14 I came back to take back the filled out surveys. I received 116 surveys, which gave me a response rate of 82.9%. The people who eventually did not respond were people who did not have enough time to complete the survey or were not at home when I came by to return the surveys. I did not use all of the filled out surveys: in order to work with a sample that met the sample I described in chapter 2.4.1, I decided to use the answers of 110 respondents. I left out 2 surveys that appeared to be filled out in an unserious manner, and the other 4 surveys I did not use were 1 female and 3 male respondents, aged between 35 and 44 years old, of which I already had enough respondents.

2.4.3 Structure of the survey

The survey I created for this quantitative research project can be found in appendix 9. I tried to make the survey as simple as possible, including 75 multiple-choice questions and only one open question. I decided to start of the survey with 5 simple questions, in order to not immediately scare off my respondents with very difficult ones. I then asked one open question, and continued with 64 multiple-choice questions, divided in three sections, on which my respondents could give an answer based on a Likert scale. After these lists of multiple choice questions, I ended the survey with a few background questions. I intentionally put the background questions at the end of my survey. In case my respondents quit the survey halfway, they had at least given an answer to the most important questions of my quantitative research.

Language

I decided to set-up the survey in Dutch because my research focuses on Dutch tourists only. Furthermore, I did not want to make the survey too challenging for my respondents, considering they already had to respond to quite a high amount of questions. I believed a survey in Dutch would result in a higher response rate and more honest and precise answers.

2.4.4 Set-up and value of the survey questions

The survey I carried out mainly analyses the current associations and perceptions in the minds of Dutch tourists connected with Russia, which shape the image of the destination. It furthermore provides a view on what kind of features and attributes Dutch tourists seek when they plan a holiday abroad. Finally, the survey analyses whether the Dutch associate these preferred holiday features with Russia.

The first questions of my research, question 1: *'Have you ever been to Russia?'* and question 1B:*' If so, what was the reason for your last visit?'* are focused on previous visits to Russia. With question 1, I wanted to analyze whether the opinion of tourists, who visited the destination before, have other, or even more positive associations with that destination. Question 1B, provides background information on how many people have visited Russia for leisure.

Question 2: *'Is your opinion on Russia positive or negative?'* question 3: *'Has your opinion on Russia changed during the past year?'* and question 5: *'What factors influence your opinion on Russia?'* analyze the damage of the negative publicity concerning Russia during the past year (as described in chapter 4.3). Question 4 furthermore analyze the strength of the media as an influencer of the public opinion, against other factors that respondents could use to form an opinion, such as friends and family, or personal experiences in Russia or with Russians.

Question 5: *'What associations do you think of when you think of Russia?'* analyzes the top-of-mind associations of my Respondents with Russia as a whole that shape the current image of the country. It measures the awareness of some core features of the country, as well as the presence of negative associations caused by negative publicity. The features and attributes the respondents think of can be used as a form of inspiration for the establishment of a Destination Branding framework.

Question 6 lists some of the core features and attributes of Russia I found through analyzing the country (described in chapter 4). The respondents are asked to answer whether they associate these features and attributes with Russia. As for question 5, this question analyzes the image of Russia through associations in the mind of the Dutch tourists. It also measures what features and attributes can be used for the set-up of a Destination Branding framework for Russia. As I will describe in chapter 3, it is good to promote a destination by using the features, attributes and benefits that the tourists associate with a destination. Promoting a destination with factors they do not associate the destination with, will lead to confusion.

Question 7 analyses the preferred situation for the Dutch tourists. It analyses what holiday elements the tourists prefer when going on a holiday abroad. It is important to analyze the preferences of the Dutch tourists, as a destination brand must always deliver the benefits the tourist truly desires (Pike, 2008:182) TNS Political and Social has carried out a quantitative research before that showed what holiday elements were most important to European tourists. I included similar elements in this question, but made them more detailed and more fitting to the specific destination I am doing research on.

Question 8 analyzes what benefits the destination Russia has for Dutch tourists. It analyzes what type of holiday destination they believe Russia actually is. Furthermore, this question includes a statement linked to the celebrity value of Russia as a tourist destination.

Question 9 *'Do you think you will ever plan a holiday trip to Russia?'* analyzes whether the Dutch tourists are willing to plan a holiday to Russia when their feelings of risk, caused by the negative publicity have faded.

Finally, the background questions assisted me in dividing the surveys I received based on my research samples, as described above. I did not ask for an educational- or income level in my survey, as I already made a pre-selection for these types of respondents, based on the income levels and educational levels of the areas where I did my fieldwork.

2.4.5 Processing of the research data

To process the data, I counted all of the surveys by hand, and entered the answers of the surveys in Excel. I created different groups of data, so that I could spot differences in data between for example male and female respondents. I used the two divisions I used as research sample based on age in order to create 6 data groups based on age and sex. I also created 3 groups based on the quarters I carried out my research and I made a division between actual and potential visitors of Russia.

Table 1: research sample based on age

Age group	Population	Participation in holidays	Participation in holidays abroad	Population participating in holidays abroad	Percentage of population	Minimum number of respondents
18-34	3 110 000	74%	73%	1 680 022	29%	Male: 16 Female: 16 Total: 32
35-44	4 590 000	75.5%	69.5%	2 408 488	42%	Male: 23 Female: 23 Total: 46
55-74	3 610 000	74.5%	61.5%	1 654 012	29%	Male: 16 Female: 16 Total: 32
Total 18-74	11 300 000	74.7%	68%	5 689 117	100%	Male: 55 Female: 55 Total: 110

Table 2: research sample based on educational level

Level of education	Population	Participation in holidays	Participation in holidays abroad	Population participating in holidays abroad	Percentage of total population	Minimum number of respondents
(Semi) Higher educated	3 940 000	84.5%	77.5%	2 285 510	40%	44
Average educated	4 430 000	74.5%	65.5%	2 161 729	37.7%	42
Lower educated	4 030 000	60%	55.2%	1 579 028	22.3%	24

2.5 Qualitative research method: interview with stakeholders

In order to analyze the opinions and ideas of stakeholders considering a destination-branding framework for the destination Russia, I contacted several stakeholders to carry out a semi-structured, qualitative interview. This chapter describes how I selected the interviewees for my research, on how I set up the questions for the interviews.

With this qualitative research project, I aimed to gather answers for the following sub-research questions:

- *'What does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like? Who is the target group for Russian destinations?'*
- *'Who influence the current image of Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists and in what way?'*
- *What is the desired situation and how can Destination Branding contribute to establishing the desired image for the destination Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists?*

2.5.1 Selection of the interviewees

The (potential) interviewees I contacted for these interviews are travel agencies offering leisure travels to Russia, as well as organizations that stimulate connections, including tourism connections, between Russia and The Netherlands, such as the national tourism board of Russia in the Netherlands and the NCRe (Nederland-Rusland Centrum). The essential characteristics I had in mind for my interviewees are listed in table 3.

In order to find interviewees for my qualitative research, I searched for my interviewees online, using the search engine Google and social media channels Facebook and LinkedIn. I primarily contacted my interviewees by phone. In cases I could not find a phone number I contacted them by e-mail. I approached a total of 9 organizations including 5 travel organizations and 4 organizations that are otherwise linked to the destination Russia, stimulating relationships between the Russia and The Netherlands. From all of these organizations, 2 were willing to make an appointment with me: the NRCe that stimulates the relationship between Russia and the Netherlands and the travel organization Eurocult-Lito, which is also responsible for the website of the national tourism board of Russia in the Netherlands. The travel organizations Bolsjoj Reizen and Tiara Tours both agreed on answering some of my questions in by e-mail, but unfortunately they were too busy with the holiday high season to send me an answer in time. The holiday high season is the main reason for my very low response rate of 22.2% for this research. The fact that I had to carry out the interview within a relative short time also influenced this result.

Table 3: Requirements for qualitative research interviewees

Interviewee from travel organization	Interviewee form other organization
Interviewee visits the destination Russia on a regular basis and has visited the destination for leisure purposes	Interviewee visits the destination Russia on a regular basis and has visited the destination for leisure purposes
The organization offers leisure trips to Russia	The organization is connected to organizations that offer leisure trips to Russia
The interviewee has knowledge of the core tourism features, attributes and benefits of the destination Russia.	The interviewee has knowledge of the core tourism features, attributes and benefits of the destination Russia.
Interviewee has knowledge on the negative publicity concerning Russia and has evidence of its effect on the attitudes and behavior of the Dutch tourists.	Interviewee has knowledge on the negative publicity concerning Russia and its effect on the attitudes and behavior of the Dutch tourists.
The interviewee has some basic knowledge on Destination Branding and the diplomatic relationships between Russia and the Netherlands	The interviewee has some basic knowledge on Destination Branding and tourism
The organization mainly focusses on the offering of trips to the destination Russia	The organization is actively involved in the establishment of good relationships between Russia and the Netherlands

2.5.2 Structure of the interview

The interview I carried out for my qualitative research was semi-structured. I developed 10 questions as a guideline for the interview based on the theoretical framework I created in chapter 3. The interview questions can be found in appendix 10.

2.5.3 Set-up and value of the interview questions

Below, I will describe the value of the interview questions for my research.

When carrying out the interviews, I always started with question 1: *'What do you personally think of Russia as a holiday destination?'* This question was primarily used to 'break the ice' between me and my interviewee. The subjects then automatically continued to the second question: *'What activities or attractions do you recommend for Dutch tourists who want to visit Russia?'*. This question focusses on the most important features and attributes of Russia, which can form an inspiration for the development of the brand for Russia (see chapter 3.4.3 and figure 2). This question was also important to analyze what features, attributes and benefits of the destination Russia fit the desires of the Dutch tourists. As I will describe in chapter 3.9.3, it is important to listen to the actual desires of the tourists when developing a destination brand.

The identity and core values of a destination are central in the creation of a destination brand. (See chapter 3.2). Question 3: *'What is the core identity of Russia? What core values do you think fit this identity the best?'* aims to clarify the core identity and values of the destination Russia. This question was asked in two steps: first the identity, and then the values. Question 4: *'Which of these values are important for Russia as a holiday destination?'* focusses more on the tourist-specific values of the destination.

Question 5: *'How can the holiday destination Russia best be described?'* Is related to both the performance imagery of Russia: the features, attributes and benefits of the destination, as well as the emotional imagery of the destination and the destination's experience imagery. The answers of this question can be used for the definition of the brand essence of the destination Russia.

Question 6: *'What type of tourist fits the destination Russia the best?'* analyzes the target audience for Russian destinations, which is related to the sub-research question: *'What does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like? Who is the target group for Russian destinations?'* The question furthermore provides information for the tourist imagery of the destination.

The final questions of the interview, question 7: *'Russia currently deals with a negative image in the Netherlands. What caused this?'* question 8: *Do you think the negative image among Dutch tourists can be improved? If so, how can this image be improved?,* question 9: *'What can tourism organizations do in order to stimulate tourism to Russia, despite the countries' negative image?'* and question 10: *'Do you think the historical bound between Russia and the Netherlands can stimulate an improved image for Russia'*, are linked to negative publicity and image improvement measures. It analyzes the opinions of the stakeholders of the destination on the current situation, and analyzes whether the current image meets the reality.

3 Theoretical framework

This chapter is created do describe and clarify some of the core theories in the field of Destination Branding. The theory in this chapter provides an answer to the sub-research question *'what is Destination Branding?', a*nd formed a useful framework for both the set-up of my quantitative and qualitative research and the conclusion part of my research. This theoretical exists of the following parts: first, I will describe some of the key concepts and terms related to tourism destinations. In the second part, I will describe some of the key concepts and terms related to Branding and Destination Branding. In the third part I will describe who the stakeholders of Destination Branding are. Throughout chapter 3.4 I will describe some elements of the Destination Branding process. After that, I will describe the advantages of Destination Branding (chapter 3.5) and the challenges of Destination Branding (chapter 3.6). Throughout chapter 3.7 I will describe how and why destinations should implement Crisis Management in their Destination Branding process and in chapter 3.8 I will mention some of the core trends in the field of Destination Branding. In the final chapter of this theoretical framework (chapter 3.9) I will describe some key elements of successful destination brands.

3.1 Description of key concepts and terms related to tourism destinations

In this section I will define some of the key concepts related to tourism destinations. I will define the terms 'tourism', and 'tourism destination zones' and I will give an explanation of the differences between 'places' and 'destinations'.

3.1.1 Definition of tourism

Writers, such as Leiper (1979) state that giving a clear definition for the concept 'tourism' is almost impossible as it is a relatively new subject and because it crosses different kinds of established disciplines. (Leiper, 1979, in Pike, 2008) The definition of tourism is different from each purpose for which it is used. For destination marketing organizations, the concept includes two important factors: economic development and tourism impacts. (Pike, 2008). A definition that relates to this first, economic factor is: "Tourism is an identifiable nationally important industry. The industry involves a wide cross-section of component activities including the provision of transportation, accommodation, recreation, food and related services." (Australia Department of Tourism and Recreation, 1975, in Pike, 2008). Leiper (1979) argues that this definition lacks the important human elements of tourism. A definition that does contain these 'human elements', is a definition given by the Nations Statistical Committee (1937), that describes a tourist as: "someone who visits a country other than that in which he habitually lives for a period of at least twenty-four hours" (OECD, 1974, in Pike, 2008). This

definition clarifies what the tourist does, but it does not include the effect of tourism on an industry, or destination. The definition that does include both the human elements and the economic effect of tourism is the definition given by Jafari (1977). He states that "tourism is the study of man away from his usual habitat of the industry which responds to his needs, and of the impacts that both he and the industry have on the host's socio-cultural, economic and physical environments." (Jafari, 1977 in Pike, 2008). Pike (2008) argues that tourism does not only include the behavior and interaction of people who visit different places, but also the host community, the host destination and the travel trade itself. (Pike, 2008) Pike gives the following definition for tourism, related to the field of Destination Branding: "The activities and interactions of people, other than regular commuters, and the resultant impacts on both the demand and supply sides, while visiting places away from home". (Pike, 2008)

3.1.2 Clusters or tourism destination zones

A 'cluster' can be defined as: "an accumulation of tourist resources and attractions, infrastructures, equipment, service providers, other support sectors and administrative organisms whose integrated and coordinated activities provide customers with the experiences they expect from the destination they chose to visit." (Rubies, 2001, in Pike, 2008) Clusters can also be called 'tourism destination zones' or 'tourism districts'. These zones or districts do not specifically include political or geographical boundaries, but are bordered in ways of where tourism services are provided. Pike (2008) describes three types of destination cluster types, being: 'section of a political boundary', 'a political boundary', and 'across political boundaries'. (Pike, 2008) Pike (2008) gives several examples these types of clusters: an example of a tourism destination zone across political boundaries is the Alps in Europe. An example for a tourism destination zone with a political boundary is Las Vegas, USA. The Darling Harbor in Sydney is a tourism destination zone with section of political boundary. (Pike, 2008)

3.1.3 Differences between places and destinations

When studying the subject of Destination Branding, it is important to define the term 'Destination', and the difference between 'places' and 'destinations'. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, a destination is: "a place where somebody or something is going or being sent". The Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary gives the following definitions for the word 'place': "a particular position, point or area" and: "a particular city, town, building, etc." Reading these dictionary definitions, a destination can be seen as "a place where tourists are going to". Pike (2008) gives a different definition of the term, leaving out the element of movement from the tourist's perspective. He describes a destination as "a geographical space in which a cluster of tourism resources exists, rather than a political boundary." (Pike, 2008)

3.2 Description of key concepts and terms related to Destination Branding

In this section I will describe some of the key concepts and terms related to Destination Branding. I explain the core differences between marketing promotion and branding, I will describe the concepts : 'destination brands', 'destination brand identity', 'destination brand image', 'destination brand personality' and 'destination brand positioning'. Furthermore, I will briefly describe the three core elements of destination brand positioning and the function of destination marketing organizations.

3.2.1 Differences between marketing, promotion and branding

Marketing, promotion branding practices are closely related with each other. However, it is important to highlight some of the core differences between these three fields.

Marketing

According to De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van Den Bergh (2013), Marketing is "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create and exchange value, and satisfy individual and organizational objectives." Kotler and Keller (2012) define the concept marketing as "the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large." Kotler et al. (2008) give the following description for the term marketing: "A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others." (Kotler et al., 2008) They describe the Marketing Mix as: 'The set of controllable tactical marketing tools – product, price, place and promotion – that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market." (Kotler et al., 2008)

Promotion

Promotion or sales promotion is an element of the Marketing Mix. According to Kotler & Keller (2012), Sales promotions are: "short –term incentives to encourage trial or usage of product or service" (Kotler & Keller, 2013) Promotions are designed to change the behavior of the trade, to carry and actively support the brand, and the consumers, so that they buy or try a brand for the first time, or buy a brand earlier and more often. In destination marketing, promotion could for example be online advertisements to promote a certain destination.

Branding

Branding can be seen as a way to position the identity of a brand in order to create the desired image. (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008) Brand managers position their brands to differentiate the products and services of a brand from other brands in the marketplace. (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) The difference between marketing and branding lies in this differentiating role of a brand. When brands are consistent, by means of content and appearance, they create value for consumers and help them to make purchase decisions. Brands create a demand for certain products and services, whereas Marketing focuses more on promoting these products or services. According to Laws (2002), 'branding is a way to increase the efficiency of marketing' (Laws, 2002, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009)

Within this thesis, I will focus on the topic of Destination Branding. I will use theories that are closely related to the regular branding theory and practice.

3.2.2 Definition of brands

When studying the topic of Destination Branding, it is important to understand what a brand is. In corporate and product branding theories, writers give different definitions for the term 'brand'. According to Morgan and Pritchard (2014), these definitions mainly describe a brand as "a communication device, an entity of perception, a value enhancer or a relationship"(Morgan & Pritchard, 2014). Kotler and Keller (2012) define a 'brand' as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of hem, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." They describe the concept 'brand' as a value enhancer, a communication device and an entity. De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van Den Bergh (2013) give a similar definition for the term 'brand', but they add the following description: "A brand is an identifier that adds either rational and tangible dimensions (related to product performance) or symbolic, emotional and intangible dimensions (related to what the brand represents) that differentiate it from other products designed to fulfill the same need." Cornelissen (2011) describes a brand as: "The set of physical attributes of a product or service, together with the beliefs and expectations surrounding it – a unique combination which the name or logo of the product or service should evoke in the mind of the audience."(Cornelissen, 2011). Pike (2008) argues that a brand is "much more than merely symbols presented to the pubic". He states that it is more useful to consider the brand as a presentation of the brand identity, created by the producer, to create a brand image in the mind of the consumer.' (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008)

3.2.3 Definition of destination brands

According to Ndlovu & Nyakunu (2009), destination brands are primarily used to protect a postive iamge of tourism at destinations, but they are also used position destinations: to set a certain destination apart from it's competitors. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:1) Destination brands are not, and should not be treated as if they were 'normal' brands. As Morgan & Pritchard (2004) state: "destinations cannot (and should not) be promoted as if they were soap powder". (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004 60) According to Anholt (1998) it is a misconception that destinations can actually be branded or rebranded. Instead, marketers attempt to change existing perceptions and associations of destinations. (Anholt, 1998, in Morgan & Pritchard, 2004:60)

3.2.4 Description of destination brand identity

Brand identity includes the mission, vision, values and desired brand image of a brand, organization or destination. (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008) Branding can be a tool to "establish a distinctive and memorable identity in the marketplace that represents a source of value for the consumer" (Pike, 2008:190). Because of the increasing competition in the tourism industry, Morgan & Pritchard (2004) state that it is "more crucial than ever for destinations to create a unique identity, to differentiate themselves from their competitors." (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004:60)

3.2.5 Description of destination brand image

An 'image' can be defined as "the set of beliefs, ideas and impressions a person holds regarding an object". (Kotler & Keller, Marketing Management, 2012) The image of a brand is reflected in the associations, connected with the brand and all of its elements, in the mind of the consumer. (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Destination brand image

Heath (2004) states that "a destination represents a mental picture in the minds of current and potential visitors" (Heath, 2004:40, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:1) A destination's image can be defined as "the meaning of a destination in the minds of tourists" (Kouris, 2009). According to Pike (2008), these meanings and images held by tourists play an important role in their travel purchase decisions. (Pike, 2008:200) Negative perceptions of a destination, such as 'dangerous' or expensive' are often unrealistic. However, they do influence the behavior of potential and actual tourists.

According to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), the image of a destination and the positioning of this destination in the mind of the consumers is "crucial to the ultimate success of a destination".(Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) Since destinations are no physical goods, they can often only compete via images (Pike, 2008:201). The only touchable elements of a holiday destination are brochures, web pages, media information on a destination or (private) photos of holidays. This competition and differentiation via images involves certain consequences that destination marketing organizations need to consider, as further described in chapter 3.6. The image they build should be sustainable, outstanding and heterogeneous. (Pike, 2008) Aramberri (2001) states that if the image and messages send out by the destination marketing organization are not well calibrated, they create a level of dissonance and confusion for the tourists. A destination brand must therefore be based on the expectations and values of the tourist, and not just on the core ideas and values of the destination. (Aramberri, 2001)

According to Kotler et al. (1993), a destination image can be: positive, negative, weak (the destination has no clear image or no image at all), mixed (the image of the country contains both negative and positive elements) or contra dictionary (one part of the population has a positive image and another part of the population has a negative image). (Kotler et al., 1993 in Avraham et al., 2008)

3.2.6 Description of destination brand personality

Destination brand personality includes the human characteristics and traits that are associated with a specific brand. Brand personality adds emotional value to a destination brand, it differentiates the brand and helps the consumer to decide what brand suits him or her the best. (De Chernatony, 2006, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:5) Common types of brand personality include: excitement, sincerity, ruggedness, competence and sophistication. (Business Dictionary, n.d.) King (1970) describes that brands are chosen by the consumer as friends: "people choose brands as they choose their friends, you choose your friends not usually because of specific skills or physical attributes (though of course these come into it) but simply because you like them as people. It is the total person you choose, not a compendium of virtues and vices." (King 1970 in Pike, 2008). A destination brand personality creates value for a destination helps the visitor to understand the identity of a destination better, in order to - to use King's (1970) words - 'pick the right friend'.

3.2.7 Description of destination brand positioning

The increased competition and the commoditization of destinations ask for a successful positioning in the mind of the potential visitor of a destination. Kotler et al. (2008) defines brand positioning as: "arranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinctive and desirable place relative to competing

products in the minds of target consumers". (Kotler et al., 2008:994) Pike (2008) describes positioning as a means to create a destination brand image that is similar to the destination brand identity and the desired destination brand image. Morgan & Pritchard (2004) state that brand managers position their brand in order to "occupy a niche in the marketplace that is occupied by no other brand". Keller (2001) and Morgan & Pritchard (2004) mention that marketers should differentiate their products and services by stressing the needs and desires of the consumers. Morgan & Pritchard (2004) state that, in order to create a strong brand position; destinations should "create an emotional relationship between the destination and potential visitors."

3.2.8 Destination brand positioning elements

According to Pike (2008), the most important brand positioning elements include the place name, a symbol and a positioning slogan.

Place names

Of course, destinations already have a place name, which is related to a whole history of associations and there are only a few examples of places that have changed their names for touristic benefits. (Pike , 2005)

Symbols and logos

According to Aaker (1996), symbols can enhance the brand recognition and recall. (Aaker D. A., 1996)Symbols may represent well-known icons of a destination, such as the Eiffel tower in Paris or the Pyramids in Egypt. (Pike, 2008:232)

Positioning slogans

According to Pike (2008), it is sometimes insufficient for destination marketing organizations to use a logo for the positioning of a destination. With a slogan, they can add a more meaning to a destination than they would be able to do through a place name or symbol. According to Keller (2003), a 'slogan' or 'strap line' is "a short phrase that communicates the descriptive or persuasive information about a brand. (Keller, 2003) According to Pike (2008), the most popular themes in slogans for positioning a destination were: leadership, discovery, nature, location, people, water, self-expression, escape, pleasure, treasure, royal, vibrant, climate and culinary. (Pike, 2004, in Pike, 2008:234)

3.2.9 Destination marketing organizations

Destination marketing organizations are responsible for the marketing and positioning of specific destination. They are not responsible for the planning and policy of a destination, and they are not able to control private organizations in an area. (Pike, 2008:31) Pike (2008) describes different types of Destination marketing organizations, including national tourism offices (responsible for marketing a country as a tourism destination), state tourism offices (organizations responsible for marketing states as a tourism destinations, in countries with federal political systems) and regional tourism organizations, (responsible for marketing specific tourism areas or 'clusters' where tourism is concentrated). (Pike, 2008:31)

National tourist board

A national tourist board is an organization that aims to attract tourists located in a specific area to a specific tourist destination. The Russian tourist board in the Netherlands for example aims to attract Dutch tourists to destinations in Russia. National tourist boards provide information about various aspects of a destination that are interesting to tourists, such as historic sites, museums and art galleries, nature sites, outdoor activities, festivals and special events, the climate of a destination and the characteristics of the host population. The national tourist board is connected to several travel and tourism organizations in both the country it wants to attract tourists from and the destination it is working for. A national tourist board is a type of destination marketing organization.

3.3 Stakeholders in Destination Branding

This chapter describes some of the main stakeholders of Destination Branding, based on the 'wheel of tourism stakeholders' model created by Buhalis & Fletcher (1995)

Destinations consist of different components, including 'accommodation, hospitality, attractions, arts, entertainment, culture, heritage and the natural environment'. (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003:4) It is nearly impossible for destination marketers to control all of these different factors. However, the destination components are all linked to stakeholders of the destination. The various stakeholders, that often have their own agenda's and interests and can make or break a destination in terms of image, awareness and differentiation. In the most ideal situation, the stakeholders work complementary in order to create the best possible situation for the tourism sector.

According to Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott (2003), stakeholders of a destination brand include national governments, environmental groups, chambers of commerce, trade associations, civic groups and the private organizations in the destination's area. (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003:4). Wang et al. (2011) mentions other stakeholders for a destination brand including: other levels of local government (for example at a regional level, or at a municipal level), tourism offices, tourism development councils or commissioners and public and private suppliers (such as tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels, travel tours etc.).

3.3.1 Wheel of tourism stakeholders

Because the stakeholders of a destination have different wants and needs, it is often very difficult for destination marketing organizations to apply one, clear strategy for destination brand building. Buhalis (1999) has created a framework, called the 'wheel of tourism stakeholders', which displays how the responsibilities and interests are shared among tourists, the public sector and government, tour operators, tourism enterprises and the host population. Figure 1 displays his theory. According to Pike (2004), the effectiveness of the tourism industry and the satisfaction of the tourists is higher when all of these stakeholders interact properly. According to Morgan, Pritchard & Pride (2011), stakeholders of a tourist destination communicate in a certain way with the outside world, creating images in the mind of potential and actual tourists. Their way of communication is often unplanned. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) However, when thought out carefully, their activities have a positive effect on how potential and actual tourists perceive a country.
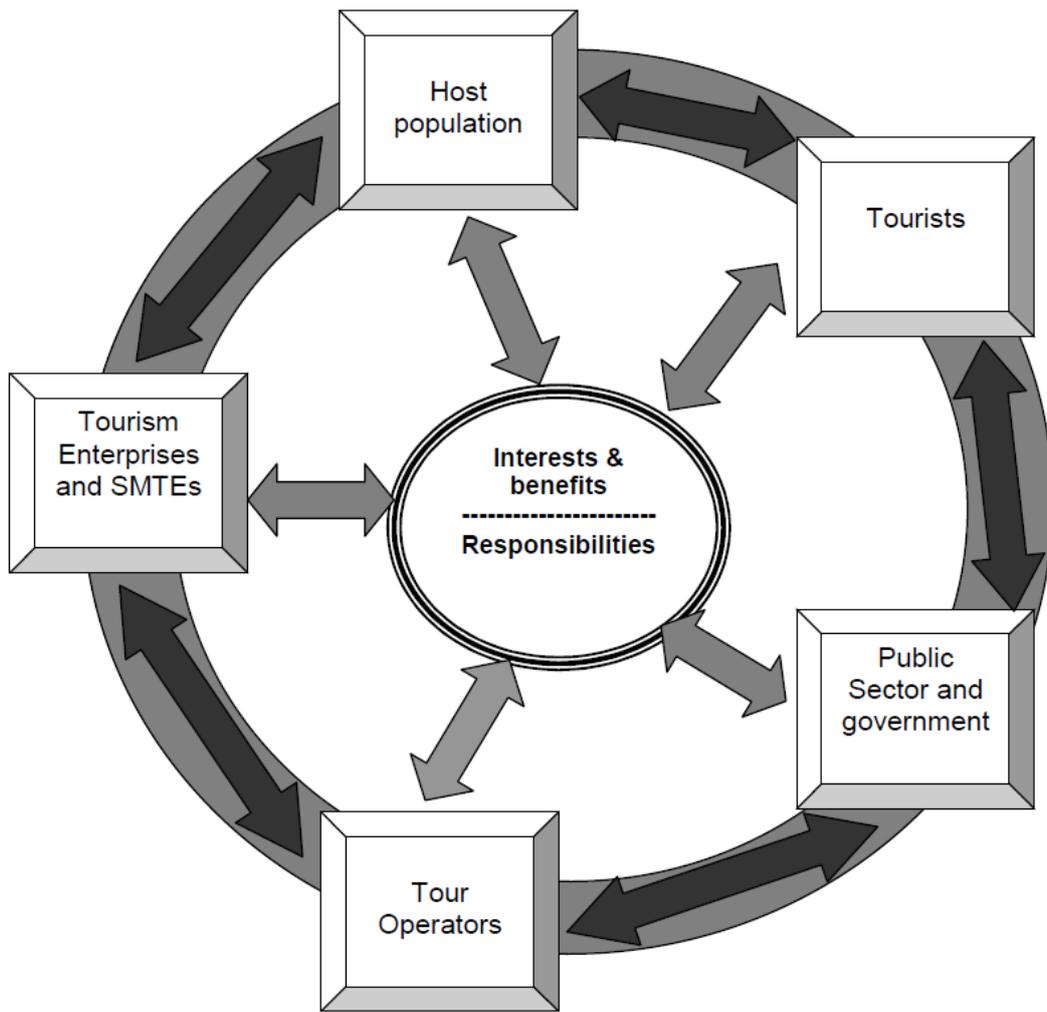
Figure 1: Wheel of tourism stakeholders, adapted from Buhalis & Fletcher, 1995

Source: (Buhalis & Fletcher, 1995, in Buhalis, 2000:4)

3.3.2 Tourists

Tourists are natural communication channels for destinations, as they are able to share their experiences with a specific destination in various ways. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) They can for example share their experiences by word of mouth, telling stories about certain destinations to their friends and families. Nowadays, the influence of tourists on online content concerning destinations becomes more and more important. This topic is further described in chapter 3.8: Destination Marketing trends.

3.3.3 Tourism enterprises

Among organizations promoting a destination, tourism enterprises and boards usually have the 'loudest voice' in Destination Branding, because of their large promotion budgets and competent marketing departments. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) They usually use 'pretty pictures' and important, well-known touristic features to promote destinations.

3.3.4 Public sector and governments

Local and national governments have an effect on the image of a destination, as their policy decisions are reported in the national media. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) They also have an effect on the destination as a whole, as they are able to develop the tourism sector of a destination, as well as the destination's competitiveness. Therefore, lots of destination marketing organizations use the practice of political lobbying to influence the policies that have an impact on these factors. (Pike, 2008:289)

3.3.5 The host population

The host population has an important effect on the image of a destination. Before traveling to a certain destination, tourists form an image based on the behavior of people from the host country they hear or read about, such as high profile leaders and media- and sport stars, or the host population in general. Furthermore, they are influenced by how the host country behaves abroad. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) When people from the host country for example visit destinations in Europe and behave in an inappropriate way, this will have a damaging effect on the host country's image.

When tourists actually visit the, they shape their image based on the friendliness and helpfulness of the host population, and by the way they are welcomed. (Pike, 2008:291) According to Pike (2008), the tourism industry of a destination should be seen as an integrated part of the local community instead of a separate entity. (Pike, 2008:290)

The ideas and values of the local population, as well as their sense of place, should be implemented in the development of a brand identity for the destination. (Pike, 2008:291) Furthermore, the host population should be satisfied with the investments of the country in tourism: they should be aware of the economic benefits of tourism for their community, and they should be able to communicate tourism-related problems at an early stage. (Pike, 2008:291)

3.3.6 Media relations

Media publicity can either make or break a destination: it can harm the image of a destination, but it can also be a useful source of 'free advertising'. With their communication management approaches, destination marketing organizations should try to achieve positive editorial media coverage. (Pike, 2008: 288) Nowadays, journalist often only approach destination marketing organizations themselves in times of a potential or actual crisis. Therefore, destination marketers should be very proactive in approaching journalists, offering them creative, positive content about their destinations.

Negative publicity

Negative news items can relate to a wide range of incidents, such as natural disasters, aggression against visitors, or the harm of human rights. Throughout chapter 3.6, a description is given of how destinations should deal with negative publicity.

3.4 The Destination Branding process

This chapter describes some theories that describe elements of the Destination Branding process. In chapter 3.4.1, the five phases of Destination Branding are listed, in chapter 3.4.2, a description of consumer-based brand equity theories is given, and in chapter 3.4.3, the 'brand building through image' model is described, which can be used to create a destination brand through existing images of the destination.

3.4.1 Five phases of Destination Branding

Morgan & Pritchard (2004) describe five phases in destination brand building. These five phases are displayed in table 4.

Table 4: The five phases in destination brand building (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004)

Phase one	Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations
Phase two	Brand identity development
Phase three	Brand launch and introduction: communicating the vision
Phase four	Brand implementation
Phase five	Monitoring, evaluation and review

Source: Morgan & Pritchard, 2004

During the first phase, destination marketing organizations need to analyze, investigate and define the core values of a destination and its brand. According to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), these values should be "durable, relevant, communicable and hold saliency for potential tourists". (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) Destination marketing organizations should consider how relevant the destination brand is considering the consumers' needs, and how well a brand can compete with other tourism destinations. In order to do this, marketers could use a SWOT analysis, which defines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a destination brand. In the second phase, the destination marketing organization develops the brand identity. Once the marketers know what the core values of

the destination brand are, they can underpin these values with the destination's brand identity and all of the elements to create this identity, including elements such as 'photography, typography and tone of voice' (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). In the third phase, the brand is introduced and communicated. Morgan and Pritchard (2004) stress the importance of consistency in communicating about a destination brand. During the fourth phase: 'brand implementation' this consistency remains important. Finally, during the monitoring and evaluation phase, destination marketers analyze the effect of Destination Branding. One of the methods to do this is by surveying potential visitors for a destination and analyze their opinions and associations with a destination brand.

3.4.2 Achieving consumer-based brand equity

Analyzing the brand equity of a brand helps destination marketing organizations to estimate the value of their brands more precisely. It provides destination marketers with information and motivation to develop better branding strategies and improve the productivity of their marketing activities.

In general, brand equity measures the effectiveness of marketing activities that are linked to a specific brand. (Keller, Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity, 1993) According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, which add or subtract from the value provided by a producer, by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers". Cornelissen (2011) defines Brand equity as: "the notion that a respected brand name adds to the value of a product (and therefore generates returns to an organization upon customer purchase)." Kotler et al (2008) states brand equity is "the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service". These definitions include the importance of brand recognition and the effect of this recognition on the thoughts and behaviors of customers, causing an increase of sales.

According to Aaker (1991) and Keller (2003), consumer-based brand equity consists of the following assets: 1 brand awareness, 2 brand associations, 3 brand resonance and 4 brand loyalty. (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008) In the following paragraphs, I will describe these elements of consumer-based brand equity.

Brand awareness

According to Aaker (1996), brand awareness is: "the strength of a brand's presence in the mind of the target, with the goal not being to achieve general awareness, but to be remembered for the reasons intended." Keller (2001) mentions that a broader meaning of building brand awareness is "making sure consumers know which of their needs the brand is designed to satisfy". (Keller, 2001 p.16) Kotler & Keller (2012) define 'brand awareness' as "consumers' ability to identify the brand under different

conditions, as reflected by their brand recognition or recall performance". Moisescu (2009) also mentions that 'brand recall' and 'brand recognition' show the level of brand awareness for a brand. He defines brand recognition as 'consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue'. According to Moisescu (2009), brand recall is "consumer's ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other cues." (Moisescu, 2009) Keller (2001) mentions that there are two key dimensions of brand awareness: depth and breadth of brand awareness. Depth of brand awareness is linked to how easily consumers recall or recognize a brand. Breath of brand awareness is linked to the degree to which a brand is top-of-mind during a purchase situation. In the context of Destination Branding, brand awareness refers to the Destination's image: its name and its core characteristics and associations that create the perceived personality and value of a destination. (Kladou & Kehagias, 2013).

Brand associations

A brand association can be anything linked to a brand in the memory of an individual. (Pike, 2008) It is important that brand associations are strong, favorable and unique. (Keller, 2003) Brand associations also includes brand image, which includes perceptions of values, quality, feelings and brand personality. (Kladou & Kehagias, 2013) In the case of Destination Branding, brand associations can be factors such as authencity, hospitality and exocticness. (Kladou & Kehagias, 2013) Morgan & Pritchard state that destination brand associations are those that the competing destinations 'want and may be able to copy, but cannot surpass or usurp.' (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) They give the example with Paris, the city that has the strongest associations with romance. A unique culture can also be a strong and uncopyable association. According to Arzeni (2009), a destination can become more attractive and competitive when a strong relationship between tourism and culture is created. (Arzeni, 2009, in Kladou & Kehagias, 2013)

Brand resonance

The brand resonance asset represents the willingness of individuals to visit a certain destination. Resonance can be searched in the behavior of people, such as previous visitation, or in the attitude of individuals: the intent to visit a destination in the future. (Pike, 2008)

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to the degree to which a customer is attached to a certain brand or, in this case: a destination. The brand loyalty asset is seen as the main source of customer-based brand equity. (Kladou & Kehagias, 2013; Pike, 2008) In Destination Branding, brand loyalty brings positive effects such as repeated visits to a certain destination and recommendation of a certain destination. (Kladou &

Kehagias, 2013) Pike (2008) mentions the following positive effects of brand loyalty: lower marketing costs, increased travel trade leverage and word-of-mouth reveals. (Pike, 2008) According to Gitelson and Crompton (1984), there are five factors that stimulate individuals to return to a familiar destination: 1: Reduced risk of an unsatisfactory experience. 2: Knowledge that they would find their own kind of people there. 3: Emotional or childhood attachment to experience. 4: Opportunities to visit aspects of the destination not previously experienced. 5: To expose others to a previously satisfying experience. (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984, in Pike, 2008)

3.4.3: Destination brand building through image

The Destination Branding pyramid by Kouris (2009), as displayed in figure 2, describes how a destination brand can be built through image. Kouris mentions four elements that both form the current image of a destination and form an important source of inspiration for creating destination brand elements. The four elements Kouris mentions are: 1: destination performance imagery, 2: emotional imagery, 3: experience imagery and 4: tourist imagery, which are displayed in figure 2: destination brand building through image.

Destination performance imagery

The first element 'destination performance imagery' refers to the functional characteristics and features of the destination brand. According to Kouris (2009), the destination performance imagery is "the reason why tourists select one destination over another". (Kouris, 2009) It includes the destination's features: the 'goods' of a destination: its functional and concrete offerings, such as museums, mountains, lakes, beaches, festivals, popular hotels, restaurants or tourist attractions such as the Red Square, or the Winter Palace. The attributes of a destination include more descriptive characteristics of the destination, such as 'a destination with beautiful architecture', 'the coldest place on earth' or 'an interesting culture'. These features support the attributes of a destination. For example, the feature 'Winter Palace' supports the attribute 'destination with beautiful architecture'. Attributes support 'benefits', which explain how attributes "add value to the tourist's experience" (Kouris, 2009). For example: the attribute 'destination with beautiful architecture' creates the benefit of 'a new, inspiring, artistic experience'. According to Kouris, benefits can be functional, emotional or symbolic. He states that frequently mentioned benefits concerning destinations include terms such as adventure, discovery, relaxing, fun, knowledge and romance. According to Kouris, it is important to divide the destination brand performance imagery element into POD's (points of difference): characteristics that are unique for the destination, and are not to be found at any other location, and POP's (points of parity), characteristics that are not unique, but necessary in order to meet the tourist's values and preferences.

Emotional imagery

The second element of the pyramid is 'tourist imagery, which refers to the deeper meanings of a destination brand for the tourists. This element examines which higher goals a destination brand may fulfill in the life of the tourists. Goals a destination brand may support can be: self-esteem, self-fulfillment or accomplishment.

Experience imagery

The experience imagery refers to how the elements of a destination brand come to life in the imagination of the tourists. It displays a description of the experiences and the feelings the tourist will receive when visiting a destination. The experiences are meant to create feelings of joy and excitement for a destination.

Tourist imagery

The final element is tourist imagery. With this element, tourists form an opinion about a destination based on who has actually visited the place. Destination marketing organizations can stimulate positive imagery by publishing pictures of tourists from specific social-economical classes or age groups.

Destination essence

Finally, these elements deliver values for the 'essence' of the destination: which is the core nature and character of a destination. It should display the emotional values and elements of a destination brand. These elements should be consistent and cannot change over time. The destination brand essence provides the tourist with a reason to choose one specific destination over another. For example, for the destination New Zealand, the destination essence is 'landscape' (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003).
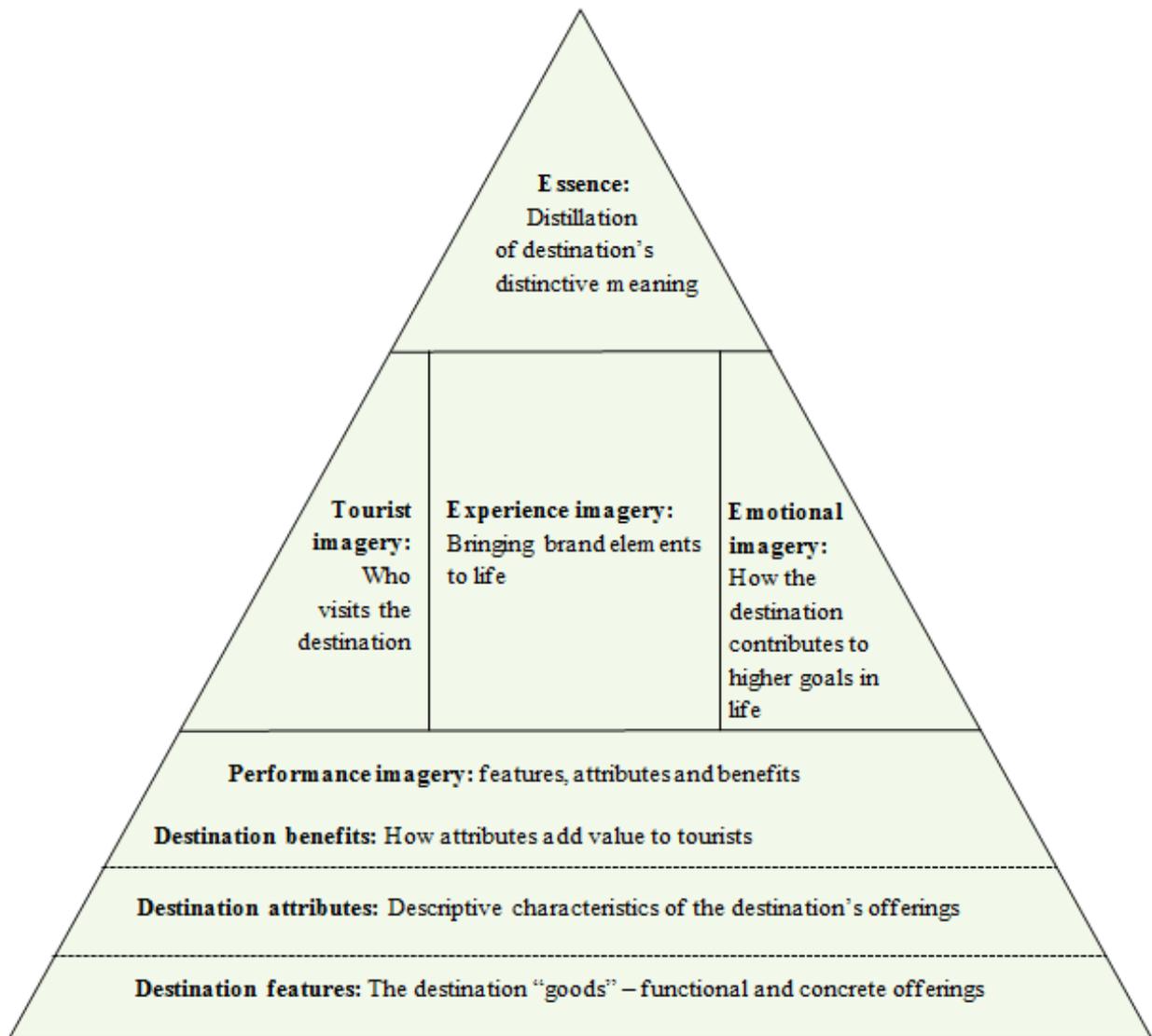
Figure 2: Destination brand building through image (Kouris, 2009)

3.5 The advantages of Destination Branding

Throughout this chapter I will describe why the development of a destination brand is important for destinations. The chapter describes some of the core functions of destination brands, including shaping an image for destinations, dealing with the intensive competition among destinations and differentiating a destination from these competitors.

3.5.1 Shaping the image of destinations

Brands are primarily used to stimulate a positive image of tourism at a destination. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:1) Negative perceptions, such as 'dangerous' can sometimes be irrelevant for a destination. By projecting a particular message about the destination to the (potential) tourists, Destination Branding can help to shape these perceptions, in order to create an image that suits the destination's identity and core values. An improved image for a destination does not only lead to increased incoming tourism. According to Vincente (2004), a positive image could also lead to increased exports and inward foreign investment. (Vincente, 2004:4, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:6)

3.5.2 Beating the increasing competition

Pike (2008) states that destination brands are important because of the increasing competition between destinations. Middelton (1998) mentions that this increasing competition has noticeable consequences for most of the destinations. He states that lots of organizations need to review their current, traditional marketing strategies to 'survive'. He mentions that some destinations will not be able to change and will therefore not survive as holiday destinations. (Middelton, 1998, in Pike, 2008:177).

The trend of increasing competition among tourist destinations will become more and more relevant over time (Mariani & Baggio, 2012, in Mariani et al., 2014). Forecasts by UNWTO, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, shows that emerging economy destinations are expected to grow double as fast (4.4% per year) as advanced economy destinations (2.2% per year). UNWTO prognoses that the share of emerging economy destinations will outgrow the share of advanced economy destinations in international tourism. According to the UNWTO forecasts, the 'new popular destinations' will be destinations in Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. (Mariani et al., 2014)

Secondary competition

Nowadays, the holiday pay is not only spent on holidays, but also on other luxury products and services that people need to express their lifestyle. Therefore, destinations do not only have to compete with other destinations, but also with a wide range of other products and services. According to Morgan and Pritchard (2004), this is difficult, since destination marketing organizations usually have low budgets, especially compared to marketing departments from other, global brands. (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004:61)

3.5.3 Key tool for differentiation

According to Pike (2008), brands are important because the commoditization of products and services is increasing (Pike, 2008:177). Nowadays, it is easy for manufacturers to imitate or copy features of a product or service. In the field of Destination Branding, the commoditization of destinations is increasing as well. As a result of the fierce competition, lots of tourist destinations offer the exact same services in order to attract visitors. Pike (2008) mentions the example of the white-sand beach at sunset, which is often used by destinations as an image for promotion. Obviously, this beach can practically be found at any destination. The same goes for destination features such as five star hotels, a unique culture, landscape and heritage, high service and friendly local people. (Piggott, 2001, in Morgan & Pritchard, 2004:60)

Price sensitivity

Tourists are very price sensitive. They are usually shopping for the best price-quality ratio. Therefore, most destinations only use price to set their destination apart from others. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:5) According to Aaker (2001) branding is the only weapon for destinations to create a sustainable competative advantage. (Aaker, 2001:321, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:5) Kotler & Gertner (2004) state that "brands have been considered to be the marketer's key tool for creating product differentiation". (Kotler & Gertner, 2004)

Personality

According to Pike (2008), detination marketing organizations should differentiate their destinations from others by giving the destination a personality. Instead of promoting a destination with common features, such as luxury hotels, great service and beatiful beaches, destination marketing organizations should consider branding a destination with qualities such as power, wealth, music, philosopy or

wisdom, in dorder to create an identity for a destination and to differentiate this destination from other destinations. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:6)

3.5.4 Destination as a lifestyle statement

According to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), consumers use their choice of holiday destination as an important lifestyle indicator. Urdde (1999) and Seth et al. (1999) state that consumers are making lifestyle statements when they are making choices about destinations, because they are buying into an emotional relationship. (Urdde, 1999; Seth et al., 1999, in Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). The place where consumers spend their money and time has to be emotionally appealing. (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). As a result, brands need to have strong, differentiating personalities.

3.5.5 Cost effectiveness

Pike (2008) states that brands can increase the media-cost effectiveness. Because more and more (niche) media channels are arising, it becomes harder for marketers to select the right channel for advertisements. Branding and positioning a brand would eventually lower the marketing budget for organizations.

Illustration 2: Beach at sunset image
Source: Pascal Le Segretain, Getty (2014)

3.6 Challenges in Destination Branding

This chapter summarizes some of the key challenges marketers face when branding a destination, such as the limited financial resources of destination marketing organizations and the challenge of negative publicity. Two other challenges of Destination Branding: the destination's vulnerability to crises and disasters and the new challenge of tourist-created content are described in other chapters. Because of its importance and its distinctive character, the challenge of Destination Branding during crises and disasters is described in chapter 7: Destination Branding and Crisis Management. The challenge related to tourist-created content is described in chapter 8: Destination Branding trends. Ndlovu & Nyakunu (2009) have created a framework that displays possible strategies for different types of Destination Branding challenges. This framework can be found in table 5.

Table 5: Key challenges and concerns in international Destination Branding

Crisis impact	Possible strategies
Perceived and real safety and security issues	Develop an integrated and coordinated strategy at the national and regional levels and create a realistic balance between reality and perceived safety
Perceived health issues (malaria, aids, etc.)	Develop information and communication strategies to address these fundamental issues on a continuous basis
Disasters and unforeseen incidents	Develop contingency plans and proactive public relations measures for immediate implementation when the unforeseen incidents occur
Lack of investment as a result of political incidents	Address the investment issues and open opportunities. Use this as a competitive advantage
International competition	Monitor and evaluate key competitor strategies as a key input into strategy formulation
The concept of a global village	Develop tourism marketing strategies by thinking globally, planning regionally and acting locally
Image fragmentation in certain overseas markets	Create strategic participative destination marketing frameworks that can serve as references for all stakeholders.

Source: Ndlovu & Nyakunu (2009:3)

3.6.1 Destination brands are highly multi-dimensional

Branding destinations is far more complex than the branding process of other goods and services (Pike, 2005) One of the core difficulties of Destination Branding is the fact that destinations are highly multi-dimensional. In positioning theories, it is common to use a few brand associations to position the brand in the mind of the consumers. (Pike, 2005) However, It is very hard to describe the cores value of a destination in a few words, as a destination includes so many diverse associations and values. According to Pike (2005), this problem becomes clear when destinations decide to develop a slogan for their destination brands. Destinations try to cover all the beautiful natural and cultural elements of a destination in one sentence. An example of a slogan that 'tries to cover everything' is: "Kenya - creation's most beautiful destinations, all in one country" (Pike, 2005:258)

3.6.2 Limited financial resources

The marketing budgets of destinations are very low, especially compared to the marketing budgets of commercial goods and services. These limited financial resources ask for a lot of creativity among destination marketers. (Morgan and Pritchard, 2004) The successful use of for example media publicity and the internet, as well as the presence of destinations in movies and series (see chapter 3.8 on destination marketing trends) can bring opportunities for destinations.

3.6.3 Negative publicity

Negative news items can concern a different range of topics, such as the violation of human rights, political incidents, natural disasters or crime against visitors. According to Pike, recovering a destination after the publication of negative news items asks for intensive communication planning and effective media relations, because "negative reporting in the mass media can affect the viability of a destination" (Pike, 2009:295) Unfortunately, the media has a tendency to publish negative news rather than positive news concerning the recovery process of destinations.

During a serious crisis or disaster, it is often useless to stimulate the image of a country with positive news items, as the public is already bombarded with negative news items concerning a destination. (Mansfield, 1999 in Pike, 2008) According to Pike (2008), the focus should then be on providing accurate and honest information. Stronger relationships with the media could in this stage lead to more positive news content during the recovery process.

3.7 Destination Branding and Crisis Management

This chapter highlights the importance of Crisis Management for destinations. A crisis or disaster can occur at any destination and will have a drastic effect on the image of a destination and therefore on the amount of incoming tourists. Potential and actual tourists will be afraid and uncertain to choose to visit a destination that is considered to be unsafe.

According to Van Gelder (2008), a crisis cannot be seen as a direct reason to develop a destination brand, but the 'benefit' of a crisis can be that the destination in crisis "may become acutely aware of the weaknesses of its brand and decide that it is high time to do something about it". (Van Gelder , 2008) A destination brand cannot pull a destination out of its crisis, but it can provide a framework to apply the strengths of the brand to a possible solution for this crisis. (Van Gelder, 2008:1). However, Ndlovu & Nyakunu state that Destination Branding can actually turn a crisis into a profitable opportunity. Therefore, Crisis Management strategies should be well implemented in Destination Branding. They mention that "destination marketing organizations need to position destinations in such a way that, depite uncertain conditions, they can exploit the scarce winodws of opportunities". (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:1)

3.7.1 Difference between disasters and crises

The difference between a disaster and a crisis is that a disaster is that a crisis is that a disaster is a sudden, catastrophic change over which the destination has little or no control, whereas the crises are more controllable. A crisis can also be seen as 'the situation that occurs during the period between when a natural or man-made disaster strikes a destination and recovery is achieved' (Pike, 2008)

3.7.2 Types of crises and disasters

There are different forms of incidents that can form a crisis or disaster for a destination. They can be man-made, such as economic crises, terrorist attacks and wars, or natural, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunami's.

Men-made crises and disasters

According to Pike (2008), man-made disasters for destinations can be made by anyone who is 'representative for management failures, such as an economic crisis, violence, ant-social visitors or poor planning.' (Pike 2008)

War and terrorism

Pike (2008) describes that terrorists more and more notice and act upon the vulnerable character of travelers, and therefore are likely to confront the tourism industry with more attacks in the future. It is important that destination marketing organizations consider the effect of terrorist attacks and wars on 'in their country or region, but also in other parts of the world'. (Pike, 2008) However there are a lot of thought-out methods for Crisis Management after natural disasters, there are not a lot of examples of Crisis Management for recovering a destination after a war or terrorist attack.

3.7.3 Travel risks

Risks can be seen as "a hazard, a probability, a threat, an uncertainty and a feeling of loss" (Slovac & Weber, 2002:4, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:7) Risks have an impact on the tourist's decision to choose to travel to a certain destination or not. Roehl & Fresenmaier in Ndlovu & Nyakunu (2009) mention seven risk components that can affect the tourist's travel decision: these risks are equipment risk, financial risk, physical risk, psychological risk, satisfaction risk and time risk. Individual tourists make travel decisions based how relevant these different risk components are to them. Furthermore, they analyze how great the risk is perceived to be and whether the risk is controllable or includes fatal consequences. (Tarlow & Santana, 2002:426, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:7)When a tourist has visited a certain destination before, he is likely to have another view on travel risks than other tourists, as he has experienced whether a change is relevant: he or she as either eliminated or confirmed the risk factor. (Sonmez & Gaefe, 1986:117, in Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:7)

Travel adversaries

Governments have the responsibility to inform travelers on the safety of a certain destination. They have the responsibility to identify (potentially) risky destinations (Pike, 2008). When a destination is considered as 'risky' on for example a government website, this has a negative effect on the image of the destination. The destination in crisis should create a recovery plan in order to change this image. On the Dutch governmental website www.rijksoverheid.nl, Dutch tourist can read through the travel adversaries for all destinations in the world.

3.7.4 Successful Crisis Management for destinations

Pike (2008) and Ndlovu & Nyakunu (2009) describe some successful Crisis Management strategies for destinations. Some of their main strategies are listed below.

The importance of preparation

Concerning the low budgets destination marketing organizations receive for recovering a destination after a crisis, good preparation is essential in Destination Branding. Destination marketing organizations are of course unable to control a disaster or crisis, but their level of preparedness can have an effect on the amount of people who visit a destination after a crisis or disaster. (Pike, 2008:322) However, lots of destinations decide not to prepare for a potential crisis, as they are not in a crisis at that point of time. Pike (2008) states "destination marketing organizations have a responsibility to prepare marketing contingency plans." These marketing contingency plans could for example include: "the formation of a permanent disaster taskforce, scenario building and risk analysis, coordinated marketing responses, market concentrations, outsourcing of media relations and initiatives to support local businesses." (Pike, 2008:322) Ndlovu & Nyakunu, (2009) also mention the development of contingency plans and the development of proactive public relation measures as possible strategies for a destination that faces a crisis, a disaster or an unforeseen incident. They mention these plans and activities should be immediately implemented when the crisis, disaster or incident occurs. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:3)

The importance of honesty

Failure to tell the truth can affect the integrity of a destination brand (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:11) According to Pike (2008), destination marketing organizations should coordinate the set-up of a management taskforce, to minimize the 'guessing' of stakeholders on a certain destination in crisis. The management taskforce clearly and trustfully informs visitors and other stakeholders on the situation and the destination recovery process. (Pike, 2008) A tool to inform potential and actual tourists can be a website, which should be updated regularly (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:11).

Outsource Crisis Management expertise

Most destination marketing organizations do not have specialized Crisis Management employees. According to Pike (2008), destinations marketing organizations often make mistakes during a destination recovery process, as the lack professional knowledge on the field of Crisis Management. It

is therefore wise to outsource a crisis manager in order to take the right steps when recovering a destination in crisis. (Pike, 2008; Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009).

Send out consistent and positive messages

Destination marketing organizations should coordinate cooperative campaigns in order to create more consistent, image-related messages considering a destination, including more positive signals. (Pike, 2008) Destination marketers should furthermore stimulate more positive messages in the media, for example by emphasizing and pushing attention to positive events. Events, such as the Olympics games in Sochi for example increased the amount of positive messages concerning Russia in the Dutch media. According to Pike (2008) having effective relations with the media can be one of the key factors for restoring an image of a destination. (Pike, 2009:295)

Stimulate discounts and add value to attract visitors.

In order to attract visitors, it is important to minimize the negative elements of destination and highlight the positive elements. When adding value to a destination and giving price benefits to the potential visitor, the crisis can appear less relevant to the potential visitor, (Pike, 2008) especially considering the high level of price sensitivity among tourists. However, price benefits do not change the actual, long-term image of a destination.

Analyze which areas need recovering efforts

Obviously, destination marketing organizations cannot recover or rebrand all tourism areas of a destination in crisis. When recovering a destination after a crisis, it is important to analyze which tourism markets are most relevant to put effort in. Destination marketers should research which areas have the potential to bring the highest value to the tourist and to become the most profitable for the destination. (Pike, 2008)

3.8 Destination Marketing trends

3.8.1 Tourist-created content

Attention needs to be paid to the increasing importance of tourist created content for Destination Branding. Due to the increased use of the web, and the popularity of social media channels, the amount of tourist-created content: such as holiday pictures, holiday reviews, blogs and videos has significantly increased. Using channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet, Flickr and YouTube, tourists largely contribute to the formation of the image of a destination. Whilst doing this, they avoid the usage of the formal elements of the destination brands. (Munar, 2011:291) The high amount of tourist-created content reduces the impact of campaigns carried out by destination marketing organizations.

Types of tourist-created content

According to Munar (2011), there are three main types of tourist-created content: narrative, visual and audio content. Table 6 describes what elements of these types of tourist-created content, and the formal content, created by destination marketing organizations, help the (potential and actual) tourist to form an image of the particular tourist destination.

Table 6: Brand, destination image and tourist-created content

Tourist-created content	Destination Branding formal elements	Destination image formation
Narrative (encyclopedic review, travel diary, blog, micro blog)	Narrative identity: slogans, taglines, brand name	Narrative text of the impressions, beliefs and attitudes on the destination experience
Visual (photography and video)	Visual identity: logo, advertising campaigns (photos or video)	Images of the destination experience
Audio (narrative and/or musical)	Audio advertising campaigns (music or text)	Audio stories about the destination experience

Source: adapted from Munar, 2011:295

Branding strategies concerning tourist-created content

Munar (2011) describes two strategies destination marketing organizations can use to deal with tourist-created content: the mimetic approach (figure 3), the advertising approach (figure 3) and the analytic approach. (Figure 4) Firstly, the mimetic approach is focused on the website of the destination brand: this website copies elements from social media channels and offers the public an opportunity to create and connect content, such as photos, videos and travel blogs with this main website. Furthermore, tourists are allowed to share information and formal elements from the destination marketing organization on their channels. This approach is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to deal with tourist-created content. The website content is controllable by the destination marketing organization, as they can remove unwanted content. However, the disadvantages of this strategy are the lack of social media elements of a corporate website, which leads to a lower level of contribution. According to Munar (2011), Organizations using the Mimetic approach "do not benefit from the massive volume of contributions that are taking place in the most popular network sites such as Trip Advisor, YouTube and Facebook". (Munar, 2011:300) Secondly, the approach lacks openness, which might reduce the level of honesty for destinations.

The second approach - advertising - is a traditional approach of dealing with tourist-created content. Destination marketing organizations that apply this approach use advertisement options of social media channels such as Facebook to promote their destination with banners and other possibilities of advertising. Furthermore, the approach uses microblogging in social media channels such as Twitter as a tool to promote the destination. In the advertising approach, the microblogging is usually based on one-way communication from the brand. The benefit of the advertising strategy is that it increases the social media presence of destinations; however, it does not use the massive amount of information created by tourists.

The analytic approach focuses on the wishes and behavior of tourists. It includes two main dimensions: prevention and knowledge. The prevention part of the approach is used for destination marketing organizations to understand how a brand is described through tourist-created content. It gives the destination marketer the opportunity to prevent crises or take action to minimize damage or to improve its marketing activities. (Munar, 2011:301) The knowledge dimension refers to the knowledge about the tourist-created content, which can be analyzed by destination marketing organizations through ICT techniques. This knowledge dimension is hard to achieve and asks for lots of financial and training investments. This strategy optimally uses the content created by tourists; however, it is less controllable by destination marketing organizations. (Munar, 2011:301)
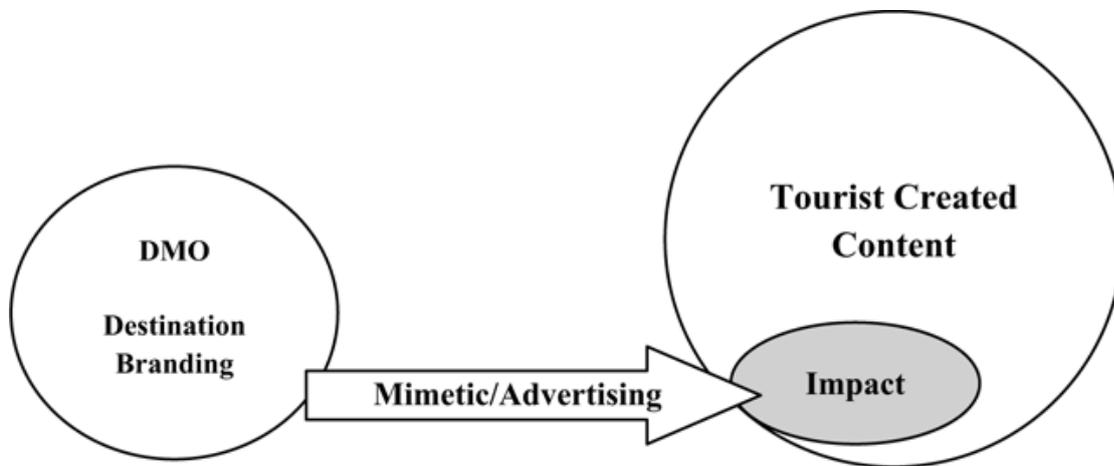
Figure 3: Mimetic and advertising strategic model of Destination Branding and tourist created content, source: adapted from Munar, 2011:300
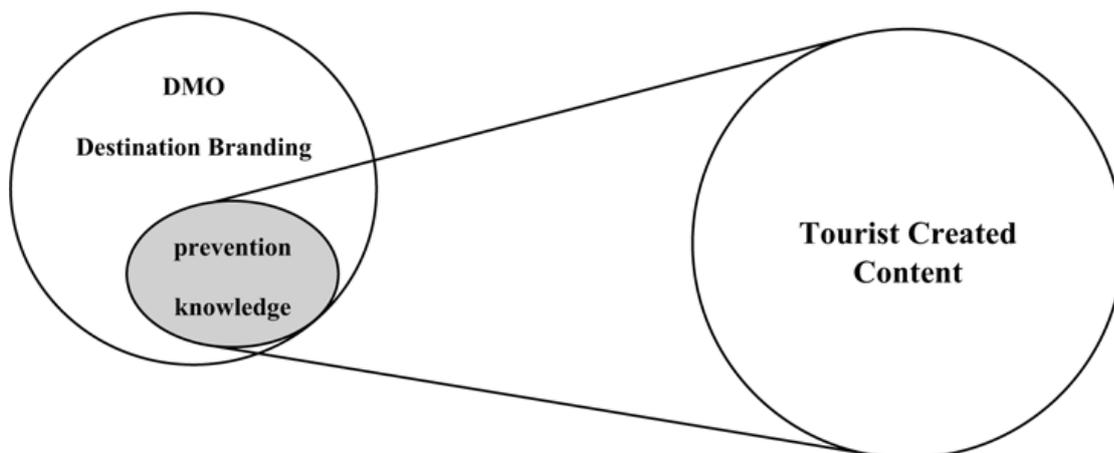

Figure 4: Analytic strategic model of Destination Branding and tourist-created content
Source: adapted from Munar, 2011:30

3.8.2 Destinations in movies

One of current trends on the field of Destination Branding is the usage of film to boost a tourist destination (Ali, Schaal, & Shankman, 2013) The movies Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit boosted the level of tourism for New Zealand (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003) and the last James Bond movie caused a higher flow of incoming tourists for the United Kingdom. Destination marketing organizations are now starting to act upon this trend and are developing methods and campaigns to draw the international attention from a movie into travel bookings. (Ali, Schaal, & Shankman, 2013)

3.8.3 Mobile internet

The trend of mobile Internet can be found both in the field of Internet Marketing and the field of Destination Branding, as lots of tourist organizations are now using Digital Maps and localization to promote tourist destinations. (Ali, Schaal, & Shankman, 2013) The localization trend focuses on promoting destinations and organizations that are in the environment of the customer. Organizations use the GPS system on the smartphone of the customer to send out information about for example restaurants or hotels in the environment of the smartphone user. (Mosterd, 2014) The localization trend can be seen as part of the advertising approach of tourist-created content, as described in chapter 3.8.1.

3.9 Successful Destination Branding

This chapter gives two models that measure the fashionability and celebrity status of destinations and mentions key success factors for destination brands.

3.9.1 The destination brand fashion curve

Morgan & Prichard (2004) created a model called the 'destination brand fashion curve', as displayed in figure 4, which outlines the stage of fashion in which a destination brand exists. The model describes four stages of destination brand fashion: 1: fashionable, 2: famous, 3: familiar and 4: fatigued. In stage 1, the destination brand as a feeling of exclusiveness and is often perceived as 'special' and 'chic'. During this phase, the destination is only visited by trendsetters. During the second phase, the destination has become a well-known and famous holiday destination. The trendsetters do not visit the destination anymore, as they believe it is rather passé now the 'mainstream crowd' likes to spend their holiday over there. In phase 3, the place has become familiar to most visitors. They are no longer surprised by the offerings of the destination. In the 'fatigued' phase, the visitors are quite bored with the destination and are looking for refreshments within this familiar destination.

3.9.2 Achieving celebrity

According to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), a successful destination brand is one that has achieved 'celebrity'. In order to achieve this positive form of reputation, destination marketing organizations must 'accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative' aspects of a destination. (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) Their 'destination celebrity matrix', as presented in figure 3, describes how destinations score on the 'wish you were here' appeal. The matrix indicates to what extend a destination is 'fashionable'. Morgan & Pritchard use four levels to describe this 'celebrity appeal': 1: celebrities, 2: potential stars, 3: losers and 4: problem places. Celebrity destinations are 'destination winners', they have high emotional meaning, great conversation value, status and high anticipation for potential tourists. Loser destinations, on the other hand, have little emotional meaning, low conversation value and no anticipation for potential tourists. Problem places are usually destinations that have a negative reputation because of negative media attention. Their emotional value is low, which – in combination with the negative attention – drives potential tourists away. Potential stars have a high emotional appeal, but they have limited celebrity value. This celebrity value can be created by building upon the established, high emotional meaning. (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004).
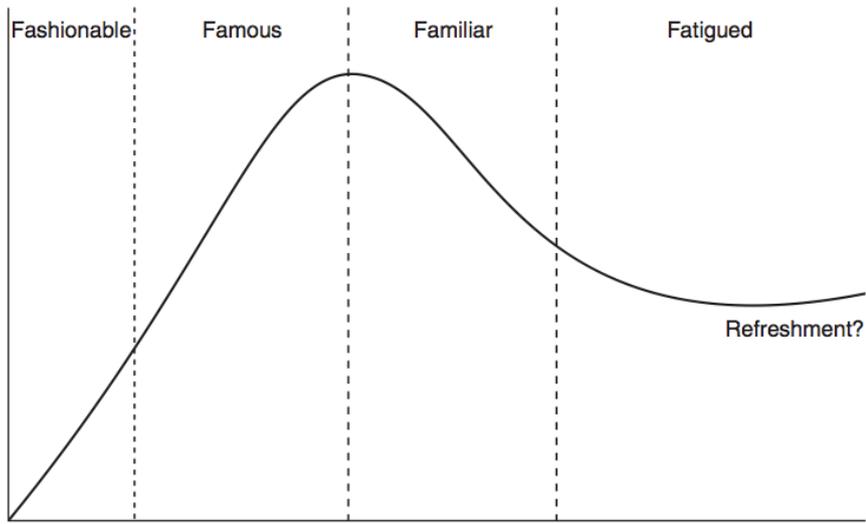
Figure 5: The destination brand fashion curve, adapted from Morgan & Pritchard, 2004
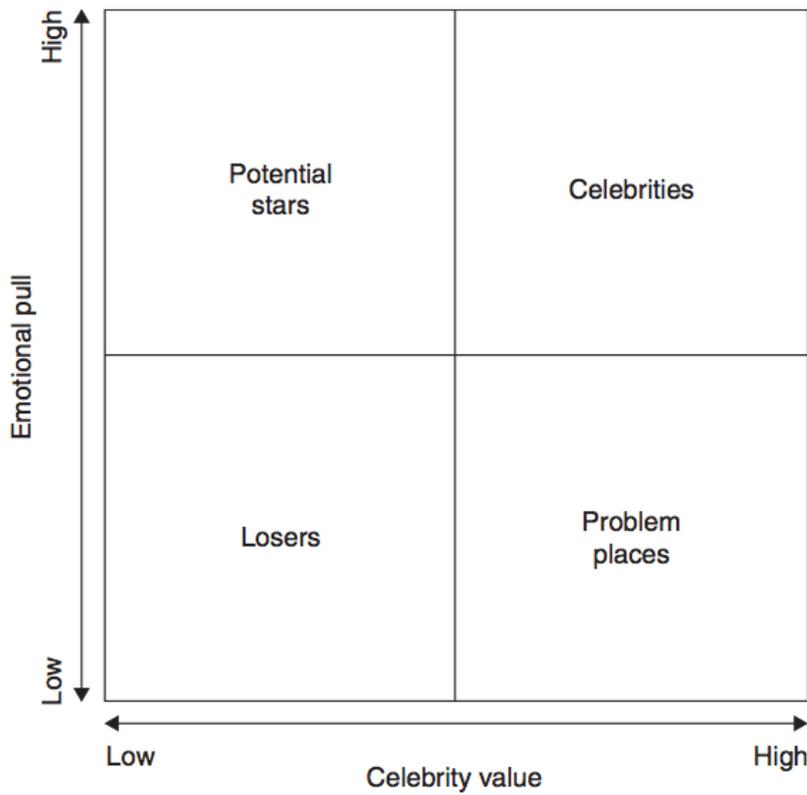
Figure 6: Destination Brand Celebrity model (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004)

3.9.3 Key success factors for destination brands

Based on the characteristics of the world's strongest brands, as identified by Keller (2000), Pike (2008) listed 10 critical success factors for destination brands. The success factors can be used a checklist for destinations in order to achieve the Celebrity status.

1: "The brand excels at delivering the benefits customers truly desire" (Pike, 2008:182)
Destination marketing organizations should create brands that deliver certain benefits for customers which they truly desire. Destination marketing organizations should carry out an extended market research to come across these desires.

2: "The brand stays relevant to customers" (Pike 2008:182)
Destination marketing organizations should ensure that a destination brand still matches the expectations and desires of customers. Morgan & Pritchard state that 'destination brands need to be sustainable, believable and relevant.' (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) According to Ndlovu & Nyakun (2009), a destination brand "should be built upon the audience existing knowledge and image of a destination, whether this image is positive or negative." (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009:10)

3: "The pricing strategy is based on consumers' perceptions of value" (Pike 2008:182)
Tourists are very price sensitive. (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009) Considering the value for money tourists are constantly seeking, Pike (2008) mentions that although destination marketing organizations usually do not have any control on the pricing of tourism products, they can research the perceptions of customers on the value of certain products.

4: "The brand is properly positioned in the market by offering a distinctive value proposition" (Pike 2008:183)
 As mentioned before, the increasing competition between destinations asks for a higher destination value and a brand that sets itself apart from other destination brands. Considering the commoditization of offerings of different, competing destinations, this success factor is very difficult to achieve.

5: "The brand is consistent" (Pike, 2008:183)
 Changing the images and perceptions of destination takes a lot of time. Therefore, all of the communication messages that a destination marketing organization sends out should be consistent with the core values of a destination brand, in order to prevent a brand from becoming 'confusing' and less strong. Morgan & Pritchard (2004) argue that consistency is often difficult to achieve. As Destination Branding takes a long time, destination marketing organizations should try not to make

too many changes to their initial idea to easily. They should communicate the core message continuously, using different media channels.

6: "The brand portfolio and hierarchy make sense" (Pike, 2008:183)

Destination-marketing organizations need to consider several brands and levels of brands that fall under the 'umbrella brand' of the country brand. (Pike, 2008:183) These different brands have a certain hierarchy, called the 'Destination Brand Family tree'. The Country brand is always the most important and dominant brand, followed by the country tourism brand, the state tourism brands, the regional/macro regional brands, the local community brands and finally the individual tourism business brands.

7: "The brand makes use of, and coordinates a full repertoire of marketing activities" (Pike, 2008:184)

Destination marketing organizations should coordinate marketing activities to establish consumer-based brand equity.

8: "The brand's managers understand what the brand means to consumers" (Pike, 2008:184)

In order to create the right message for positioning a destination brand, destination marketing organizations should first understand the identity and image of a brand, and the differences and relations between these two elements. Morgan & Pritchard (2004) state that 'destinations need to create a unique identity, to differentiate themselves from their competitors'.

9: "The brand is given proper support, and that support is sustained over the long run" (Pike, 2008:184)

In order to establish a good destination brand, senior management must fully support the brand and believe in the sort-term and long-term outcomes of the Destination Branding process.

10: "The organization monitors the sources of brand equity" (Pike, 2008:185)

In order to stimulate positive perceptions for a brand, destination marketing organizations must outline the value of a brand, the philosophy of the brand and the guidelines for strategies and tactics of a brand and its (visual) characteristics.

4 Russia, the tourist destination

Throughout this chapter I will analyze Russia as a tourist destination. First, I will mention some of the core characteristics of the country, including the Russia's geography and history. Furthermore, I will summarize some of the core features, attributes and benefits of the country, relevant for potential and actual tourists.

4.1 General description of the country

In order to create a destination brand for Russia, it is important to mention some of the main characteristics of the country, including its geography and climate, history and people. Throughout this chapter, I will give a very brief overview of these elements.

4.1.1 Geography and climate

With its surface of over 17 million square kilometers, Russia is the biggest country in the world. The country, which lies both in Europe and Asia, and can be seen as a continent on itself: Eurasia. Although three quarters of the country are situated in Asia, Russia is referred to as a European country. This is because the 'core of Russia', with its most important cities, are situated in Europe. (Onwijn, 2006) Appendix 5 shows a map of Russia.

The perception of many people in the Netherlands that it is always cold and snowy in Russia is definitely not true. Russia shows many different climates. In Siberia, one finds a sub-arctic climate and the climate in the Ural Mountains is continental. The far south of Russia has a steppe climate with very dry grounds and in the far north of Russia, the cold tundra climate causes the ground to be frozen all the time. The central areas of Russia: the areas around Moscow and Saint Petersburg show a humid continental climate, with warm summers and cold winters.

4.1.2 History

Russia knows a very rich and extremely interesting history, which can form a benefit for tourists who seek knowledge and adventure. The attribute is furthermore interesting for tourists who seek self-development as a deeper meaning behind traveling. Below, I will give a very brief overview of the Russian history. For this overview, I have divided the Russian history into the following periods: 1: Kiev Russ (980-1200), 2: The Mongol-Tartar period (1200-1450), 3: The Muscovite period (1450-1600), 4: The Russian Empire (1700-1917), 5: The Soviet Union (1917-1991) and 6: The Post-Soviet period (1991-now).

Kiev Russ 980-1200

The Mongol-Tatar Period 1200-1450

The Muscovite Period 1450-1600

Kiev Russ (980-1200)

The first Russians originate from Eastern Slavs who moved to the area around the Volga River. Around the ninth century, Norsemen conquered this area. They established Novgorod and later Kiev, which became the capital. The united tribes, who called themselves rapidly. The Kiev Russ state religion became Christian Orthodox around 988, and for a short while, the state was the most powerful Christian empire of that time

The Mongol-Tartar Period (1200-1450)

From the year 1200, Kiev Russ was frequently attacked by Mongol-Tatar tribes: all important cities of the empire were destroyed. The Golden Horde was established and Russian highborn paid high taxes to the Mongol-Tartars in order to keep their positions. The most loyal principality was Moscow that slowly gained lots of power and land. In 1450, the Muscovites conquered the Mongol-Tatars, under the leadership of Ivan the Third. The Muscovite state became officially independent in 1480.

The Muscovite Period (1450-1600)

Ivan the Terrible, the first Russian leader who called himself 'Tsar', conquered lots of land, including Kazan, Astrakhan and a part of Siberia. The Muscovites established good trade relationships with European countries such as Great Britain and The Netherlands. After this time of good welfare and after the death of Ivan the Terrible, the empire found itself in the Time of Troubles, which was a period of confusion and unrest in Russia. To restore the rest in the country, the church leaders stimulated the highborn to entitle a new tsar: Michael Romanov

The Russian Empire (1700-1917)

The Romanov family further expanded the Russian empire, conquering almost the entire Siberian area and the center area of Ukraine. When Peter the Great became tsar, he changed the Russian state into a modern empire, inspired by European science, technology and architecture. His successor Catherina the Great further modernized the state and created plans for schools and hospitals. Russia became a true superpower that proved its power when the empire conquered Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812. After 1816, more difficult times commenced. There was chaos in the empire and the Russians desired a more social political system. During and after the war with China in 1905, the chaos came to its climax, lots of aggression against the Tsarist regime and during the First World War, the empire was not strong enough to defeat Germany. After the lost war, the Russians had to deal with a heavy economic crisis and food shortages. The Soviets, groups of workers and soldiers gained power. In 1917, the tsar abdicated. The Russian Revolution had started.

The Soviet Union (1917 – 1991)

After the end of the tsarist regime, a temporary government of Russian highborn was formed. Meanwhile, the Soviets gained more power. With their 'power to the people' promises, they competed with the temporary government. In October 1917, the Bolshevik Soviets became the largest political party in Russia, Lenin became the national leader. In a short while, the Communistic Soviet ideology became the 'one and only truth' in the country, while other forms of ideology and religion were suppressed. Stalin became the leader of the USSR in 1924. He operated with terror to keep control. In 1941, Germany attacked the USSR. The Soviets won the war, which cost over 27 million lives of Soviet inhabitants. After the cold war, which remained an arms race, the USSR came to its end in 1991. Boris Jeltsin became the nation's new leader.

The Post-Soviet Period (1991-now)

Boris Jeltsin tried to change the Russian economy in a more capitalistic system. State organizations were privatized. Jeltsin managed to control the inflation by 1996. In 1994, Russia joined the NAVO.

4.1.3 People

Living in a country that crosses both the borders of Europe and Asia, the Russians enhance a culture that does not seem to match either of these continents. As Onwijn (2006) describes, the Russians relate more to Europe than with Asia, but when staying in Europe for a longer period of time, the Russians do feel that 'something is missing'. Throughout this chapter I will describe some of the main elements of the Russian culture that can be used to give meaning to the destination as a whole.

Ethnicity

There are many different ethnical groups in Russia, but the Russians are with 80% of the total population clearly the major ethnical group. After the Russians, the Islamite Tartars (3.7%) and the Christian Ukrainians (1.4%) form the biggest ethnical groups. All ethnical groups speak the Russian language perfectly. This is usually influenced by the massive 'Russification', which the country implemented throughout its history.

Religion

During the Soviet era, the Russians followed an atheistic state ideology. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church started to rise again. According to the CIA World Factbook, the Russian Orthodox religion is with 15%-20% the most common religion in Russia. The Orthodox Church is followed by the Muslims, with 10%-15%, a religion which is still growing in Russia. The other Christian religions form with 2% a religious group in Russia. (CIA World Factbook, 2006).

The Russian Pride

Throughout their history, the Russians have always been very proud on their country: they are proud on its richness, on its victories and on its stories. Their country is their 'home'; they are willing to fight for (D'Hamecourt, 2013). This pride is often seen as a part of the Russian 'soul', or 'Dusha'. It is the strong, inner need of a Russian to suffer for others, a duty which is strongly related to the Russian Orthodox Church and the story of Jesus Christ, who suffered died for others.

Land of contrasts

The socio-economical gap between the rich and the poor Russians is very big, as it has always been throughout the history of the country. Whereas the country has the highest amount of natural and energy resources, the big part of the inhabitants are still unable to heat their houses in winter, and one third of the Russians live in poverty (Onwijn, 2006) In the Russian society, power is very distant. According to Hofstede (n.d.), this is caused by the power and investments being centralized in

Russia's capital Moscow. Muscovites show to have much more power and potential because of this. (Hofstede, n.d.)

4.3.5 Collectivism

The Russian culture can be described as very collectivistic. (Hofstede, n.d.) Russians are very connected to their society. Their home is not just the place they go to after their work: their country is their home and its inhabitants their relatives. (D'Hamecourt, 2013 : Hofstede, n.d.) Russians do not only take care of their own families but they feel responsible for a bigger group of people. In exchange of their care, they receive loyalty. Russians would rather refer to 'we' than to 'I'.

4.2 Tourism in Russia

This chapter describes some of the main features and attributes of Russia as a tourist destination, including a range of natural tourist attractions and men-made tourist attractions.

4.2.1 Natural tourist attractions

As described in the chapter 4.1.1: 'Geography', the biggest country in the world shows a high diversity of landscapes and climates. Russia encounters many, unrevealed nature wonders. Throughout Russia's diverse nature, there are lots of special, uncommon species of animals to be found. The following areas and places can be seen as natural tourist attractions.

UNESCO World Nature Sites

In Russia, there are over 100 nature parks and wild parks. Some of these sites are enlisted as 'natural world heritage' by UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization). (UNESCO, 2014) The special element of these sites is the fact that these areas are untouched by men and therefore still exist in their pure, natural form. World Nature Sites in Russia are for example the Virgin Komi Forest, The Volcanoes of Kamchatka, The Manpupuner Rock formations in the Ural Mountains (illustration 3) and Lake Baikal.

Volga River

The Volga River is seen as the national river of Russia. It is the largest river in Europe. The river flows through central Russia and through or near some of the biggest cities of the country. (touristlink.com, n.d.)

Nature activities

As lots of nature sites are pretty much untouched, the Russian nature is a true paradise for adventurous tourists. The very diverse nature sites offer a wide range of possibilities for the tourist on the field of activity and adventure. The Russian nature offers lots of possibilities for hikers, trackers, mountain climbers, ice climbers, fishers, hunters and bird watchers.

Illustration 3: Manpupuner Rock Formations (Russia's Seven strong men), Ural Mountains
Source: www.kuriositas.com

4.2.2 Men-made tourist attractions

Russia owns very special cultural, historical and artistic tourist attractions including historic sites, beautiful architecture, museums, special events and national folklore. These attractions all add value to Russia as a destination for Dutch tourists and form unique attributes and benefits for the destination. Throughout this section I will describe some of the core, men-made tourist attractions in Russia.

Historic sites, buildings and monuments

Russia is home to many, beautiful historic sites. Some of these sites are enlisted as World Heritage, such as the historical centers of Saint Petersburg. (UNESCO, 2014) Moscow and Saint Petersburg are the most popular Russian cities among tourists. The cities are completely different, but both include the most beautiful works of art and architecture. The Kremlin in Moscow is seen as one of the world's architectural masterpieces (UNESCO, 2014) and the historical center of Saint Petersburg is often referred to as 'Venice of the North', because of its many beautiful canals and bridges and its European style of architecture.

Museums

There are many museums to be found in Russia, related to various concepts. On the Red Square in Moscow, the National Historical Museum of Russia is located. This museum exposes millions of objects that related to all phases of the Russian history. The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, also located in Moscow, is named after the Russian poet Pushkin, and exposes the largest collection of European fine art.

In Saint Petersburg, one finds The Hermitage museum. This is one of the oldest museums in the world, founded by Catherine the Great in 1726. The museum includes the largest collection of paintings in the world. Another interesting museum in Saint Petersburg is the Aurora, which is actually a museum ship. The Aurora is known for its role in the October revolution of 1917. For the tourists who like to have a drink, the Vodka Museum in Saint Petersburg can be interesting as well.

Folklore

Folklore has always been very popular among Russians of all social classes. (Oinas, 1961) Generally, folklore refers to the traditional beliefs, myths, tales and practices of a certain group of people, which have been passed on from generation to generation in an informal matter, usually by word of mouth. (American Folklore, n.d.) Folklore can be of any form, including stories, music, dance or artifacts. (Ben-Amos, 1971 p.3) One of the popular Russian folk tales is Firebird. This story formed an inspiration for the famous Russian ballet choreography, created by Sergei Diaghilev of Ballet Russe and composer Igor Stravinsky. The most well-known Russian folklore object is the Matryoshka doll.

Events

According to Berkowitz, Gjermano, & Gomez (2007), big events such as the Olympic Games have a positive effect on national image and the image of a destination. As I will further describe in chapter 4.3.2, the Olympic Games in Sochi had a positive effect on the destination's presence in the newspapers, as well as on the character of the articles: which became more positive during the Olympic Games. Other events that Russia uses to improve its image are the World Soccer Championship in 2018 and the Mercedes-Benz Fashion week in Moscow.
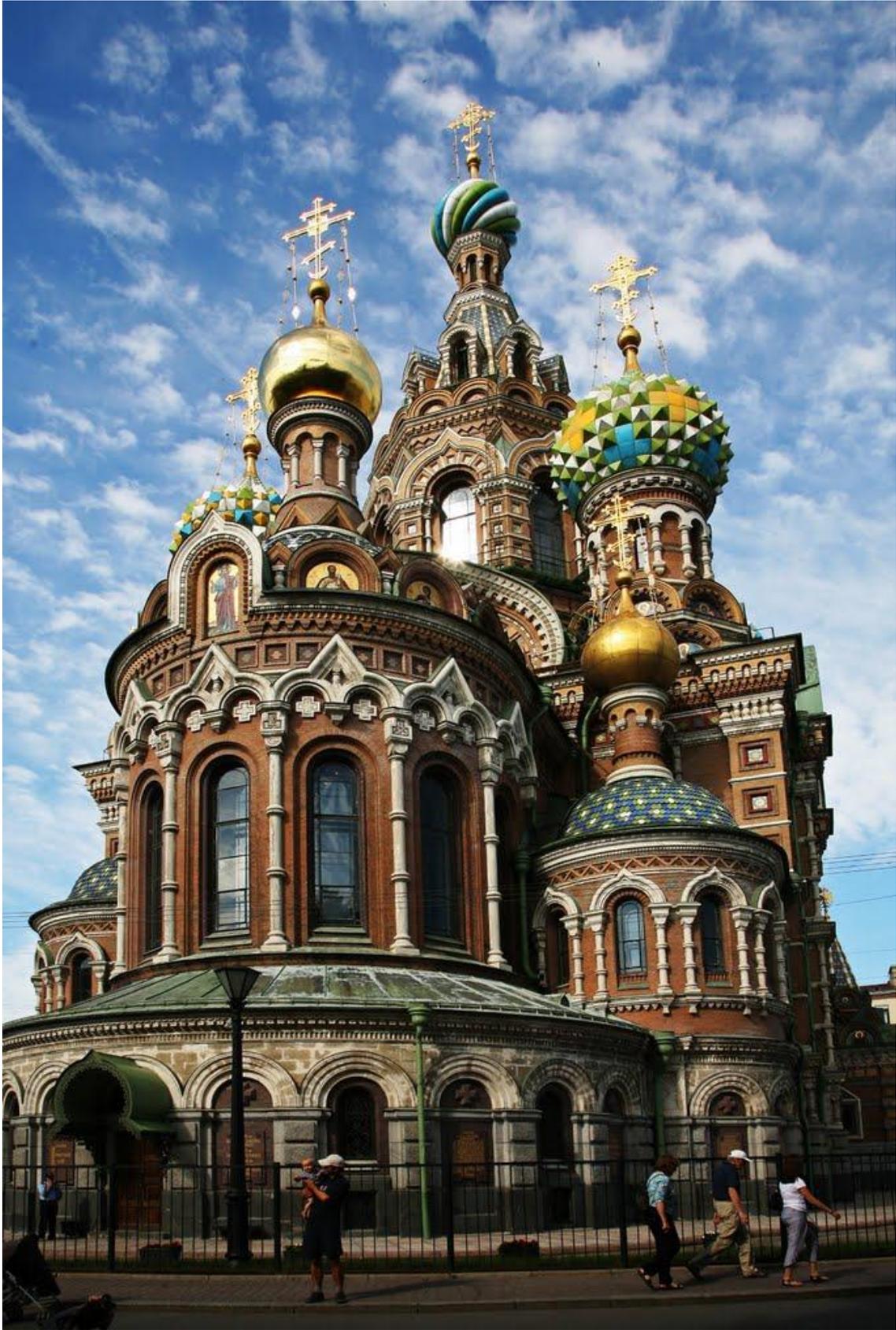
Illustration 4: Saint Petersburg
Source: www.panoramio.com

4.3 Russia in the Dutch Newspapers

This chapter gives a brief analysis of the presence of Russia in the Dutch media throughout the period January 2013 until May 2014. As described in chapter 3, Negative publicity has a damaging effect on the image of a destination. (Pike, 2008) On the other hand, as described in chapter 4.2, big events such as sports events have a positive effect on the image of destinations. The news items I listed below were the most noticeable during the period I analyzed:

4.3.1 The Netherlands-Russia year (January 2013 – December 2013)

The Netherlands-Russia year was organized in order to celebrate the long and good relationship between Russia and the Netherlands. Unfortunately, due to a series of negative incidents between the countries, the year did not go as well as planned. The incidents put a lot of pressure on the diplomatic relationships between the two countries. The year, which was supposed to bring benefits for the image of both countries, became a fiasco.

The death of Russian activist Dolmatov

The range of incidents started when the Russian activist Dolmatov died in a detention center in Rotterdam. The activist requested shelter in the Netherlands but this request was rejected and he had to wait for his appeal in detention. When he committed suicide in his cell. The incident became problematic for the Dutch government. It soon became clear that there were a lot of mistakes made in the Dolmatov case. Dolmatov's family reached the media claiming that the suicide of Dolmatov was done under pressure.

The anti-gay propaganda law

Meanwhile, the discussion considering the anti-gay propaganda started to get more media attention. This law, implemented in June 2013 by the Russian government, is now used to prevent the distribution of ideas about 'non-traditional sexual relationships', among minors. The Dutch strongly disagree with this law, as in their opinion, it violates the human rights of Russians. When criticizing the anti-gay propaganda law, the Dutch minister Timmermans of foreign affairs came up against the wrong side of the Russian minister of foreign affairs: minister Larov. On April 8, president Putin visits the Netherlands for the official opening of the Netherlands-Russia year. During his visit, there are lots of protest actions of Dutch activists who disagree with Putin's regime. In July 2013, shortly after the implementation of the new anti-gay propaganda law, four Dutch documentary makers are arrested in Russia, on suspicion of breaking the anti-gay propaganda law, after a short while, they are set free and return to the Netherlands.

The Artic Sunrise

In September 2013, a group of Greenpeace activists who sailed under the Dutch flag was arrested for piracy. This was later changed into an arrest for hooliganism, on which is usually punished with seven years of detention in Russia. By means of a trial in the maritime court, the activists were found innocent in December 2013.

The arrest of Diplomat Dolmatov

The Russian government reacts furious when the Russian diplomat Borodin is arrested in suspicion of molestation. As it is by law impossible to arrest diplomats, the Dutch government apologizes for the incident. But shortly after this, a Dutch diplomat is molested in his house in Moscow. In the Netherlands, people are very upset by this incident.

The closing ceremony in Moscow

The question arises whether the king should or should not visit Moscow in November, to officially end the Netherlands-Russia year. But finally, the royal couple does visit the country in order to end the turbulent celebration year in the most positive way possible.

4.3.2 The Olympic Winter games in Sochi (February 2014)

Shortly before the opening of the 2014 Winter Olympics, the anti-gay propaganda law was a hot item in the Dutch media. Organizations such as the COC, which promotes an equal treatment of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders all over the world, argued that a smaller delegation should visit Sochi, instead of the 'heavy delegation including the king, queen and president. The 'heavy delegation' however does visit the games, and minister Rutte tries to start a discussion with Putin considering the rights of LGBT's.

After the start of the 2014 winter Olympics in Sochi, the coverage of news items considering Russia was focused on sports, and therefore stimulated the image of the country in a more positive way. Because of the relatively high temperatures in Sochi, the generally hold notion by the Dutch people that it is always cold as ice in Russia, was even destructed when images of tourist and athletes showed up, enjoying the sun and the Sochi beach. Furthermore, Putin reached the Dutch news channels in a more positive way when was photographed drinking a beer with the royal couple and when he visited the Holland Heineken house to congratulate some of the Dutch athletes.

4.3.3 The political crisis concerning Eastern Ukraine and the Crimea area

This short period of positive news items concerning Russia drastically turned when the crisis in Ukraine started to get more and more media attention. The crisis started when president Janoekovitsj of Ukraine stated he wanted to strengthen the bounds with Russia and withdrew some of the agreements he made with the European Union. As a result, lots of protest actions started in Ukraine, which were brutally beaten down by the government. Janoekovitsj withdrew his function in February.

Russia took over the Crimea area in march 2014. Russia stated that this area is indissolubly connected to Russia and should therefore be reunited with the country and that the take-over was necessary to 'protect' the Russians who live in Ukraine. (NOS, 2014)

The VS and the EU reacted very negatively on the Crimea annexation. The Dutch government withdrew its military collaboration with Russia in April 2014, and Russia is no longer welcome in the G8 meetings.

4.3.4 Frequency and character of news items

Throughout the period I analyzed, Russia was very frequently present in the Dutch media. From November 2013 until May 2014, there were articles about Russia published on a daily basis. Throughout the period January 2013 until December 2013, almost all Russia-related news items had a negative character because of the negative incidents surrounding the Netherlands-Russia year. During the 2014 Olympic winter games in Sochi, from February 7, until February 23, the publicity surrounding Russia was mainly positive. Very shortly after the Olympic games, the news items involving Russia became very negative, especially after the country annexed the Crimea area. Around the end of May 2013, the frequency of Russia-related news seems to decline very slowly, although the character of the publicity is still mainly negative.

Illustration 5: protest actions against the anti-gay propaganda law in Amsterdam during the visit of president Putin.

Source: Het Parool (2013)

Illustration 6: Crisis in Eastern Ukraine

Source: Robert Bensh (2014) retrieved from www.robertbensh.com

5 Findings

Throughout this chapter I will describe my findings of my research. In chapter 5.2, I will describe my findings of the secondary on the behavior and attitude of Dutch tourists. In chapter 5.3, I will describe my findings from the quantitative research I carried out, and in chapter 5.4, I will describe the findings of my qualitative research.

5.1 Secondary analysis of the Dutch tourists

Since I am creating a Destination Branding strategy, which is specifically aimed at Dutch tourists, it is important to analyze this target audience thoroughly. Throughout this chapter I will give a brief description of the Dutch tourist. As described in chapter 2, I analyzed the Dutch outbound tourist using research data from CBS, CVO and TNS Political and Social. With this part of my research, I will provide an answer to the sub-questions: *'What does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like?'* and *'who is the target group for Russian destinations?'*

5.1.1 International tourism

In 2012, there were 16.7 million people living in the Netherlands. In 2012, 23,3% Of these people are aged between 0 and 19 years old, 60,5% of Dutch people are aged between 20 and 65, and 16,2% is 65 years or older. (CBS, 2013) The median age of all people living in the Netherlands is 42.1 years. (CIA World Factbook, 2014) During the year 2012, the Dutch working population counted 7.4 million people. Out of these people, 507,000 people were unemployed. 36.4% of all Dutch households consisted out of one person, against a percentage of 63.6% of multi-person households. (CBS, 2013)

During the year 2012, 81.4% of all people living in the Netherlands went on a (long or short) holiday. (CBS, 2013) According to this percentage, there were 12.81 million Dutch tourists who participated in holidays. (CBS, 2013) In total, Dutch tourists spent approximately 36.748.000 holidays. (CBS, 2013) In 2011, the percentage of holiday participation by the Dutch was with 81.9% even higher, but overall, this rate shows a very slow, but stable growth throughout the period 1990-2012. (CBS, 2013)

The Netherlands rank fourth on the European ranking list for holiday participation in the European Union. The majority of Dutch tourists enjoy both short (4 days or less) and long (more than 4 days) holidays. However, the percentage of Dutch tourists participating in longer holidays only is higher than the percentage of Dutch tourists participating in short holidays only. (CBS, 2013) Altogether, around 59 percent of the Dutch population participates in longer holidays. (European Commission,

2012, in CBS, 2013, p. 114) Of all holidays, 50.7% of holidays by Dutch tourists were spent abroad. (CBS, 2013) Over all, the amount of holidays abroad is slightly growing. (CBS, 2013)

5.1.2 Most popular holiday destinations

In 2012, the most popular holiday destinations for Dutch tourists were France, Germany, Spain and Italy during the summer period. During the winter, the Dutch tourists most often went to Germany, Austria, France and Spain. During the winter period, the Dutch tourists made more travels outside Europe than during the summer period. (CBS, 2013) An average holiday abroad spent by Dutch tourists takes 11 days: 8.5 days in winter and 12.6 days in summer.

In total, the Dutch tourists spend around 20.2 billion dollars during their holidays. (UNWTO, 2013, in CBS, 2013). This was 0.3 billion dollars less than during the year 2011, but more than during the year 2010, when the Dutch spend 19.6 billion dollars during their holidays (UNWTO, 2013, in CBS, 2013, p.116). The Dutch tourist spends approximately 970 dollars on his/her holiday. (CBS, 2013)

When travelling abroad, the Dutch tourist spends on average 74 euros per day in the winter and 58 euros per day in the summer. The total amount of money spend on holidays is on average 627 euros during the summer and 734 euros during the winter.

5.1.3 Target group characteristics

This chapter describes some of the main characteristics of the Dutch tourists. I used this analysis in order to create fitting samples for my quantitative research.

Sex

The ratio between male and female tourists who participate in holidays is well-balanced. There are no significant differences in holiday behavior and participation between male and female tourists. (CBS, 2013; TNS Political & Social, 2013)

Age

According to the CBS, the amount of Tourists aged above 55 years old is growing significantly because of the obsolescence in the Netherlands. Of all Dutch people above 55 years old, 75% participates in holidays. This percentage is lower than the percentage of younger people participating in holidays. However, the older group of tourists spends on average 3.2 holidays per year, whereas the younger group spends around 2.8 holidays per year. Furthermore, the older group mainly goes on

longer holiday trips only, whereas the younger group spends both short and longer holidays. (CBS, 2014)

Multi-person households versus single-person households

Households with more than one person show a higher holiday participation rate than single-person households. The holiday participation rate of multi-person households is 84% versus a percentage of 68% for single-person households. Households with children aged between 0 and 13 years old have with 88% the highest holiday participation rate. (CBS, 2013 p. 18)

Social class

The social class of a household is measured by analyzing the occupational and educational level of the main breadwinner. (CBS, 2013 p.18). According to research by CVO, the holiday participation rate of households is in line with their social class: the higher the occupational and educational levels of the main breadwinner, the higher the holiday participation rate. Members of the highest social class rate 92% on holiday participation, whereas the lowest social class only rates 52% in 2012. (CBS, 2013 p.18)

Holiday accommodation types

For holidays abroad, the 40% of Dutch tourists chooses for a hotel as a holiday accommodation type. 12% prefers to stay in a bungalow, 11% stays in an apartment and 10% uses a caravan or camper as holiday accommodation abroad. (CBS, 2013 p. 48) The hotel, the most popular accommodation type shows a significant growth over the past years. The tent and bungalow tent became less popular. (CBS, 2013 p. 49)

On average, Dutch tourists who stay in hotels spend 94 euros per tourist per day. Tourists who stay in apartments spend on average 64 euros per day and tourists who stay in a bungalow spend around 49 euros per day. Tourist who chose for the caravan or camper as a holiday accommodation type spend the least: 36 euros per day. (CBS, 2013 p. 55)

Mode of transport

Throughout 2012, 54% of all Dutch tourists travelled by car, followed by 36% of travels by airplane. For longer stays, Dutch tourists are more likely to travel by airplane. (CBS, 2013 p.49) The popularity of the car as a mode of transport remained stable, whereas more and more Dutch tourists chose to travel by airplane during the past few years.

5.1.4 Reasons for holiday planning and returning to a destination

Reasons for holiday planning

Table 2 shows the main reasons that Dutch tourist mention when going on a holiday. Nature (42%) is most considered by Dutch tourists as a reason to plan a holiday, followed by the beach (40%) and culture (33%). Wellness treatments and spas are less important reasons for Dutch tourists to go on a holiday. (TNS Political & Social, 2013, p. 8)

Reasons for returning to a destination

The main reasons for Dutch tourists to return to the same holiday location are the natural features of a country (55%), such as the landscape and the weather conditions. Cultural and historical attractions (28%) can also be a reason for the Dutch to revisit a destination. The Dutch highly value the quality level of their holiday accomodation (33%). (TNS Political & Social, 2013, p. 13)

Main influencers

According to TNS Political & Social (2013), Internet websites (63%) are the most important sources for Dutch Tourists to make a decision about their travel plan. Recommendations of friends, colleagues and relatives also play a very important role in this decision making process. 50% of the Dutch tourists value these opinions when making a holiday decision. News, radio and television, social media and paid tourism guidebooks are the least valuable to Dutch people planning a holiday. (TNS Political & Social, 2013, p. 18)

According to research carried out by TNS Political & Social, the majority (75%) of Dutch tourists likely to have planned their holidays using Internet in 2012. (TNS Political & Social, 2013) 18% of Dutch tourists booked their holidays over the counter at a travel agency.

5.1.5 Conclusion secondary research findings

The percentage of the Dutch population visiting destinations abroad is relatively high. The biggest group of tourists is aged around 40 years old. The group of tourists who goes on holidays most often is over 55 years old. There is a relationship between the level of income and the percentage of holiday participation, as well as there is a relationship between level of education and the percentage of holiday participation: the higher the income level and educational level, the more likely it is that the person visits destinations abroad. Furthermore, multi-person households show a higher holiday participation rate than single-person households.

The most preferred holiday accommodation type among Dutch tourists for holidays abroad is the hotel. Most tourist prefer the car as mode of transport for holidays (54%), the airplane is the second most preferred mode of transport (36%).

When planning a holiday, the Dutch tourists value the natural features of a destination the most (55%). The natural features are also the main reasons for tourist to revisit a certain area.

Table 7: Main reasons for Dutch tourists to go on a Holiday

Main reasons for going on a holiday	Percentage
Nature (mountain, lake, landscape, etc.)	42%
Sun/beach	40%
Culture (religion, culinary purposes, arts, etc.)	33%
Visiting family/friends/relatives	24%
City trips	21%
Sport-related activities (scuba diving, cycling, etc.)	18%
Specific events (sporting events/festivals/clubbing)	6%
Wellness/spa/health treatment	4%

Source: TNS political and Social (2013)

Table 8: Main reasons for Dutch tourists to revisit a holiday destination

Main reasons to return to the same place for a holiday	Percentage
The natural features of a country	55%
The quality of the holiday accommodation	33%
The general level of prices	19%
Cultural and historical attractions	28%
How tourists are welcomed (customer care, child friendliness, etc.)	19%
The quality of activities/services available	17%
Accessible facilities for people with special needs	5%

Source: TNS Political and Social (2013)

5.2 Quantitative research

Throughout this chapter I will give some of the most important findings from the questionnaire I carried out among 110 Dutch tourists, aged between 18 and 75 years old, who visit destinations abroad regularly for leisure purposes. Graphs and tables that display the exact data from this research can be found in the appendix.

5.2.1 General opinion about Russia May 2014

Question 2: *'Is your opinion on Russia positive or negative?'* analyzed the general opinion on Russia, measured in May 2014. A majority of 45% of all respondents mentioned that their overall opinion on Russia is negative, while 38.2% of all respondents mentioned to neither be positive nor negative about Russia and only 15% mentioned to be positive about the destination. Of all respondents, 1% is very negative about Russia and 1% is very positive about Russia.

5.2.2 Influencers of image Russia

As described before, the media mainly influences the image of Russia and the current negativity surrounding the destination is for the big part caused by a high amount of negative news items. Question 3: *'Has your opinion on Russia changed during the past year?'* and question 5: *'What factors influence your opinion on Russia?'* of my quantitative research analyzed how the negative publicity during the period before May 2014, influenced the target audience's general opinion on Russia.

More negative opinion

75% of all respondents mentioned that their opinion about Russia became more negative during the past year, 23% mentioned that his or her opinion remained the same and 2% of all respondent said that they started to think more positively about Russia during the past year. From the results of my quantitative research became clear that the media is the main influencer of the Russian image among Dutch tourists. Especially during times of negative publicity, the effect of the media is strong among the Dutch tourists.

Media channels as biggest influencers

Almost all Dutch tourists (94.5%) mentioned that their opinion about Russia is (partly) formed by media channels, such as newspapers, radio and television. Other influencers are friends and family (38.2%) and personal contacts or experiences with Russians (19.1%). Smaller groups of respondents

mentioned that history lessons (9%) or books about Russia (9%) shaped their opinion. Travel organizations seemed to have the smallest influence among this group of tourists (3.6%).

5.2.3 List of top-of-mind associations

Question 5: *'What associations do you think of when you think of Russia?'* analyzed the top-of-mind associations of my Respondents with Russia as a whole that shape the current image of the country. The most frequently mentioned associations (mentioned 7 times or more) are listed below in table 9. The complete list of associations can be found in the appendix.

Table 9: Most frequently mentioned top – of mind associations with Russia (mentioned 8 times or more)

Associations (English)	Frequency
Putin	66
Cold weather/snow	26
Moscow	24
Vodka	21
Crimea	17
Olympic games	17
Huge country	17
History	16
Homophobia, gay discrimination	15
Communism	15
Kremlin	14
Red square	13
Saint Petersburg	12
Ukraine	12
Corruption	11
Beautiful architecture	10
Fur (coats and caps)	10
Red	9
Contrasts, inequality	8
Culture	8
Alcoholism and drunkenness	8
Music	8

5.2.4 Negative associations

Table 10 gives an overview of all negative associations linked to Russia, that were mentioned two times or more throughout the quantitative research. Some associations, such as the associations 'Putin', 'Ukraine' and 'Visa' are listed as negative associations based on their news context: when these features are presented in the news negatively, they have a negative influence on the tourist's opinion, and therefore, they can be seen as negative associations.

Negative associations related to negative publicity

As described in chapter 3, the media plays one of the most important roles in forming the tourist's image of a destination. Throughout my quantitative research, lots of frequently mentioned associations were therefore linked to recent news headlines. When analyzing the data I found from my quantitative research, I immediately noticed the amount of times that 'Putin' was mentioned as a first top-of-mind association with Russia. The 110 respondents I interviewed mentioned Putin 66 times as one of their first associations with Russia. Out of these 66 times, Putin was mentioned as the very first association on 47 surveys. The association 'Putin' was mentioned 32 times by male respondents and 34 times by female respondents, which represents a relatively equal strength of this most frequently mentioned association for both genders. Putin can be considered as a strong, but negative association with the destination Russia. He was very frequently mentioned in negative publicity about Russia during the period January 2013 until May 2014.

Other associations that were linked to current news items were the associations 'Crimea', which was mentioned 17 times in total and 'Ukraine', which was mentioned 12 times in total. Associations surrounding homophobia the anti-gay propaganda law in Russia were mentioned 15 times. The association 'Netherlands-Russia year' was only mentioned 2 times, which shows that the effect of the negative publicity concerning the incidents during that year has already faded.

Negative associations related to historical events

Respondents often associate Russia with Soviet Union or with elements related to the Soviet era. Communism was mentioned 15 times and is therefore a strong association with Russia. Other associations related to the Soviet era were 'Stalin' (mentioned 2 times), 'Soviet Union' (mentioned 4 times), 'glasnost' (mentioned 2 times) and the association Cold War (mentioned 5 times).

Alcoholism, drunkenness and asocial behavior

Russia is often associated with alcoholism and drunkenness (mentioned 8 times). These associations are based on stereotyping and the traditional Russian drink Vodka, which is a very strong association as well and was mentioned 20 times throughout the quantitative analysis. The association 'booze', also

related to this subject, but just like Vodka not necessarily a negative association, was mentioned 3 times. On the other hand, the association can also be based on experiences with Russian tourists in European destinations. Respondents think of Russian tourists as 'loud' (mentioned 2 times), 'asocial' (mentioned 2 times) and aggressive (mentioned 3 times). One respondent wrote down an explanation on her association 'asocial', and described how she experienced asocial behavior of Russian tourists around a buffet: "they put half the buffet on their plates and eat only a few bites".

Inequality

Lots of respondents noticed the gap between the poor and the rich in Russia. Inequality is mentioned as a top-of mind association 8 times. The association 'poverty' is mentioned 5 times.

Absence of freedom of speech and press freedom

The Dutch have very negative associations with Russia when it comes to press freedom and freedom of speech. Russia is associated with suppression (4 times), the absence of press freedom (3 times), and the absence of freedom of speech (2 times).

Negative associations related to power and political regime

Corruption was mentioned 11 times and was therefore one of the strongest negative associations with Russia. The respondents associate the country with dictatorship (mentioned 5 times) and power display (mentioned 5 times). The country is seen as 'conservative' (mentioned 3 times) and 'strict' (mentioned 2 times). 'Disagreement' is another negative association linked to Russia's political regime.

Other negative associations

Russia is perceived to be a 'dangerous' country (mentioned 5 times). The respondents associate the country with 'war' (mentioned 4 times), 'criminality' (mentioned 4 times) and 'mafia' (mentioned 2 times). Finally, the association 'Visa', can be seen as a negative association, as the regulations for tourists who want to visit Russia are often perceived to be unnecessary difficult and confusing.

Table 10: list of negative top-of-mind associations, mentioned 2 times or more

Associations (English)	Frequency
Putin	66
Crimea	17
Homophobia, gay discrimination	15
Communism	15
Ukraine	12
Corruption	11
Contrasts, inequality	8
Alcoholism and drunkenness	8
Poverty	5
Dangerous	5
Cold war	5
Dictatorship	5
Power display	5
Criminality	4
Suppression	4
War	4
Soviet Union	4
Anti-gay propaganda law	3
Conservative	3
Discrimination	3
No freedom of press	3
Violence and aggression	3
Stalin	3
Asocial	2
No freedom of speech	2
Loud	2
Mafia	2
Netherlands-Russia year	2
Disagreement	2
Political crisis	2
Strict	2
Visa	2

5.2.5 Positive associations

Despite all the negative associations, as described in chapter 5.2.4, the respondents also mentioned lots of positive associations with Russia. The list of all positive associations, mentioned 2 times or more, can be found in table 11, at the end of this chapter. I will describe some of the main positive associations below.

Positive associations linked to news items

The Olympic games was one of the most frequently mentioned positive associations with Russia. This association was mentioned 17 times by the respondents. Concerning publicity, this was the only positive news item to be found throughout the list with associations of my respondents.

Beauty

When analyzing the positive associations with Russia only, the word 'beautiful' is very frequently used: 25 respondents used the word 'beautiful' in one of their associations with the country. They wrote down the associations: 'beautiful architecture' (mentioned 10 times), beautiful nature (mentioned 7 times), beautiful cities (mentioned 3 times), beautiful women (mentioned 3 times) or 'beautiful country' (mentioned 2 times).

Concerning these beautiful cities and places, Moscow was mentioned 20 times as a top-of-mind association. Saint Petersburg was mentioned 11 times. The tourists have strong associations with architectural features such as the Kremlin in Moscow (mentioned 14 times), including the Red Square (mentioned 13 times), and the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (mentioned 2 times). Siberia was another association linked to a place, respondents mentioned Siberia 2 times and the Trans Siberia Express 3 times. Concerning the beauty of the Russian nature, the respondents mentioned the Volga river as one of their top of mind associations 4 times.

The Dutch tourists does not only perceive the destination Russia as a beautiful country, they also know the empire includes a much extended surface. The association 'huge country' was given 17 times by the respondents of the survey.

Cultural features

Russia is associated with a rich and interesting culture (mentioned 8 times). Cultural and artistic elements such as music (mentioned 8 times), arts (mentioned 4 times) and ballet (mentioned 4 times) are strong associations with Russia. The association 'literature' was mentioned 2 times by the respondents. The folklore element 'matryoshka doll' was mentioned 4 times.

Rich history

The rich history of Russia can form a benefit for potential and actual tourists. The association 'rich history' is very strong among Dutch tourists: the association was given 16 times. Despite the historical elements the respondents mentioned concerning the Soviet Union, respondents also mentioned the association 'tsars' 7 times.

Table 11: list of positive top-of-mind associations: mentioned 2 times or more

Associations (English)	Frequency
Moscow	24
Olympic games	17
Huge country	17
History	16
Kremlin	14
Red square	13
Saint Petersburg	12
Beautiful architecture	10
Culture	8
Music	8
Beautiful nature	7
Arts	4
Matryoshka dolls	4
Ballet	4
Volga	4
Beautiful cities	3
Beautiful women	3
Trans Siberia Express	3
Hermitage	2
Literature	2
Beautiful country	2
Russian language (characters)	2
Siberia	2
Exciting	2
Strong people	2
Gold	2

5.2.6 Other associations

It is always difficult to classify certain associations as 'positive' or 'negative'; therefore, I will list some of the remaining, frequently mentioned associations that can either be interpreted as positive or negative by the Dutch tourists. These associations are linked to Russian stereotypes.

Cold weather/snow

I did not ask my respondents whether they prefer warm or cold weather on their holidays or if they do not really care about weather circumstances, and therefore it is difficult to classify this association as either positive or negative. The association 'cold weather and snow', was mentioned 26 times as a top – of mind association with Russia. It was the second most frequently association, after the association Putin. Associations linked to this cold weather image are the association 'fur coats and caps', which was mentioned 10 times and the association 'Siberia', which was mentioned 2 times.

Alcohol

The association 'Vodka' is mentioned 21 times, and is linked to Russian stereotype. The Dutch perceive the Russians as heavy drinkers and lovers of strong drinks. The association 'booze' was mentioned 3 times.

Red

The Dutch tourists associate the destination very frequently with the color 'red'. This color was mentioned 9 times as a direct association with Russia.

5.2.7 Features, attributes and benefits associated with Russia

Question 6 lists some of the core features, attributes and benefits of Russia as a tourist destination I found through analyzing the country (described in chapter **4)** The 110 respondents were asked to answer to what extend they associate these features, attributes and benefits with Russia. This chapter again analyses the associations of the Dutch tourists with Russia, but now, the associations were already given, and therefore not necessarily top-of-mind. Throughout this chapter I will describe some of the most remarkable findings from this survey question. The entire list of data concerning this question can be found in the appendix.

Features

Features that were given throughout the survey were for example: ballet, poetry, literature and music. The features throughout the survey existed of POP (points-of-parity) features only, as it is quite logical

for the audience to associate POD (points-of-difference) features such as the Red Square or the Hermitage with Russia.

The association 'historic cities' was most strongly associated with Russia. 90.9% did strongly agree or agree on the fact that this feature matched the destination. Other features that were strongly associated with Russia were the associations 'dance, ballet' (86.4% associated this feature with Russia) 'religion and orthodox churches' (80% associated this feature with Russia) historical monuments (72% associated this feature with Russia) and 'literature' (66.4% associated this feature with Russia).

A majority of people (57%) associated Russia with music and palaces. The association 'winter sports' also gained a majority of 54% of respondents who agreed this feature matched the destination Russia. The association winter sport is very likely to be strengthened by the Olympic Winter games of February 2014 in Sochi. 51.9% of people agreed or strongly agreed that the association 'sports' fitted the destination and a smaller group of 43.7% agreed or strongly agreed that the association 'outdoor sports' fitted the destination.

Features that were not associated with Russia were the features 'beach', 'modern cities' and 'fashion'. Only 9% associated the Russian destination with beaches, 16.3% associated the destination with modern cities and 19.1% associated the destination with fashion.

Attributes

The attributes of Russia I analyzed throughout my quantitative research were 'beautiful, extended nature', 'interesting culture', 'rich history', 'diverse climate', 'cold weather' and 'tasty meals'.

From all of the features given, the attribute 'historic cities' was most strongly associated with Russia. 95% of all respondents associated or strongly associated this attribute with the destination. The majority of respondents: 65% strongly associated the attribute with Russia.

Russia was furthermore strongly associated with the attribute 'cold weather'. 94.5% associated this attribute with Russia). This was not surprising, as 'cold weather' was also very frequently mentioned as a top-of mind association, as described in chapter 5.2.6. The association 'diverse climate' was mentioned as a fitting attribute on 79% of all surveys. The respondents associated the destination more met the attribute 'interesting culture' (91.8%) than with the attribute 'beautiful and extended nature' (70.9%), but both associations are strong.

The weakest attribute was 'tasty meals', although two respondents mentioned something positive related to the Russian kitchen as a top-of-mind association, only 13.6% of all respondents thought tasty meals matched the destination.

Benefits

The benefits I analyzed throughout my survey were: authenticity, splendor, passion, romance, friendliness, adventure, rest and luxury.

According to the respondents, the most fitting benefit for Russia was the benefit 'authenticity', which 66.4% of all respondents associated or strongly associated with Russia. The second most fitting benefit was splendor: 58.2% of all respondents associated this benefit with Russia. On the contrary, only 25.5% of all respondents associated the benefit 'luxury with the destination.

Out of all respondents, 50% associated the destination with adventure. 34.5% mentioned they neither agreed nor disagreed on whether this benefit matched the destination. The association 'passion' was relatively strong as well: 44.5% of all respondents associated or strongly associated this benefit with Russia, whereas 29.1% remained neutral.

Weaker associations were romance (29% associated this benefit with Russia) and rest (18.2% of all respondents associated this benefit with Russia). The weakest benefit was friendliness. Only 9% associates or strongly associates this benefit with Russia and 40% states they are neutral about weather this benefit is linked to the destination.

Other associations

Other strong associations with Russia were 'pride', which was mentioned as a strong association in 80.9% of all surveys and power, which was mentioned as one of the strongest associations in 92.7% of all surveys.

Russia is more often seen as a poor country (72.7%) than as a rich country (51.8%), although, the fact that the majority of people associated the destination with both elements, reflects that there is awareness on the contrasts between the poor and the rich in the country. The respondents perceive the destination as more expensive (39%) than inexpensive (11.8%).

5.2.8 Most preferred holiday elements

With question 7, I analyzed the preferred situation for the Dutch tourists when they go on a holiday abroad. It is important to analyze the preferences of the Dutch tourists, as a destination brand must always deliver the benefits the tourist truly desires (Pike, 2008:182)

Nature vs. Culture

From the results I gathered throughout my quantitative research, the natural and cultural features of a country are almost equally important for the Dutch tourist. 75% mentioned nature as an important

factor for holiday planning, whereas a slightly bigger group, 76% of all respondents, valued the cultural features of a destination. Beautiful architectural features (60%) were other important factors for planning a holiday.

History versus modernity

The majority of the respondents (58%) value an interesting history when planning a holiday. The availability of historical cities is very important for 23% of the Dutch tourists and important for 50% of them. Modern cities and fashion are less important for the Dutch tourists.

Culinary features

The availability of tasty meals and local delicacies is very important for the Dutch tourists. 78% mentioned that they take this element into account when planning a holiday. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the Dutch tourists are not so sure about the tastiness of the Russian meals.

Friendliness

Dutch tourists highly value the friendliness of a destination. Out of all the respondents, 86% appreciates a friendly host population and likes to be welcomed in a proper way. The Dutch however do not perceive Russia as a friendly destination: 47% of all respondents do not, or not at all, associate the destination with friendliness. Only 9% of the respondents believes the term 'friendliness' relates to Russia. Respondents who associate the Russians with friendliness have either visited the country before or have had personal contact with Russians.

5.2.9 Associations with different types of tourism

Just as for question 6, I used question 8 to analyze what benefits the destination Russia has for Dutch tourists analyzes what benefits the destination Russia has for Dutch tourists. I furthermore analyzed what type of holiday destination they believe Russia actually is. My main findings are listed below.

More a cultural destination than a nature destination

The Dutch tourists perceive Russia more as a destination for cultural tourism than as a destination for nature tourism. On the statement "Russia is an excellent destination for cultural tourism", 58.2% agrees and 28.2% strongly agrees. The amount of respondents who consider Russia to be "an excellent destination for nature tourism" is less. On this statement, 44.5% agrees, 14.5% strongly agrees and 34.5% mentions to neither agree, nor disagree.

Not suitable for wellness holidays

Russia is not really clearly seen as a destination for Wellness tourism. The majority of respondents answered not to agree nor disagree on the statement "Russia is an excellent destination for Wellness tourism".

Adventure and sports

The destination does score very high as a destination for adventurous tourism 51.5% agrees on Russia being "an excellent destination for adventurous tourism" and 17.3% strongly agrees. With 37.3% of all respondents agreeing on the statement of Russia being a destination for sportive holidays, the destination scores on the higher site on this dimension, although the majority, 42.7% of all respondents, is neutral about this statement.

Winter versus summer tourism

Because of the strong associations with cold temperatures, Russia is more often seen as a destination for winter holidays than for summer holidays. Although the opinions on Russia being a summer holiday destination are somewhat divided, 36.4% of all respondents agree on the statement "Russia is a perfect destination for winter holidays. As a result of the cold and winter-linked image of Russia, the majority of people do not perceive Russia as a destination for beach tourism: 33.6% of all respondents disagree on the statement "Russia is an excellent destination for beach tourism". 26.4% completely disagrees on this statement.

5.2.10 Celebrity value of the destination Russia

On the statement "A holiday to Russia makes me a trend setter", the respondents answered very differently. The majority, 37.3% of all respondents, answered 'neutral' on this statement, 26.4% agrees on the statement and 22.7% disagrees. 11.8% strongly disagrees on Russia being a trendy destination and only 1.8% strongly agrees.

Although the opinions on the field of trendiness are very divergent, the big majority of respondents does answer positively on Russia being an interesting destination. On the statement "a holiday to Russia is interesting and educational", 49% agrees and 30.9% strongly agrees.

5.2.11 Relation between previous visits and associations

The quantitative research I carried out showed a relationship between previous visits and the image in the mind of tourist about that destination. Although I only interviewed a small amount of actual visitors (12), I did notice that these actual tourists mentioned more specific and more positive features, and were more positive concerning the different associations they were able to rate throughout the

survey. The actual tourists were especially more positive concerning the destination's friendliness, feelings of rest, and concerning the features 'poetry', 'outdoor sports' and 'visual arts'.

5.2.12 Conclusion qualitative research

The general opinion of the Dutch tourist on Russia is negative. This negative image is for the big part influenced by the media. However, when analyzing the perceptions of the Dutch tourists on Russia as a tourist destination, the respondents do mention lots of positive associations related to Russia. Most positive associations are related to Russia's rich history, interesting culture and the destination's historic sites with beautiful architecture. Focusing on the desires of the tourists, including cultural tourism, nature tourism and their interest in historical elements of holiday destinations, the desired image of Russia should include the attributes 'rich history', 'beautiful nature' and 'interesting culture', as the tourist already associate these attributes with the destination. Other desires of the target audience, such as 'friendliness of the host population' and 'tasty local dishes' are not associated with Russia and should therefore either be strengthened or left out of the Destination Branding strategy.

5.3 Findings qualitative research

This chapter summarizes some of the findings from my qualitative research, which I described in chapter 2. A more detailed description of the interview findings can be found in the appendix.

5.3.1 Russian identity and core values

During my qualitative interviews I asked my respondents to describe the identity of Russia (question 3), and the core values of the destination (question 4), that matched this identity. Even for these stakeholders in the Russian destination brand, it was quite hard to do this. Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication, 19 5 2014) describes the Russian identity as: "patriotic, orthodox, collective, politically autocratic, but definitely hospitable, although Russians usually first want to get to know you." As core values of the destination he mentions include the country's culture and the love of the Russians toward art, literature, poetry, ballet, theater, opera and architecture. He also stated that "the Russians love stores and history".

Joosten (personal communication, 22 5 2014) stated the identity of Russia changed throughout its history, which fits the Russian's good ability to change and try something completely different. On the other hand, Joosten describes how the Russians feel a lot of pride for their home country, especially the Muscovites. He describes this pride as follows: "Russians and especially people from Moscow feel very connected to their home country. The feel as if they are better than other people such as Europeans, as their country is the biggest in the world, the leading land, the most important nation, the country who needs to show others what is the best way to live". Joosten also mentions 'rich history', as a core value for the identity of the Russian destination brand. He describes that the country displays different phases of the rich Russian history, including beautiful art and architecture, are very interesting for western tourists. Also, the 'hugeness' of the country is a great value and the diversity of natural elements. He also adds that the Russian love the history and ancient stories of the country.

5.3.2 Features, attributes and benefits

As described in chapter 3, the performance imagery and the other factors of the Destination Branding pyramid can form an inspiration for the creation of a destination brand through existing images. Question 5: *'How can the holiday destination Russia best be described?* Asks the interviewees to describe what type of tourism fits the destination the best. It furthermore analyzes what attributes and benefits the destination Russian includes. Question 2: '*What activities or attractions do you recommend for Dutch tourists who want to visit Russia?'* analyses the most important features of the destination from the view of the destination's stakeholders.

Features

Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014) and Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication 19 5 2014) mentioned similar features as recommended tourist attractions. They both mention the features 'Saint Petersburg', 'Moscow' and 'The Golden Ring' as cultural tourist attractions, as well as the features opera, ballet, arts, circus and theater. For adventurous and nature tourists, they advise the Crimea area or a trip with the Siberia Express in order to visit several nature sites. Another feature they both recommend is a cruise trip on the Volga River.

Attributes

Both Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication 19 5 2014) and Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014) mention that the destination is most suitable for cultural tourism, although the destination also includes lots of interesting natural features and attributes that are mainly interesting for adventurous tourists. According to the interviewees, the main attributes of the destination Russia are: 'destination with a beautiful and unique culture', 'destination with beautiful, historic architecture and masterpieces of art', 'destination with a rich history', 'biggest destination in the world with beautiful and extend nature' and 'destination with lots of offerings on the field of adventure'.

Benefits

According to Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014), the destination Russia is very suitable for people who seek adventure. As described above, this benefit 'adventure' is often included in nature tourism in Russia. Adventure can also be found during train travels with the Trans Siberia Express.

Van Koningsbrugge mentions benefits related to the cultural and artistic features of the destination. According to him, the benefits 'inspiration', 'discovery' and 'romance' fit the destination's cultural features and attributes. Regarding the cultural and historic features of the destination, Joosten furthermore mentions the benefit 'knowledge' for tourists who want to learn and experience some more of the rich history of the destination.

5.3.3 Target audience for holidays in Russia

Joosten (personal communication, 22 May 2014) mentions that most tourists who fit holidays in Russia are couples who do not go on holidays with their children: they either do not (yet) have children, or the children have already left the house or do not longer wish to go on holidays with their parents. Joosten divides two core tourist types for whom destinations in Russia are the most interesting. The first type is the cultural tourist: this is a somewhat older tourist without children who enjoys culture, art and architecture and appreciates a bit of comfort and luxury. The second type is the

adventurous and exploring tourist: this is a younger tourist without children who enjoys culture and nature, who enjoys movement and does not need a lot of luxury.

5.3.4 Celebrity value

According to Joosten (personal communication, 22 5 2014), Russia is less trendy because of the current political crisis. However, some core elements of the destination have always been very trendy among European tourists. Moscow and Saint Petersburg are both destinations that a European 'needs to visit' just like other capitals in Europe.

5.3.5 Causes for the negative image of Russia in the Netherlands

Question 7 of my qualitative interview analyzed what factors caused the negative image of Russia among Dutch tourists. The interviewees mentioned the following factors.

Media

As described before, the media mainly influences the image of Russia and the current negativity surrounding the destination is for the big part caused by a high amount of negative publicity. According to Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication, 19 5 2014), The political choices of Vladimir Putin and the publication of these choices in the media have definitely done the destination no good. Van der Heijden, board member of the foundation 'Rusland op zijn best', mentions, "The popularity of destinations in Russia is indeed declining because of the Putin politics." He however states that, throughout the country, tourists do not really notice the political strife, which currently rules the Dutch newspapers. In his opinion, it is safe to visit the country. (Van der Heijden, personal communication 15 5 2014). Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014) also agrees upon the fact that the media influences the image of the destination Russia. He describes this negative image is now mainly caused by the crisis in Ukraine, and the stubborn political attitude of Putin.

Cold war

Besides the media, Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication 19 5 2014) mentions two other factors that play a role in the negative image of the country. First of all he mentions there is a negative leftover feeling from the Cold War. The thoughts, memories and emotions that surround this war still evoke feelings of uncertainty, fear and disapproval from tourists.

Russian tourists in Europe

Secondly, he describes how the Russian tourist, who more often visits European tourist sites, is able to create a negative image for the country, by behaving in an inappropriate way. Van Koningsbrugge

states: "the Russian wants to play a European, but by heart, he is not one". On the other hand, he mentions that Russians who have lived in Europe for a longer period of time become excellent promoters of the Russian identity.

5.3.6 Options for image improvement

As an answer to question 8: *Do you think the negative image among Dutch tourists can be improved? If so, how can this image be improved?*, my respondents both mentioned that image improvement will become difficult for Russia, especially after the annexation of the Crimea area. Van Koningsbrugge mentioned that the Dutch tourist will not easily forget this negative event. As options for image improvement, my interviewees mentioned the following:

Events as tools for image improvement

Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014) mentions that the Olympic Games in Sochi indeed gave the destination a short-term boost, especially in the news items. But also by means of word of mouth, Russia was well promoted as a beautiful and safe destination from one person to another. According to Joosten, the Sochi experience was a unique opportunity for Russia to increase its inbound tourism sector, but the new items that followed, just a few weeks after the games, ruined this short, but significant improvement of destination image. Van Koningsbrugge (personal communication, 19 5 2014) states that, when the political situation in Russia calms down, new big events such as the World Soccer Cup in 2018 can actually give a similar boost to the image of the destination. He hopes that such another boost will however last longer than the boost Sochi created.

Publishing positive and honest information about the destination

Joosten mentions the importance of the creation of lots of positive, but honest and consistent information about the destination Russia. He mentions that, especially now, it is important to explain that the destination is safe enough to visit. Joosten believes the best channels for publishing this information are websites or other online channels such as social media. Van Koningsbrugge also mentions the importance of informing the potential and actual tourists in an open honest way. He describes how the NCRe did this after the negative incidents during the Netherlands-Russia year. The NCRe informed its audience with 'both sides of the story': instead of only highlighting the negative events caused by the Russians, the organization also described what mistakes the Dutch made throughout the year. Destination marketing organizations and other stakeholders in the Russian destination could inform potential and actual tourists by giving courses and seminars about the destination or by publishing information concerning the destination on online channels.

Historical connections between Russia and The Netherlands

According to both interviewees, the historical connections between Russia and the Netherlands can be a supporting factor in the improvement of the destination's image. According to Van Koningsbrugge, the Netherlands-Russia year was actually organized as a tool to improve the image of both countries, but unfortunately, this failed. According to Joosten, historical connections and similarities between the countries, such as the Hermitage in Amsterdam, can make culture-loving tourists interested in historical and cultural features of Russia. As he describes, tourists who visited the hermitage in Amsterdam surely want to visit the bigger and more beautiful hermitage in Saint Petersburg.

Efforts of tourism organizations for image improvement

According to Van Koningsbrugge, tourist organizations can always publish 'pretty pictures' of destinations and this will always work to some extent. But in order to create a long-term, positive image, he believes something needs to change at the political level of Russia: "The political situation needs to calm down first". Joosten agrees with this statement and explains that promoting the destination in a regular manner does not work at the moment. Lots of tourists decide not to visit Russia because they believe the destination is dangerous. Tourist organizations now only can stress the safety of the destination.

National tourism board

According to Joosten, who runs the website for the National Tourism board of Russia in the Netherlands, as a side-task of his work at travel organization Eurocult-Lito, the destination could be promoted better if the board received at least some financial resources from the Russian Government. With some financial resources, the board would be able to organize events to increase interest an feelings of safety surrounding the destination Russia.

Improvements of the tourism sector

According to Van Koningsbrugge, the situation for tourism in Russia is not very optimal. Services, such as hotel service and service in restaurants should definitely be improved if Russia wants to live up to its potential as a tourist destination. Van Koningsbrugge mentioned that the very minimal service in for example restaurants originates from the Soviet Era, where the communistic ideology stated that it was 'dirty' and 'slavery-like', to serve others food. These attitudes are often still to be found throughout the Russian tourist sector.

Furthermore, he describes that it is difficult to organize trips in Russia. This is caused by the Russian mentality on one hand, but also because the Russian infrastructure sometimes is not optimal for, for example nature activities.

5.3.7 Conclusion qualitative research findings

Russia is a destination that suits both cultural and natural tourism, but cultural tourism seems to fit the destination the best. The desired image of Russia should be focused on the beautiful culture, rich history and beautiful nature of the destination. The target audience for Russian destination does not go on holidays with children and enjoys either culture or nature and adventure. The media mainly influences the current negative image of Russia, but the image also contains some leftover feelings of the cold war. Furthermore, the image is influenced by the often negative behavior of Russian tourists who visit destinations in Europe. The current image is improvable, but the political situation in Russia first needs to 'calm down'. Honesty and consistency of information related to Russia is important for improving the image of the destination. As tools for destination improvement, Destination marketing organizations can make use of big events, such as the World Soccer Championships.

Throughout the next chapter I will combine all of my findings from my qualitative and quantitative research in order to draw a conclusion for my problem statement as described in chapter 1.

6 Conclusions

Throughout this section I will describe the conclusions I drew from my quantitative and qualitative analyses, in order to come to a solution for the problem statement: *"In order to attract more Dutch tourists to destinations in Russia, the image of the country as a destination for traveling should be improved."* Below, I will provide answers to all of my sub-questions and my research question, as described in chapter 2.

6.1 What is Destination Branding?

In order to provide an answer to the sub-research question *'what is Destination Branding?'*, I have analyzed different Destination Branding theories, which I described in chapter 3. This chapter summarizes the theory and draws conclusions from the previously described concepts.

6.1.1 What is a destination?

Destinations are areas without political boundaries (clusters), where tourism exists. Tourism includes the activities and interactions of people, other than the host destination's inhabitants, and their impacts on both the demand and supply sites, while they visit places away from home. (Pike, 2008)

6.1.2 What is Branding and Destination Branding?

Branding can be seen as a way to position the identity of a brand in order to create the desired image in the minds of the consumers. (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008) Brand identity includes the mission, vision, values and desired brand image of a brand, organization or destination. (Pike, Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing communication approach, 2008) Brand image includes the set of beliefs and ideas that a person holds regarding an object. (Kotler & Keller, 2012)

Destination brands are used in order to protect the image of destinations (Pike, 2008). Furthermore, they are a key tool for differentiating a destination from competing destinations (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). When developed properly, destination brand can lower the media costs of destination marketing organizations (Pike, 2008).

The main brand elements of a destination are the destination's name, a logo and a positioning slogan. (Pike, 2008) A destination brand should always be consistent and build upon the expectations (Kouris, 2009) and desires (Pike, 2008) of the potential and actual tourists.

6.1.3 Stakeholders of destination brands

As described in chapter 3.3, the main stakeholders of a tourism destination brand are the tourists, the public sector and governments, tourism enterprises, tour operators, the host population and the media. (Buhalis & Fletcher, 1995) These all have different interests and agendas (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003:4) and all send out messages different messages about the destination to the outside world (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23). Since consistency in communication about the destination is of high importance (Pike, 2008), the stakeholders should cooperate in the best ways possible to achieve this.

6.1.4 The Destination Branding process

As described in chapter 3.4, the five phases of the destination process include 1: Market investigation and strategic recommendations, brand identity development, brand launch and communicating the vision, brand implementation and monitoring, evaluation and review.(Morgan & Pritchard, 2004)

6.1.5 Challenges in Destination Branding

Challenges in Destination Branding include the multi-dimensional character of destination brands (Pike, 2008), the low budget of destination marketing organizations (Pike, 2008), negative publicity (Pike, 2008) and the destination's vulnerability to crises and disasters (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009). Destination branding should always be married with Crisis Management (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009), in order to be prepared for potential crises, but also to better recover a destination brand after a crisis.

6.1.6 Successful Destination Branding

Destination brands that are successful have reached the so-called 'celebrity status'. These destinations have eliminated the negative aspects of destination and have highlighted the positive elements in the minds of the tourists. (Morgan & Pritchard 2004) In order for brands to become successful, they should be consistent, relevant to consumers and they should include the tourist's desires and expectations. (Pike, 2008)

In order to analyze the brand equity of a destination brand: it's value and the effectiveness of the brand-related marketing activities, destination marketing organizations should monitor the destination brand's awareness, associations, resonance and loyalty. (Pike, 2008)

6.2 What does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like?

The secondary research I carried out on data from CBS, CVO and TNS Political and social provided me with an answer to the sub-research question *'what does the Dutch tourist industry currently look like?'*.

As described in chapter 5.1, a very big group of over 80% of all people living in the Netherlands went on a long or short holiday trip throughout the year 2012. Of all holidays that year, 59% were longer holidays and 50.7% were holidays abroad.

The highest holiday participation rate can be found in the group of Dutch tourists around 40 and 45 years old. Tourists over 55 years old go on holidays most frequently. There are no differences to be found between male and female tourists in holiday participation rate. There is however a relationship between the income- and educational levels of tourists and their holiday participation rate. Furthermore, multi-person households show a higher holiday participation rate than single-person households.

6.3 Who is the target group for Russian destinations?

My qualitative research with stakeholders of the destination brand Russia provided me with answers to the question *'who is the target group for Russian destinations?'*

6.3.1 Two types of target audiences

As described in chapter 5.3, there are two types of target groups for Russian destinations. The first group is around 50 years old or older and does not have children or has children who already have left the house. This group of people loves culture and cultural features such as arts, architecture ballet, opera and theater and is interesting in historical features of a destination. The second group is younger, around 30 years old, and does not (yet) have any children. This group enjoys adventure and nature but is also interested in the cultural and historical features of destinations.

6.3.2 Actual tourists are interested in culture

From my quantitative research, I drew the conclusion that the persons, who already visited Russia for leisure purposes, were very interested in culture and valued the availability of historic sites at a tourist destination. Although I did not interview a lot of actual tourists, there is an assumption that Russia now mainly attracts cultural tourists. The interviewees from my qualitative research also mentioned that most people who are interested in Russia visit the country for its culture, rather than for its natural features.

6.4 What is the current image of the destination Russia, as perceived by potential and actual tourists in the Netherlands?

As described in chapter 3, a destination's image can be defined as "the meaning of a destination in the minds of tourists". (Kouris, 2009) The image of a destination can be: positive, negative, weak, mixed or contra dictionary (Kotler et al. (1993). I measured the current image of the destination Russia by asking the respondents of my quantitative research to mention 5 things they associate with Russia. I also asked them to mention whether they associated given features, attributes and benefits with the destination.

6.4.1 Mainly negative image

As mentioned throughout chapter 5.2, the current image of Russia among Dutch tourists is mainly negative. As I will describe in chapter 6.5 below, this image is primarily caused by negative publicity: most things Dutch tourists associate with Russia are linked to current, negative events, such as the crisis in Ukraine, the annexation of the Crimea area and the anti-gay propaganda law. Other negative associations, such as 'dangerous' , 'criminality' and 'war' reflect feelings of fear from the Dutch tourists when they think of Russia. Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014) describes that tourists are often too afraid to visit destinations in Russia.

Brand personality

The brand personality of Russia, which includes the human characteristics and traits that are associated with a specific brand, is very negative. Russia is associated with aggression, violence, danger, corruption and power display.

6.4.2 Positive elements

The destination also shows some characteristics of a mixed image, as the Dutch tourist also associate the destination with positive elements. As described in chapter 5.3, lots of positive top-of-mind associations with the destination Russia are related to the destination's beauty. Respondents for example mention 'beautiful architecture', 'beautiful nature' and 'beautiful cities' as top-of-mind associations. Other positive associations are linked to the destination's rich history and its culture, including the elements ballet and music.

6.4.3 SWOT Analysis

In order to visualize the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the destination, as related to the images in the mind of the Dutch tourists, I created a SWOT analysis (table 12). According to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), a SWOT analysis is useful to research what brand elements are relevant to the tourists and what elements can differentiate a destination brand.

Table 12: SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses

•The destination is positively associated with the following (actual) features and attributes:
    - Beautiful, interesting and exciting culture;
    - Beautiful architecture and historic cities;
    - Rich history;
    - Ballet, poetry, literature, music and art;
    - Cold weather, snow and winter sports;
    - Red Square, Kremlin, Hermitage, Peterhof;
    - Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Golden Ring;
    - Siberia, Trans Siberia express;
    - Russian dance, Matryoshka, Vodka.
•Tourists state Russia is a very interesting (and even educational) destination.
	•The destination is associated with:
	    - Corruption;
	    - Danger and war;
	    - Alcoholism;
	    - Inequality;
	    - Violence, aggression and criminality;
	    - No of freedom of speech or press freedom;
	    - Communism;
	    - Dictatorship.
	•Tourists think the host community is unfriendly;
	•The Dutch tourists do not think the Russian local food is tasty.
	 •The destination's tourism services need improvement.

Opportunities	**Threats**
•Destination is associated with adventure; •Nature is perceived to be beautiful; •Beaches are important reasons for tourists to visit destinations, but the tourists do not perceive Russia as a destination for beach tourism; •Big, international events have a positive effect on the destination's image; •Historic relationships.	•Negative publicity (tourists are mainly influenced by the media when forming an image); •The destination is expected to be expensive.

6.5 Who influence the current image of Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists and in what way?

From the results of my quantitative and qualities research I can conclude that the following factors are the main influencers of the current negative image of Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists.

6.5.1 Media

As described in chapter 3.3.6 and chapter 3.6.3, negative publicity has a damaging effect on the destination's image. Especially the negative publications surrounding the anti-gay propaganda law and the crisis in Ukraine have formed the opinion on the Dutch (potential and actual) tourists on Russia in a very negative manner. As described in chapter 5.2, almost all of the respondents of my quantitative research mentioned the media formed their image. A high percentage of these respondents (75%) mentioned that their opinion on Russia changed during the past year.

6.5.2 The host population

As described in chapter 3.3, the host population has an effect on the image of a destination: tourists are influenced by how the host country behaves abroad. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:23) Van Koningsbrugge mentions that the Russian host population has a negative effect on the image of Russia, because Russians often show behavior that is unacceptable for Europeans when they are abroad. The results from my quantitative research showed that the Russians are often perceived as asocial, aggressive and loud among Dutch tourists. Furthermore, they are often associated with alcoholism and drunkenness. Throughout my quantitative research, 19.1% of all respondents that personal contacts with Russians shaped their image of the destination, either in a positive or negative way.

6.5.3 History

According to the results of my quantitative research, 9% of my respondents mentioned that their opinion was partly formed by history lessons or books concerning Russia. Van Koningsbrugge also stated that historical elements help the tourist form an image of Russia. He mentioned that especially the events concerning the Cold War still play a big role in the formation of an image for Russia. The respondents of my quantitative research mentioned a lot of top-of-mind associations related to historical events. Most of these associations were linked to the Soviet Era, but some respondents mentioned associations such as 'tsars', which are linked to the time of the Russian empire and the Muscovite period. As I will describe throughout the following chapter, the associations related to

history are not necessarily negative. They can actually form a benefit for the potential and actual tourists of the destination.

6.5.4 Personal experience

As described in chapter 5.2, there is a positive relationship between previous visits a tourist to a certain destination and his/her image of the destination. The friendliness of a destination's host population influences the opinion of the tourist who visited the destination (Pike, 2008). Furthermore, the tourist is able to relativize certain negative elements of a destination, when he or she has experienced whether the destination is safe or dangerous by him or herself. This positive effect of previous visit was also reflected in my quantitative research: actual visitors of the Russian destination gave more positive associations, were more positive towards the destination's friendliness and were likely to revisit the destination over time.

6.6 What is the desired image for the destination?

According to Pike (2008) it is important to create a destination brand that is associated with elements that the tourists actually desire. Furthermore, it is important that this destination brand meets the expectations of the tourists (Kouris, 2009). A destination brand needs to be relevant and believable (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) and should be built upon the existing knowledge and image of a destination (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009). Finally, a destination brand needs to be outstanding enough to compete with other destination brands.

I used the Destination Branding pyramid framework of Kouris (2009), which I described in chapter 3.4.3 in order to create a framework for developing the desired image and destination brand for Russia. Throughout this chapter I will combine the existing image of Russia with the desires from the Dutch tourists in order to define the essence of the Russian destination brand. I will analyze the performance imagery of the destination, including the associations with features, attributes and benefits of the destination, the emotional imagery of the destination, the experience imagery, the tourist imagery and the essence of the destination.

When creating a brand for the destination Russia, destination marketers should include both the natural and cultural features of the destination. However, in order to meet the expectations of the tourists, it is important to stress the cultural features of the destination more than the natural features. As described in chapter 5.2, the respondents from my quantitative research perceive Russia more as a destination for culture tourism than as a destination for nature tourism. These strong expectations should be included in the brand in order to minimize the chance of confusion for tourists considering the destination.

6.6.1 Performance imagery

Destination performance imagery refers to the functional characteristics of a destination. According to Kouris (2009), it is the reason why tourists choose one destination over another. Performance imagery includes the destination's features, attributes and benefits. (Kouris, 2009).

Features

As described in chapter 3.4.3, the features of a destination are the destination's concrete offerings, or 'goods'. They can either be unique, POD (points of difference) features or POP (points-of-parity) features, which can occur in any destination. Throughout chapter 4, I described some of the core tourist attractions of the Russian destination, which can be seen as POD features.

From the results of my quantitative research I can draw the conclusion that the Dutch tourists associate the destination Russia with the following positive POD features: Red Square, Kremlin, Hermitage, Siberia, Trans Siberia Express, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, the drink Vodka and the folklore element Matryoshka doll. They associate the destination with the following POP features: ballet, poetry, literature, music, religion and churches, historic cities and architecture.

The findings from my qualitative research showed similar features. As interesting features for Dutch tourists, the interviewees from my qualitative research described the following POD features: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Golden Ring, Crimea, Volga, Trans Siberia Express, Peterhof, Hermitage and Kremlin. As POP features they mentioned the following: ballet, theater, opera, circus, music, poetry, arts, historic sites, architecture, nature sites, museums, and cruises.

The features, as mentioned above, match the desires of the Dutch tourists, who stated to enjoy both natural and cultural features of a destination. It furthermore includes the tourist's desires of historic sites and architecture at a tourist destination.

An interesting fact is that, in both qualitative interviews I carried out, Crimea was mentioned as an interesting feature of the destination Russia for nature tourism. It is however difficult to use this feature for Destination Branding as it is now mainly associated with the crisis in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of the area. In the future, this feature could form a benefit for Destination Branding purposes aimed at nature- and adventure loving tourists.

Attributes

As described in chapter 3, the attributes of a destination include more descriptive characteristics of the destination. (Kouris, 2009) Attributes for the destination Russia, as described by the respondents from my quantitative research are: "country with beautiful and extended nature", "destination with cold weather and snow", "destination with beautiful, historic architecture", "destination with interesting and exciting culture", "destination with a rich history" and "destination with diverse climate". From my qualitative research, I can add the following benefits: "destination with masterpieces of art", "destination with lots of adventurous offerings" and "largest destination in the world with beautiful nature".

Benefits

Benefits are supported by the attributes, as described above. They add value to the experience of the tourist at a destination. (Kouris, 2009) According to the respondents of my quantitative research, benefits for the destination Russia are ' authenticity, splendor, adventure, activity, knowledge and passion. The interviewees from my qualitative research added the following benefits: inspiration, discovery and romance.

6.6.2 Emotional imagery

As described in chapter 3: theoretical framework, the emotional imagery of a destination brand refers to the deeper meanings of destination brand for the tourists. According to findings from both my quantitative and qualitative research and the performance imagery, as listed above, I can state that the destination Russia fulfills the needs of self-development (related to the benefits knowledge, discovery and inspiration), self-fulfillment (related to inspiration, passion, activity, adventure and splendor) and self-esteem (related to knowledge, passion, adventure, activity and inspiration).

6.6.3 Experience imagery

The experience imagery refers to how the elements of a destination brand come to life in the imagination of the tourists. (Kouris, 2009) For Russia, I have used the two types of Tourists Joosten (personal communication, 22 5, 2014) described, in order to create two types of experience imagery: one linked to nature and the benefit adventure, the other linked to culture, history and the benefit knowledge. The adventurous experience imagery for Russia can be described as follows: "Wandering through unexpected nature sites you will experience feelings of ultimate freedom and adventure". The

cultural experience imagery can be described as follows: "Enter the most beautiful ancient buildings and be surprised by the stories of this beautiful land".

6.6.4 Tourist imagery

As described in chapter 3, the tourist imagery is based on who as actually visited a destination. (Kouris, 2009). This also includes importance of the stakeholder 'tourist', as described in chapter 3.3.2. Considering the target audience for holidays in Russia, the tourist imagery must display travelers without children, with an higher income- and educational level. The tourists displayed should appear interested in culture, but also in nature and adventure.

6.6.5 Essence of the destination brand

The essence of the Russian destination brand can be described as the core nature and character of a destination. It is connected to the emotional values and the identity of a destination. The essence of a brand provides the tourists with a reason to choose one destination brand over another. As a result of my quantitative and qualitative research, I came up with the essences 'passionate', and 'authentic'. These essences are both very well suitable, but by following the line of the performance imagery, emotional imagery, tourists imagery and experience imagery, I think the essence 'passionate' suits the destination the best and therefore I have used this type of essence in figure 7.

Passion

The destination Russia is built upon a strong passion for culture, history and beauty. The character of the destination's local community is often described as romantic, fanatic, pride and full of temperament. Their love for history, art and religion is included in this description of the destination's essence. Furthermore, the passion of Russia can be found in the intense and pure nature that tourists can experience when visiting one of the destination's beautiful nature sites.

Authentic

The essence 'authentic' refers to the exclusive character of the destination Russia, which can be found nowhere else in the world. Russia is built upon two continents and shows a wide variety of breathtaking natural and cultural elements. The destination breaths a rich history, which marks the destination with interesting and beautiful cultural features.

Essence:

Passion

Tourist imagery: couples without children, higher educated, adventurous

Experience imagery: "Enter the most beautiful ancient buildings and be surprised by the stories of this beautiful land"(cultural experience) and "Wandering through unexpected nature sites you will experience feelings of ultimate freedom and adventure" (adventure experience)

Emotional imagery: self-development, self-fulfillment and self-esteem

Destination benefits: authenticity, splendor, adventure, activity, excitement, knowledge, inspiration, discovery, passion and romance

Destination attributes: cold weather, biggest country in the world, beautiful historic architecture, interesting culture, diverse nature, masterpieces of art and rich history

Destination features: Golden Ring, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Siberia, Volga river, Kremlin, Red Square, Hermitage, Peterhof, Matryoshka dolls, Russian dance, ballet, opera, literature, poetry, music, art, architecture, historic cities, cruises and museums

Figure 7: Destination branding through image, case of Russia

6.7 How can Destination Branding contribute to establishing the desired image for the destination Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists?

This chapter analyses how the Destination Branding theory, as described in chapter 3, and the advice from the interviewees, as given in chapter 5.3 can help to establish the desired image for the destination Russia among Dutch (potential and actual) tourists.

6.7.1 Create a sense of safety

According to Van Gelder (2008) Destination Branding can be the context for image improvement after a crisis. However, because Russia is in a political crisis right now, branding a destination with positive information only will not make a lot of sense, as tourists are already 'bombarded with negative publicity'. According to Van Koningsbrugge, publishing 'pretty pictures' about a destination will work to some extent, but for real, long-lasting image improvement, the situation in Russia first needs to 'calm down'. Joosten describes that lots of tourists are too scared to visit the destination at the moment, mainly because of the political unrest in eastern Ukraine, in which Russia is highly involved. At this point, destination branding should mainly be a tool for 'calming the potential tourists down', and explaining them the destination is safe enough to spend an amazing holiday in. The creation of a new, destination brand for Russia is definitely useful when the crisis has faded, but first, it is important to send out consistent, positive and honest messages about the destination.

6.7.2 Destination brand for long-term improvement

After the crisis, the development of a destination brand can further improve the image of the destination for a longer period of time. The new destination brand should be built upon the existing images of the destination, as described in chapter 6.6, and should deliver those benefits the tourist truly desires. Building a positive image for the destination Russia will take a very long time. Throughout this long period of Destination Branding, the brand should be communicated in a consistent way, and should constantly be monitored in order to measure the relevance, effectiveness and equity of the destination brand.

6.7.3 Implementation of Crisis Management

Throughout the process of image rebuilding and crisis recovery, Destination Branding practices should be tightly connected with Crisis Management practices. But after the establishment of a positive image, Crisis Management remains important for Russia, to analyze potential risks and be prepared for potential, new crises and disasters.

6.8 Final conclusion

This final conclusion summarizes the conclusions of the sub-research questions and mentioned above, and provides an answer to the research question: '*How to improve the image of Russia as a destination for Dutch tourists?*' and a solution to the problem statement: '*In order to attract more Dutch tourists to destinations in Russia, the image of the country as a destination for traveling should be improved.*'

Destination Branding is useful for the destination Russia in order to restore and protect the image of the destination and in order to differentiate the destination from other, competing destinations in order to attract more tourists from the Netherlands and increase the percentage of total GDP from inbound tourism.

A high percentage of the Dutch population goes on holidays abroad. The group with the highest participation rate is over 40 years old, lives in multi-person households and has income- and educational levels that are above average. Destination marketing organizations should both target the tourism destination Russia at couples without children, who enjoy culture, art, and history and at couples without children who seek adventure, pure natural elements in combination with beautiful cultural features.

The current image of Russia is mainly negative. However, Dutch tourists also associate the destination with positive elements. The negative image of Russia, as perceived by Dutch tourists, is mainly influenced by the media. Other influencers of this image are the destination's host population, the destination's history and the personal experiences of actual visitors with the destination.

The desired image of the destination is made up by both the identity and core values of the destination, as well as by the current image, expectations and desires of the Dutch tourists. The desired image for Russia should include both cultural and natural features, but should mainly focus on the element 'culture', as the Dutch tourists expect Russia to be more of a culture destination. The desired image of the destination should be built around the essence 'passion' and should promote the benefits: adventure, excitement, knowledge, inspiration, discovery, passion and romance and the attributes: rich history, interesting culture, beautiful architecture and beautiful, extended nature. Furthermore, the POD features Golden Ring, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Siberia, Volga, Kremlin, Red Square, Hermitage, Trans Siberia Express, Vodka and Matryoshka doll should be highlighted, as well as the POP features ballet, theater, opera, poetry, literature, music, museums, arts, religion and churches, historic cities, nature sites, cruises and architecture.

In order to establish the desired image, destination marketing organization should make sure that the destination brand is consistent, relevant to consumers and built upon the tourist's expectations and desires. For all destinations, but especially in this case of Russia, Destination Branding should be

strongly interconnected with Crisis Management. The destination should always deliver honest information concerning crisis situations in order to reduce or recover from the harm of negative media publicity. Tools and tactics for image improvement of the destination Russia include the usage of big events such as the World Soccer Championships in 2018, the presence of the destination in major films and the effective use of tourist-created content. Finally, the historic bound between the Netherlands and Russia can form a unique source of inspiration for image improvement.

Establishing a more positive image for the destination Russia will take a lot of time; destination marketers need to make sure that the messages they send out concerning the destination remain positive and consistent. Scanning and monitoring the destination brand is of high importance as well, in order to measure the brand equity of the destination brand and to notice risks and potential crises for a destination brands at an early stage.

7 Advise

Throughout this chapter I will first give a general advice for the Destination Branding case of Russia. After this general advice, I will give some recommendations to some specific stakeholders of the Russian destination brand.

7.1 Relevance of an improved destination brand for Russia

Russia is currently dealing with a political crisis, which harmed the destination's image drastically. As described in chapter 3.7: Destination Branding during a crisis or disaster, Destination Branding can be of value for destinations in crisis, as destination brands "provide the context for solving of the crisis" (Van Gelder, 2008). At this point of time, Destination Branding is important for Russia to reduce the feelings of danger and uncertainty among tourists and explain that the destination is actually safe to visit. Destination marketing organizations should provide honest information concerning the destination and the crisis situation, and should highlight the values and strengths of the destination in order to get a step away from the crisis. When creating and implementing a new destination brand for Russia, it is important to realize that the image of Russia will not change overnight: the establishment of a destination brand takes a lot of time, sometimes even decades.

7.2 Advise for the development of the Russian destination brand

As described throughout chapter 6, a destination brand for Russia should especially be aimed at couples without children, with above average income- and educational levels, who love culture, or who want to combine culture with nature and adventure. The destination brand should be built upon the expectations and desires of these tourists. Desires of the Dutch tourists, which match the attributes and features of the destination Russia, include Russia's beautiful culture, beautiful architecture, rich history and beautiful nature. The expectations of the tourists concerning the destination Russia are more in the direction of cultural tourism. It is therefore advisable to mainly focus on the cultural features, attributes and benefits of Russia, when branding the destination for Dutch tourists. My advice is to build a brand around the essence 'passion'. As described in chapter 6, this essence perfectly reflects the Russian character and love for culture and history.

7.3 Key success factors for the Russian destination brand

Throughout chapter 3.9.3, I described 10 critical success factors for destination brand. These success factors should be used as a checklist for how Russian destination brand can best be developed. Below, I will describe some of the key Destination Branding success factors in the case of the destination Russia.

The brand excels at delivering what customers truly desire

The first critical success factor, as mentioned by Pike (2008), is that destinations should deliver elements that the customer truly desires. As described in chapter 5.3 and 6.6, the Dutch tourist desires the attributes 'beautiful nature', 'interesting culture', 'beautiful architecture' and 'rich history'. The destination brand should be built upon these desires.

The brand stays relevant to customers

According to Pike (2008) the brand needs to remain relevant to tourists. It should meet the desires, but also the expectations of the tourists and should be built upon current images of the destination (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009). Throughout chapter 6.6 I used the destination brand building pyramid as a framework for destination brand- and image building for Russia, through existing images of the destination. The conclusions I drew using by using this framework can be used as a source of inspiration for the creation of a relevant destination brand for Russia.

The pricing strategy is based on consumers' perceptions of value

Tourists are very price sensitive (Ndlovu & Nyakunu, 2009) and often choose for one destination over another based on price/quality ratios. The respondents from my quantitative research perceive Russia as a relatively expensive destination. Therefore, destination marketing organizations should attempt to change the perceptions of the Dutch tourists on the value of the offerings of the destination Russia. This is well possible, as the destination is not only associated with higher prices, but also with 'rich elements' such as splendor, beauty, gold and artistic elements.

The brand is properly positioned in the market by offering a distinctive value proposition

In order for the destination Russia to compete against other destinations, the brand needs to have differentiating value. Although the image of Russia is mainly negative, the Dutch tourist does describe Russia as an authentic destination. Furthermore, the respondents of my quantitative research are able to mention lots of POP features and attributes of the destination that set the destination apart from its

competitors, such as the fact that the destination is the biggest country in the world, includes the coldest places on earth and offers breathtaking architectural features such as the Kremlin in Moscow. When developing a brand for the destination Russia, these differentiating features should be stressed in order for Russia to compete with other destinations.

The brand is consistent

Pike (2008) and Morgan & Pritchard (2004) mention that changing the image of a brand takes a very long time. Destination marketing organizations need to realize this when developing a brand for a destination. The messages they send out concerning the destination brand should always remain consistent and the essence of the brand, as described in chapter 6.6.5, should not change over time.

The brand's managers understand what the brand means to the consumers

In order to create a fitting brand for the destination Russia, destination marketing organizations need to understand what perceptions and values the destination has in the mind of the tourists. Negative associations with the destination brand, such as corruption, danger and inequality should be unstressed and positive associations such as rich history, interesting culture and beautiful architecture should be stressed.

7.4 Tools and tactics for image improvement

The following tools and tactics can be used as a part of destination branding in order to improve the image of the destination Russia.

Events

Throughout my quantitative research, I noticed that lots of respondents mentioned the Olympic Winter games as a direct association with the destination Russia. They also associated Russia with winter sports in general. This shows how positive events such as big sport events have a positive image on the associations concerning a certain destination, in the mind of the (potential and actual) tourists. According to Joosten (personal communication 22 5 2014), the Olympic games indeed had a positive impact on the perceptions of Dutch tourists. Joosten and Van Koningsbrugge believe that the World Soccer Games, which will be held in Russia in the near future, will have a positive effect on the image of the destination as well.

Films

As described in chapter 3.9, the presence of a destination in movies has a very positive effect on the image of destination. Russia could make use of this trend by offering its beautiful landscape and architectural sites to increase excitement from tourists to visit the destination.

Tourist-created content

Tourist-created content can be a challenge for destination brands, as this content usually has a very high presence on the Internet and can overwhelm the message send out by destination marketing organizations. (Munar, 2011) However, when used properly, the content can also create value for a destination, since the previous experiences of other tourists can also help to establish a positive image for a destination brand. For branding Russia, the tourist created content strategy 'mimetic', is most useful, as the destination's negative image asks for some more control of online sources. Furthermore, taking into account the limited financial sources of Russian Destination Branding organizations that try to attract tourists from the Netherlands, this strategy suits the best is it is the most cost-effective approach.

Historic bounds

According to Joosten and Van Koningsbrugge, the historical bound between the Netherlands and Russia can form an advantage when improving the image of the destination. The historic bound especially forms a benefit for attracting Dutch tourists to the destination Saint Petersburg, because this city has the most valuable links with The Netherlands through the tsar Peter the Great, who build this beautiful city. Furthermore, tourists who visit the Hermitage in Amsterdam might be interested in the Russian Hermitage in Saint Petersburg as well.

7.5 Advise for the implementation of Crisis Management techniques

 Destination marketing organizations should include Crisis Management in their branding process, in order to be prepared for potential crises and disasters, but also to recover from existing ones such as the political crisis Russia currently deals with. Successful Crisis Management techniques that are useful for branding the destination Russia are the following:

7.5.1 The importance of preparation

Destination marketers working with the destination Russia should create consistency plans and should sketch potential crisis situations in order to be well prepared for actual crises and disasters. They should furthermore scan the environment for risks.

7.5.2 The importance of honesty

Destination marketing organizations should be open and honest about crisis situations. Only sending out positive, promotion messages about a destination in crisis will not work. Tourists need to be informed about the situations in an clear and fair way.

7.5.3 Outsource Crisis Management expertise

It is advisable for destination marketing organizations to outsource Crisis Management expertise, as destination marketing organizations usually do not have the skills or knowledge to deal with crises situations in the most optimal way.

7.5.4 Good media relationships

Good media relationships can be of crucial importance for destinations that want to recover from a crisis and establish a more positive image. Destination marketing organizations must give two-sided, clear information on the situation in Russia and the safety for tourists, in order to reduce the perceived risk.

7.6 Core challenges in the Destination Branding Process

Destination marketing organizations should consider the following challenges in the process branding the destination Russia.

Destination Branding takes a lot of time

As described before, the political situation in Russia first need to calm down and the amount of negative publicity needs to decline. Then, destination marketing organizations can make an attempt on improving the image of Russia among Dutch tourist. Important is to state that changing the image of destinations takes a very long time. During this time, destination marketing organizations need to make sure that the messages concerning the destination brand remain consistent, relevant and honest.

Low Destination Branding budget

Destination marketing organizations usually have very low budgets (Pike, 2008). According to Joosten, the national Russian tourism board in the Netherlands receives no financial resources at all from the Russian government. With a little more financial resources, the board would be able to work much more effectively to improve the image of Russia among Dutch tourists.

Tourism sector needs improvement

Finally, the tourism sector in Russia needs some improvement in order to live up to its potential. The service is often poor and it is sometimes difficult to organize trips, because of the Russian mentality and (in some areas) insufficient infrastructure.

7.7 Recommendations to destination marketing organizations involved with the destination Russia

The following recommendations are specifically aimed at destination marketing organizations that want to improve the image of the destination Russia:

- For the destination marketing organization involved with designing a brand for the destination Russia I want to advice to further research the core identity of the destination in other EU markets. The framework I created only focuses on the Dutch tourism market. This was due to time limitations, but also because of recent conflicts between the Netherlands, which created an interesting angle to the Destination Branding process.

- Destination marketing organizations analyzing the case of Russia should hire crisis experts to advise them on how to deal with the current political strife when branding the destination. In order to overcome future crises more easily, they should create a detailed plan and crisis scenarios with the crisis expert in order to set guidelines for future crises or disasters.

- Destination marketing organizations should look for options to promote the destination brand of Russia in films.

- Destination marketing organizations should analyze the options for further promoting the destination brand Russia with big events, such as sports events. They should analyze how upcoming events such as the World Soccer Championships that will be held in Russia in 2018 can have a more long-lasting effect on the image of the destination than the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. When the political situation in Russia has calmed down, the Soccer Championships can be a key tool for image improvement through positive media publicity.

- Considering online marketing efforts, destination marketing organizations involved with the case of Russia should consider the implementation of one of the tourist-created content approaches of Munar (2011), as described in chapter 3.8. In my opinion, they can best use the mimetic approach to use tourism-created content in a simple, but controlled and cost-effective manner. A way to implement the mimetic approach is through the creation of a website, linked with tourism-created content on social media channels.

- After implementing the destination brand for Russia, this brand and the image of the country should constantly be monitored and evaluated. It is important to keep the brand and its messages consisted and relevant to the target audience. Destination Branding takes a lot of time, and destination marketing organizations should definitely take this time in order to establish the desired brand image.

7.8 Recommendations to the Russian Tourism board

The following recommendations are specifically aimed at the Russian tourism board.

- The Russian Federation should seriously consider investing more in Destination Branding. With its unique cultural features and extended nature the country shows a huge potential to become a world player on the field of tourism. More financial and human resources will help to create a better, more positive feel about the destination, as the positive elements of the country are highlighted in a more effective and consequent way.
- The Russian Tourism board should invest even more in the use of big events to promote the destination. From the findings of my quantitative and qualitative research I concluded that the 2014 Winter Olympics had a (short term) positive effect on the image of the destination.
- The current Visa regulation holds tourists back from visiting the destination Russia. A few years ago, this regulation was simplified in order to stimulate tourism. It would be better for the amount of incoming tourism if traveling to Russia did not ask for so much paperwork. The Russian Federation should, in accordance with the EU implement easier to process Visa regulations.

7.9 Recommendations to the Russian Tourism Board and Dutch tourist organizations offering trips to Russia

The following recommendations are specifically aimed at the Russian Tourism Bureau and the Dutch tourism organizations offering trips to Russia.

- Although Russia is in a political crisis at the moment, the destination still evokes lots of positive associations with its target audiences. Dutch travel organizations should not hold back in stressing these positive associations, including a rich culture, history and beautiful architectonic features.
- One of the main reasons for Dutch tourists not visiting the destination Russia is because they think the destination is dangerous at the moment. Travel organizations should minimize the guessing: they should stress, or even prove that the destination is indeed safe. The Russian tourism board in the Netherlands can also do this, for example by organizing lectures, presentations and events to talk about tourism in Russia.
- Travel organizations should make more use of social media and other online media channels in order to increase the amount of (consistent) information on the destination Russia, in accordance to the desired image for the country. Organizations should consider asking

assistance from travelers who blog, photograph or create videos about the destination they have visited.

- The Dutch tourist perceives the destination Russia as relatively expensive. Travel organizations should use price deals and discounts to make the destination Russia more attractive for tourists during the current crisis. When this is not possible, they should try to reshape the tourist's value of price for the destination. This can be done through associations tourists already have with the destination. Tourists link associations such as 'gold' and 'splendor' with the destination. These associations relativize a higher price level.

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9 Appendix

Appendix 1: Holiday participation rates of Dutch tourists

Participation rates based on average income level

Average income level of household in €	Population size x 1 000	Participation in longer holidays	Participation in holidays abroad
17 500 or less	1 790	48%	55%
17 500 – 23 000	1 510	61%	55%
23 000 – 28 500	1 750	70%	54%
28 500 – 34 000	2 120	72%	55%
34 000 – 45 000	2 780	79%	61%
45 000 – 56 000	2 340	85%	66%
56 000 or more	3 440	89%	79%
Total	15 730	74%	65%

Source: CBS (2013)

Participation rates based on educational level

Level of education	Population X 1000	Participation in longer holidays	Participation in holidays abroad
Children aged 0 – 15	2 940	81%	58%
Primary/lower education (Basisonderwijs)	1 020	57%	52%
General lower education (Algemeen lager onderwijs)	1 730	68%	61%
Lower vocational education (Lager beroepsonderwijs)	1 670	60	56%
Secondary education (Middelbaar onderwijs)	1220	76%	70%
Secondary vocational education (Middelbaar beroeps onderwijs)	3 210	73%	61%
Semi-higher education (Semi-hoger onderwijs)	2 530	83%	74%
Higher education (Hoger onderwijs)	1 410	86%	81%
Total	15 730	74%	65%

Source: CBS (2013)

Participation rates based on age

Age	Population size X 1000	Participation in longer holidays	Participation in holidays abroad
0-5	1 000	81%	50%
6-12	1 580	82%	59%
13-17	950	79%	68%
18-24	1 330	73%	74%
25-34	1 780	75%	72%
35-44	2 200	77%	66%
45-54	2 390	74%	73%
55-64	2 100	76%	67%
65-74	1 510	73%	56%
75 or older	1 100	50%	55%
Total	15 730	74%	65%

Source: CBS (2013)

Holiday participation rate based on urbanity levels of municipalities

Level of urbanity municipalities	Population size X 1000	Participation in longer holidays	Participation in holidays abroad
Very strong urbanity level	2 930	75%	70%
Strong urbanity level	4 370	74%	65%
Average urbanity level	3 240	75%	64%
Weak urbanity level	3 440	74%	62%
Not urban	1 750	72%	61%
Total	15 730	74%	65%

Source: CBS (2013)

Appendix 2: Average income levels for each district in Amersfoort
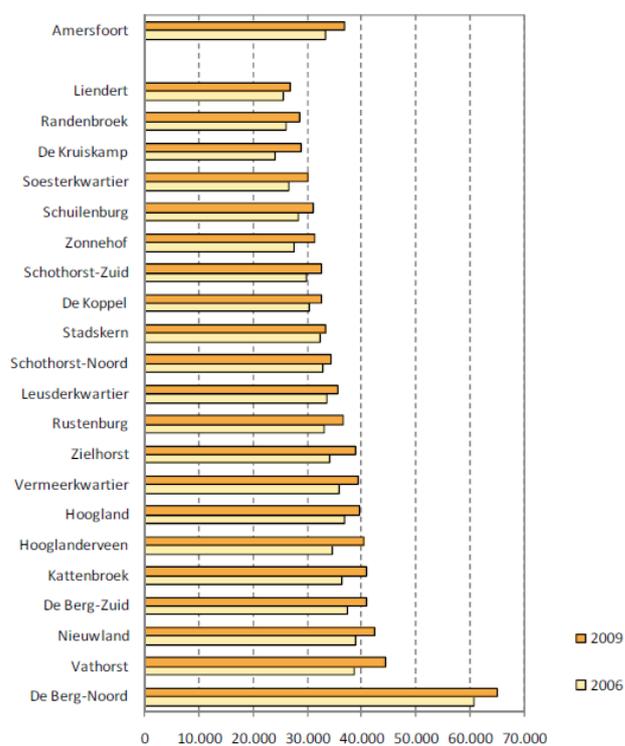
Source: Gemeente Amersfoort (2012)

Appendix 3: Percentage lower educated people in 2007

District	Percentage lower educated people
Nieuwland	24%
Leusderkwartier	29%
Liendert	44%
Amersfoort (total)	31%

Source: Gemeente Amersfoort (2012)

Appendix 4: Population pyramid of The Netherlands
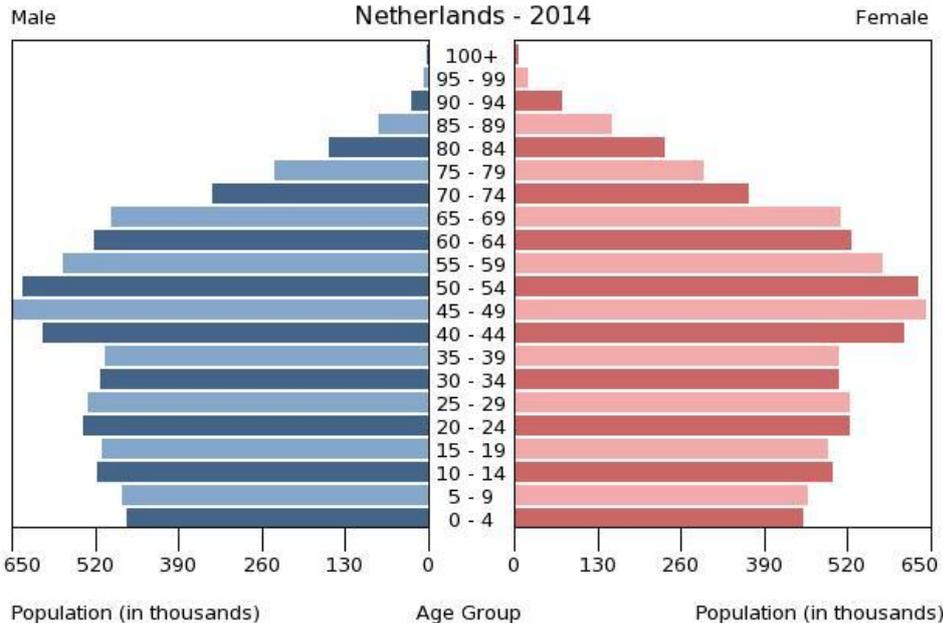
Source: CIA World Factbook (2014)

Appendix 5: Map of Russia

Source: Adapted from CIA World Factbook (2014)

Appendix 6: Interview with NRCe

Question 1: What do you personally think of Russia as a holiday destination?

I personally would not visit Russia for leisure, but this is mainly because I have been to the country so often. I visit Russia twice a year for business purposes and have been a tour guide in the country as well, so for me, there is nothing new about the destination.

Russia is a perfect destination for tourists who enjoy culture, poetry, architecture, ballet and opera. There are many options for tourists who enjoy art and culture, the Golden Ring and the city Saint Petersburg being two of the most popular options. Furthermore, cruises seem to get popular in Russia. The cruise between Moscow and Astrakhan, across the Volga is mostly recommended among Dutch tourists.

Of course, the country also has a beautiful natural features that are interesting for the nature-loving Dutch tourists. I personally love the nature in the Crimea area. Unfortunately, there are not many camping sites in Russia. The Russians usually camp in the free nature. I am not sure whether this matches the Dutch, more luxurious way of camping. This lack of luxury is normal in Russia. During the Soviet Union, making profit was perceived as 'dirty' and serving people in a restaurant was seen as a form of slavery. This feeling remained and influence the way the Russians perceive service. The service standards are way lower than we are used in Europe. Also, it is quite hard to organize activities in Russia. The Russian mentality is certainly something Dutch people need to get used to. Also it is quite hard to access some areas. In some occasions, the Trans Siberia express seems the only option.

Question 2: What core values fit the core identity of Russia?

I would describe the Russian identity as patriotic, orthodox, collective, politically autocratic, but definitely hospitable, although Russians usually first want to get to know you. Other values of Russia include the countries culture and the love of the Russians toward arts and literature.

3: What are the most important values of Russia as a holiday destination?

I think the hospitality of Russia should be mentioned as a description of the Russian destination. Furthermore, I would focus on the interesting cultural elements of the country, including the Russian literature, poetry, ballet, theater and architecture. The Russians enjoy stories and history.

4: Russia currently deals with a negative image in The Netherlands. What do you think caused this negative image among Dutch tourists?

I think there are three core elements that play a role in this negative image. First of all, I think there are still negative feelings towards the country because of the Cold War. Secondly, the current political regime of Putin has obviously harmed the country's image. But finally, I think the Russians themselves also have a negative influence on their country's image. The Russians want to 'play' Western, but actually, they do not fit in the Western culture. For example: they do visit luxurious and expensive hotels, but when they arrive there, they show asocial behavior or molest the entire hotel. This is a strange twist in the Russian way of thinking. They perceive England and other places in Europe as 'the promised land': everything seems easier in Europe. The economy seems more stable, the studies seem better and the works seems more interesting. Furthermore, in Europe, negative events of the past do not surround them. Then again, Russians who have lived in Europe for a couple of years and have found their place in the west, do have a positive effect on the image of Russia. Russians who have blended in a little are usually very good at promoting their home country among Europeans.

5: Do you think the incidents during the Netherlands-Russia year influenced the negative image in The Netherlands?

This year, which was supposed to celebrate a friendship has in fact harmed this friendship. Of course the incidents throughout the year harmed the image of Russia in the Netherlands. But also, the image of the Netherlands in Russia changed negatively, the image of the Netherlands was probably harmed even more. The incident which was the worst for our image was how the Dutch welcomed Putin. There were a lot of demonstrations on the day of his visit. The Dutch people were in the way of all the events on that day. A meeting in the restaurant even had to be held on another location. The Russians who saw this event in the news were flabbergasted by the 'disrespectful' behavior of the Dutch people. They did not understand that the Dutch government approved this behavior.

6: Do you think the current crisis in Ukraine influences the negative image of Russia in The Netherlands?

Yes, this definitely has an effect on the image of Russia as well, the annexation of the Crimea area being the worst incident. For restoring the image of Russia, this current unrest definitely has to calm down. But even then, the annexation of the Crimea area will leave marks in the image than cannot be restored.

7: How do you think the Dutch tourists are mainly influenced concerning their opinions on the destination Russia?

The Dutch tourists are mainly influenced by the media. This is actually one of the only influencers in this case. Of course the Dutch have some knowledge about the Russian history which may help them forming an image, and tourist organizations can always show pretty pictures or stories of a country to get tourists to think in the right direction. But because of the negative media attention, the main,

negative vision remains. Therefore, the range of negative incidents involving the country need to reduce.

8: Do you think the image of Russia among Dutch tourists can be improved. If so, how can this image be improved?

The political crisis needs to 'relax' first before we can think of actual recovery for the image of Russia. The Olympic games had a temporary effect on the image of the destination. Giving attention to these kind events can have the same effect again, even during the political crisis Russia is currently dealing with. Beautiful pictures and stories can always heal the pain, pictures of the Golden Ring, Saint Petersburg and information about beautiful cultural elements can help. But the Crimea remains annexed, and therefore, the negative undertone remains.

As pain healers, Russia can both be promoted as a culture destination and a natural destination. It is certainly an good destination for people who are interested in history, culture and arts, or for people who want to learn something. But I personally think that people who want to learn something about Russia already have been there.

Another reason holding tourists back from visiting Russia is the difficult visa regulation that the country uses. When you for example want to arrange a business visa, the company you work for, first needs to send a letter to ask for approval. The European Union has also caused this difficult regulation: tourists are free to visit Ukraine, but visiting Russia takes lots of paperwork.

9: Do you think the historical connection between Russia and the Netherlands can play a part in 'healing' the image of Russia among Dutch tourists?

Yes, this can help, although it does more for the image of The Netherlands in Russia, as the Russians love the historical stories bounding the two countries. The NRCe tries to restore the image of Russia by organizing trips, and giving, seminars, congresses and courses. Furthermore, the organization owns its own record label and publishing company. The NRCe tries to remain neutral in the negative incidents between Russia and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, the organization tries to focus on the mistakes the Dutch made, which harmed the bound between the two countries.

Appendix 7: Interview with Eurocult-lito Reizen

1: What do you personally think of Russia as a holiday destination?

"I think the destination Russia has a lot to offer, especially on the field of culture and art, but also – because of the country's huge surface – on the field of nature."

2: What activities or attractions do you recommend for Dutch tourists who want to visit Russia?

For Dutch tourists who seek culture, I mostly recommend the most well-known cities Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Moscow is interesting to the tourists because it is such an old city. The city is filled with beautiful historical elements and breathes the richness of the tsar regime. Saint Petersburg is interesting because of its bound with Europe, its beautiful architecture and canals. For nature tourism, the Crimea area shows beautiful nature elements. The recent annexation of this area definitely has brought some nature tourism benefits for Russia. Unfortunately, tourists are reluctant to visit this area due to this annexation and because of how this was presented in the media.

Also, Russia is well known for its ballet, music, poetry, architecture, music and circus. Of course I would recommend tourists visiting one of these artistic attractions.

3: What is the core identity of Russia? What core values do you think fit this identity the best?

The identity of Russia changed throughout its history. This change fits the Russian soul: the Russian are not afraid to try something new, and if they do so: they go for big changes. On the other hand, Russians, and especially people from Moscow feel very connected to their home country. The feel as if they are better than other people – such as Europeans, as their country is the biggest in the world, the leading land, the most important nation, the country who needs to show others what is the best way to live.

4: Which of these values are important for Russia as a holiday destination?

History is the most important value for Russia as a holiday destination. The different phases of the rich Russian history that the country displays, including beautiful art and architecture, are very interesting for western tourists. Also, the 'hugeness' of the country is a great value and the diversity of natural elements.

5: How can the holiday destination Russia best be described? (Is Russia more a destination for nature tourism or a destination for cultural tourism?)

Russia is definitely more a destination for culture than for nature, although the natural features of the country are beautiful as well. Most tourists visit the country for culture.

6: What type of tourist fits the destination Russia the best? (Adventurous tourists, cultural tourists, nature tourists?)

Russia is an excellent destination for culture tourism. The tourists who most often visit the destination are either older couples, whose children no longer come along on holidays, or younger couples without children. The older couples usually go on city trips or cruises to the main cities of Russia: Moscow, Saint Petersburg or the Golden ring cities. They usually love art, architecture and enjoy ballet, theatre, poetry and music. The younger couples most often seek for a combination of culture, nature and adventure. They combine trips to Saint Petersburg and Moscow with trips to the far east or Siberia, and usually travel with the Trans Siberia express. Actually, we almost never see people with children visiting the area.

7: Russia currently deals with a negative image in The Netherlands. Why do you think this is?

The negative image of Russia is of course linked to the current political crisis in Ukraine, combined with the somewhat stubborn attitude of president Putin. As a travel organization, we definitely notice the effects of this negative image: people are scared to visit Russia, while in fact, the country is not more dangerous as it was one year ago. When tourists have already booked a trip, they usually go anyway, but they do not experience as much fun preparing for the trip as they would to without this negative situation. Other people postpone their trip to Russia, waiting for calmer periods.

8: Do you think the negative image among Dutch tourists can be improved. If so, how can this image be improved?

I think it is hard to change the current, negative image without changing the political situation in Russia. The current crisis really holds back tourism for the destination. If the Russian government should deliberate more, this could already make a difference for incoming tourism.

9: What can tourism organizations do in order to stimulate tourism to Russia, despite the countries negative image?

All tourism organizations can do for now is informing people about the destination: telling tourists that this destination is still safe to visit, that they do not have to be scared. When people ask us if it is safe to go, we usually tell them that the country is not more dangerous than most South-European countries. This usually gives them a better feeling, but still, the negative news items give them bad feelings about Russia. Promoting the country even more will definitely not work, we should be open and honest in order to attract more tourists. We usually give information about Russia on fairs or on the internet.

Our organization Eurocult-lito the Russian traffic bureau. The organization of this bureau was done by Russians in the first place, but they stopped their work a few years ago. Now, we only keep the

website up-to-date, but furthermore, the bureau does not really have a function. In most cases traffic bureaus are financed by the country they promote tourism for. The Russian traffic bureau in the Netherlands does not receive any submissions and is therefore not able to work in the most optimal way. We therefore only provide information about Russia on the website, and refer potential visitors to our travel agency. It would be good for inbound tourism if the Russian Federation invested more in traffic bureaus such as this one. By organizing events or publishing information, the image of Russia could be improved.

Finally, events such as the Olympic games in Sochi have a very positive effect on the destination's image. As we saw during the winter games, there was a high amount of positive news about Sochi in the Dutch media. The atmosphere in Sochi was perfect, and no Dutch tourist who visited the destination back then would ever say that Russia was an unsafe place. Unfortunately, this positive 'bubble' did not last long, but the 2018 soccer world championship can definitely be another chance for Russia to improve its image.

10: Do you think the historical bound between Russia and the Netherlands can stimulate an improved image for Russia?

Travel organizations can use the connections and similarities between the two countries to stimulate a certain level of curiosity. People who visit the hermitage in Amsterdam, could for example become enthusiastic to visit the (more beautiful) hermitage in Saint Petersburg.

Appendix 8: Quantitative research data

Question 1: have you ever been to Russia?
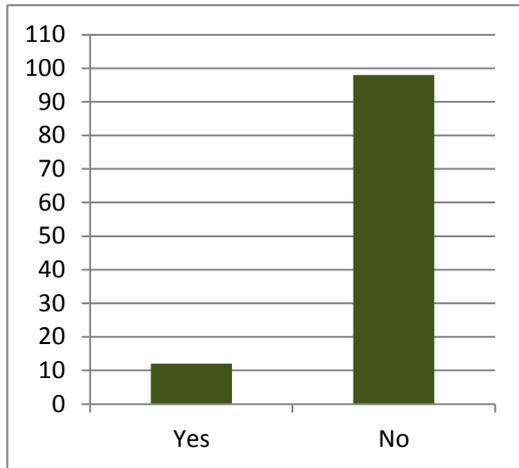
	Yes	No
18 – 34	2	30
35 – 54	7	39
55 – 74	3	28

	Yes	No
Male	9	45
Female	3	52

Question 2: what was the (main) reason for your last visit?
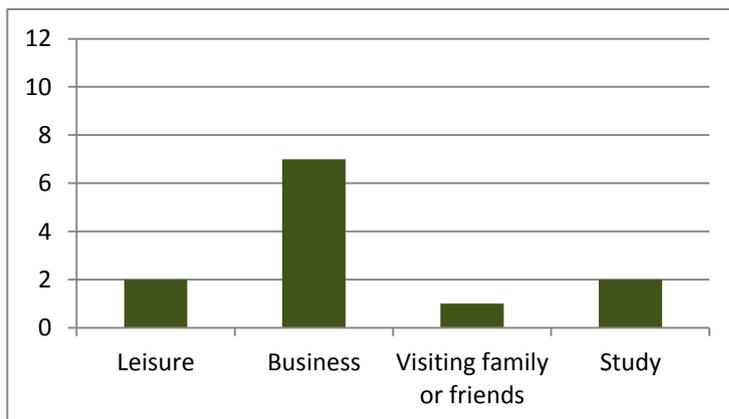
Question 3: to what extend is your opinion on Russia positive or negative?
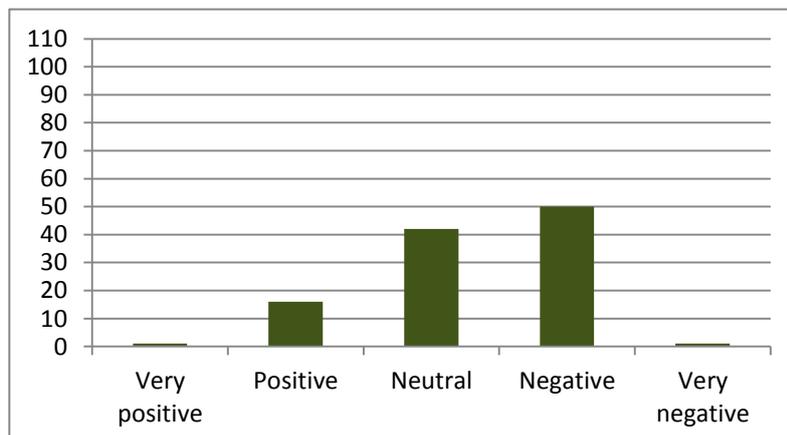
Question 4: did your opinion on Russia change during the past year?
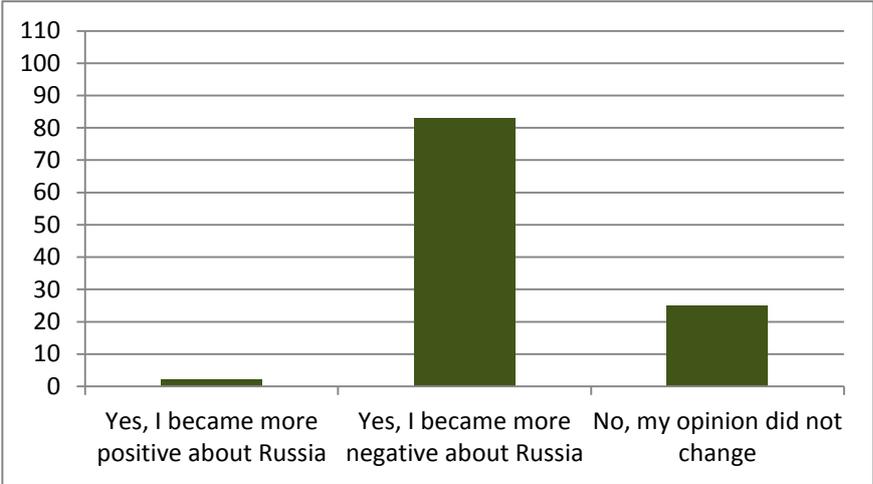
Question 5: which channels help you to form an opinion about Russia?
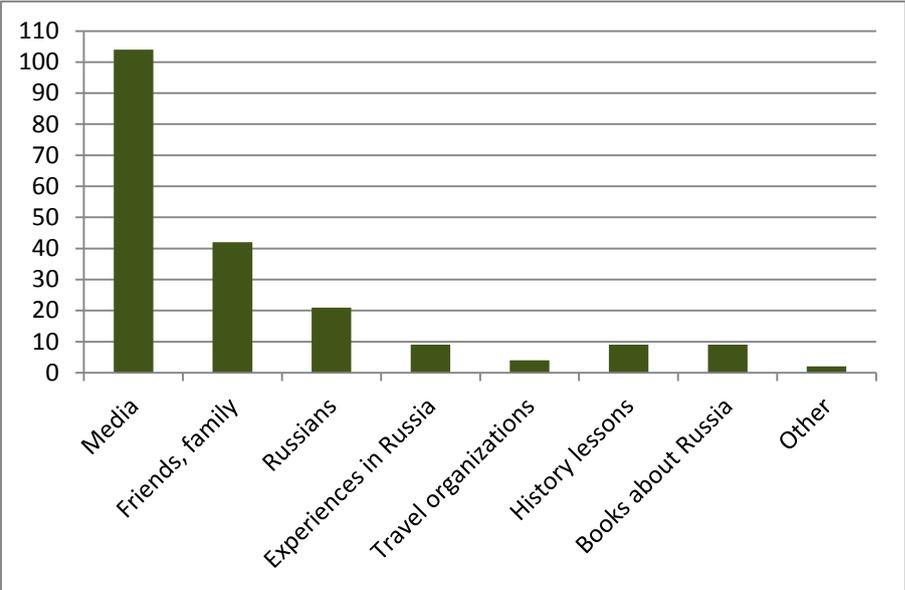
Question 6: what things/associations do you think of when you think of Russia?

Table 5.1: List of given associations (total male and female)

Associations (English)	Frequency
Putin	66
Cold weather/snow	26
Moscow	24
Vodka	21
Crimea	17
Olympic games	17
Huge country	17
History	16
Homophobia, gay discrimination	15
Communism	15
Kremlin	14
Red square	13
Saint Petersburg	12
Ukraine	12
Corruption	11
Beautiful architecture	10
Fur (coats and caps)	10
Red	9
Contrasts, inequality	8
Culture	8
Alcoholism and drunkenness	8
Music	8
Beautiful nature	7
Tsars	7
Poverty	5
Gazprom	5
Dangerous	5
Cold war	5
Dictatorship	5
Power display	5
Criminality	4
Arts	4
Matryoshka dolls	4
Suppression	4
War	4
Soviet Union	4
Ballet	4
Volga	4

Anti-gay propaganda law	3
Conservative	3
Discrimination	3
No freedom of press	3
Violence and aggression	3
Beautiful cities	3
Beautiful women	3
Trans Siberia Express	3
Booze	3
Stalin	3
Asocial	2
Boris Jeltsin	2
Dashcam	2
No freedom of speech	2
Glasnost	2
Hermitage	2
Literature	2
Loud	2
Mafia	2
Beautiful country	2
Netherlands-Russia year	2
Oil	2
Disagreement	2
Political crisis	2
Russian language (characters)	2
Siberia	2
Exciting	2
Strong people	2
Strict	2
Often in the news	2
Gold	2
Lada	2
Visa	2
Anna Polowna	1
Different folk	1
Arrogant	1
Bound with the Dutch royalty	1
Beet soup	1
Soldiers frozen to death	1
Hard/tough character	1
Friendly people	1
High hat	1
Immoral	1

Difficult	1
Jules Verne	1
Cossacks	1
Land of extremes	1
Good food	1
Lakes	1
Unreliable	1
Undiscovered	1
Restless	1
Unpredictable	1
Unfriendly people	1
Orthodox church	1
Peter the Great	1
Propaganda	1
Provocation	1
Raw	1
Richness	1
Red army	1
Russian dance	1
Russian folkloric costume	1
Bad driving skills	1
Bad economy	1
Bad government	1
Second World War	1
Lots of people suffering	1
Different climates	1
Annoying tourists	1
Nasty food	1
Vicious circle	1
Soccer	1
Black Sea	1

Table 5.2: Most frequently mentioned associations by male respondents

Association	Frequency
Putin	32
Vodka	13
Moscow	12
Crimea	11
Kremlin	10
Cold weather/snow	9
Olympic games	9
History	9
Huge country	8
Saint Petersburg	8
Communism	7
Corruption	7
Red	6

Table 5.3: Most frequently mentioned associations by female respondents

Association	Frequency
Putin	34
Vodka	17
Moscow	12
Huge country	12
Olympic games	9
Crimea	8
Cold weather/snow	8
Saint Petersburg	8
Corruption	8
Alcoholism, drunkenness	8
Gazprom	8
History	7
Red square	7

Question 7: to what extend do the following associations suit the destination Russia?

1 Beautiful and diverse nature
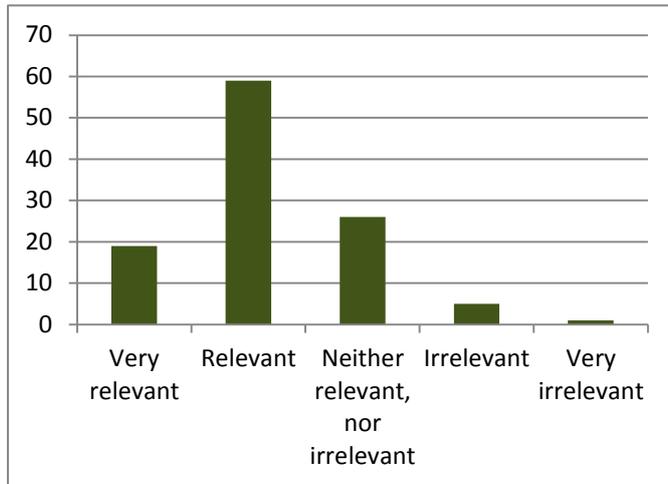
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	19
Relevant	59
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	26
Irrelevant	5
Very irrelevant	1

2 Interesting culture
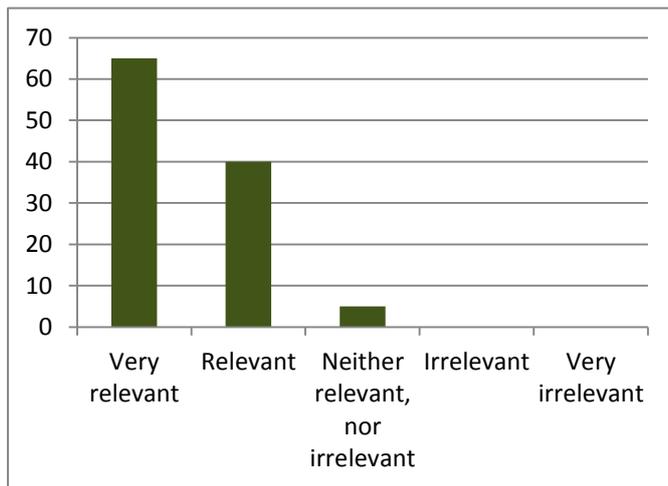
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	43
Relevant	58
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	9
Irrelevant	0
Very irrelevant	0

3 Rich history
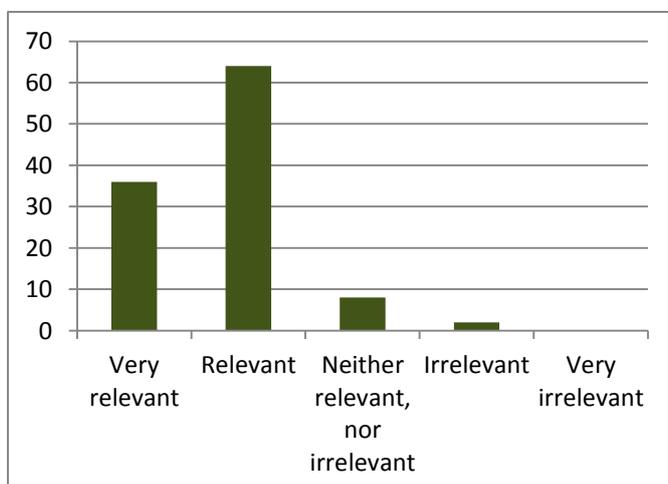
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	65
Relevant	40
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	5
Irrelevant	0
Very irrelevant	0

4 Historic cities
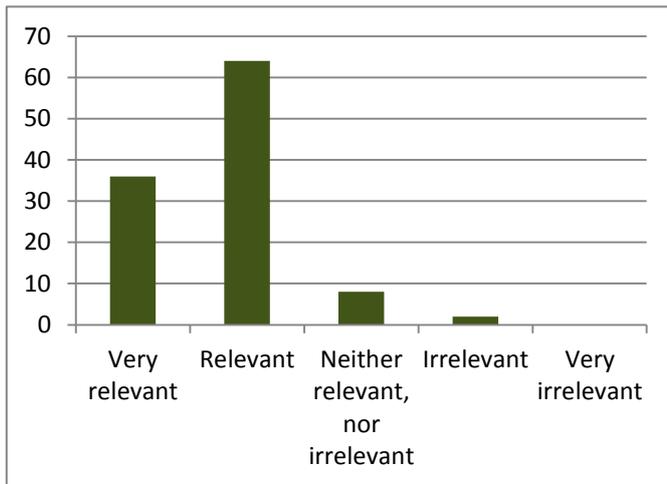
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	38
Relevant	64
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	8
Irrelevant	2
Very irrelevant	0

5 Modern cities
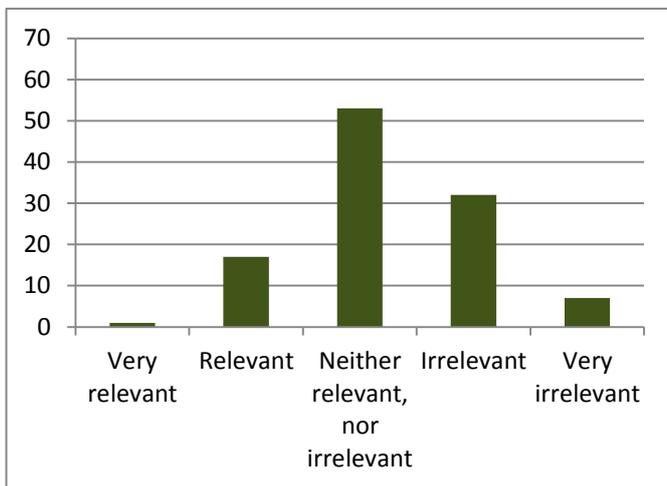
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	1
Relevant	17
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	53
Irrelevant	32
Very irrelevant	7

6 Beautiful architecture
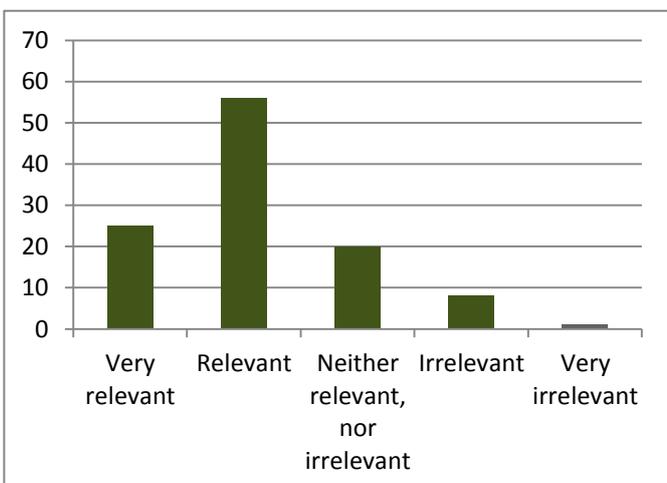
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	25
Relevant	56
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	20
Irrelevant	8
Very irrelevant	1

7 Religion, orthodox churches
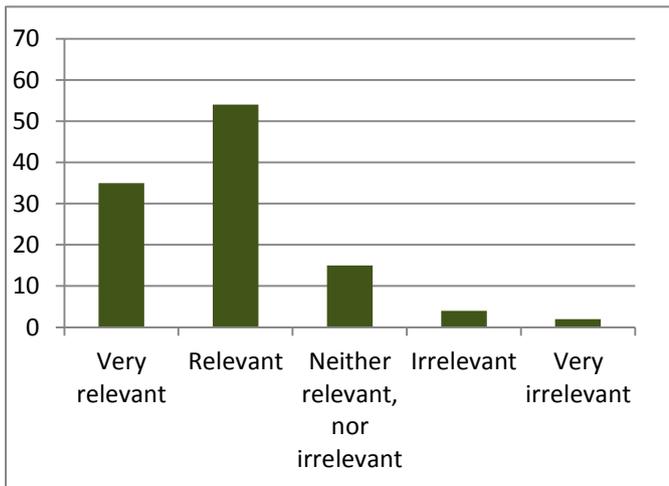
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	35
Relevant	54
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	15
Irrelevant	4
Very irrelevant	2

8 Palaces and royal gardens
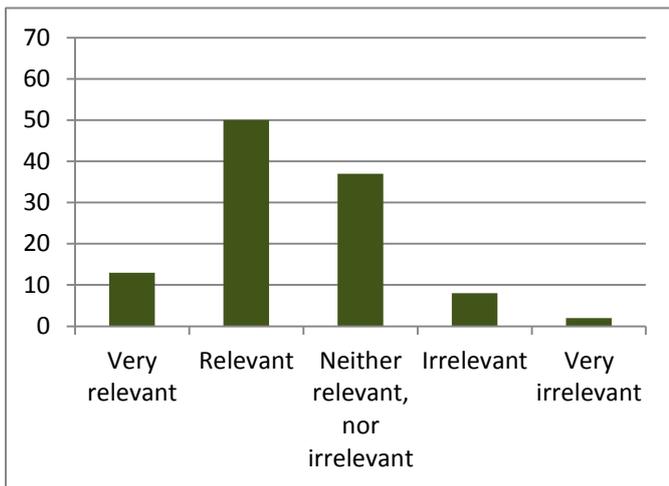
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	13
Relevant	50
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	37
Irrelevant	8
Very irrelevant	2

9 Historic monuments, cultural heritage
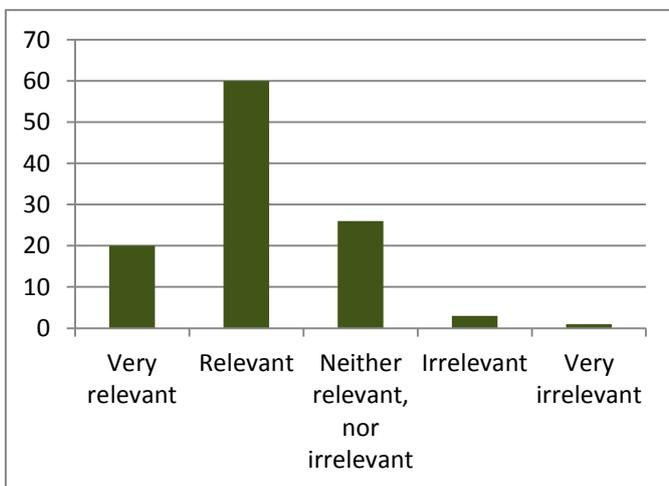
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	20
Relevant	60
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	26
Irrelevant	3
Very irrelevant	1

10 Visual arts
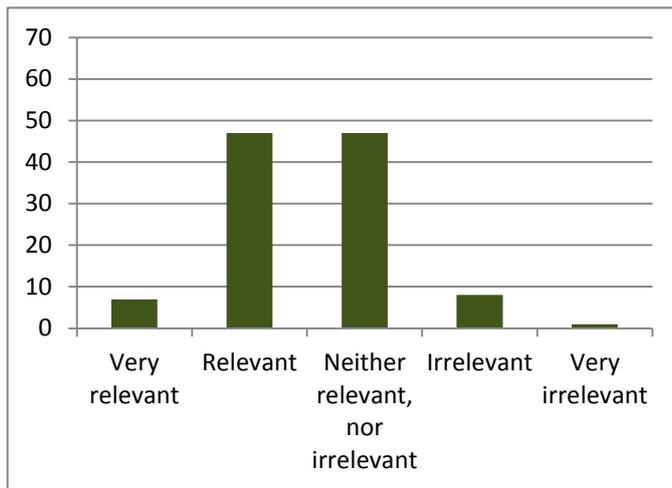
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	7
Relevant	47
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	47
Irrelevant	8
Very irrelevant	1

11 Music
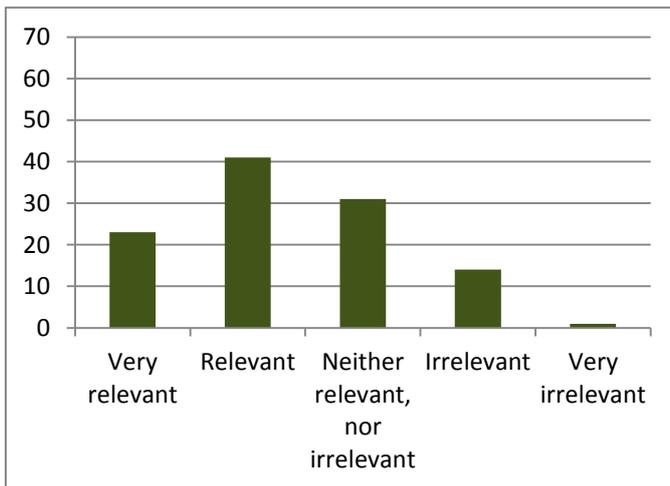
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	23
Relevant	41
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	31
Irrelevant	14
Very irrelevant	1

12 Poetry
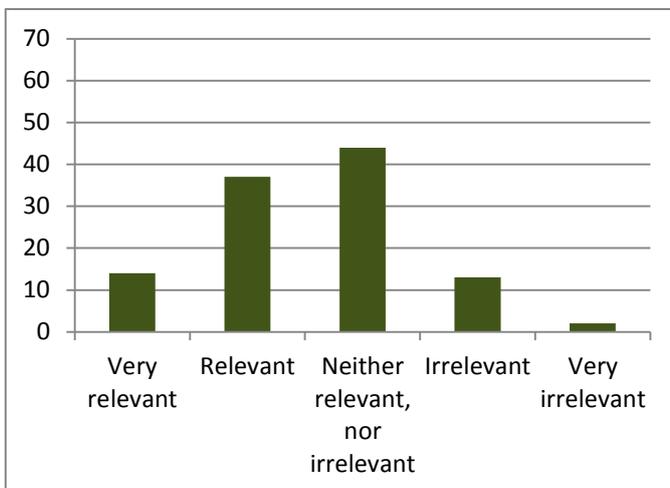
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	14
Relevant	37
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	44
Irrelevant	13
Very irrelevant	2

13 Literature
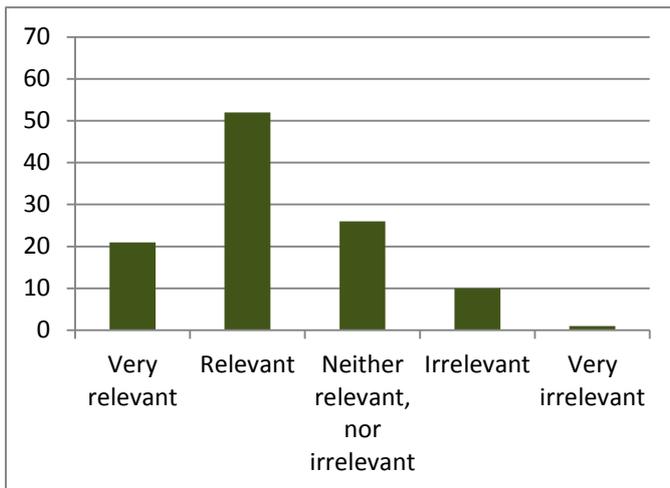
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	21
Relevant	52
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	26
Irrelevant	10
Very irrelevant	1

14 Dance, ballet
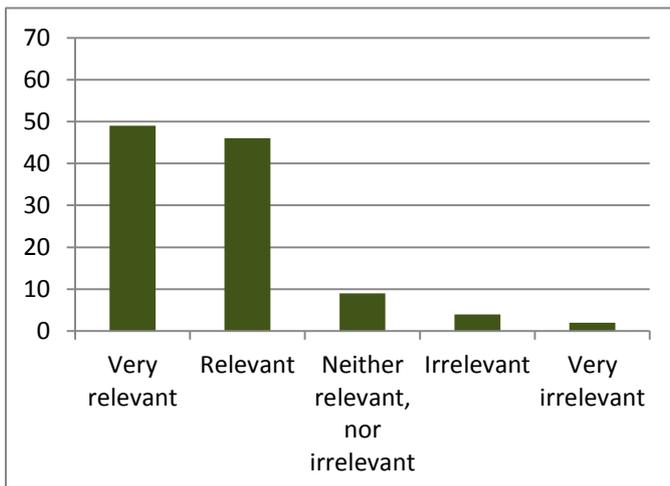
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	49
Relevant	46
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	9
Irrelevant	4
Very irrelevant	2

15 Fashion
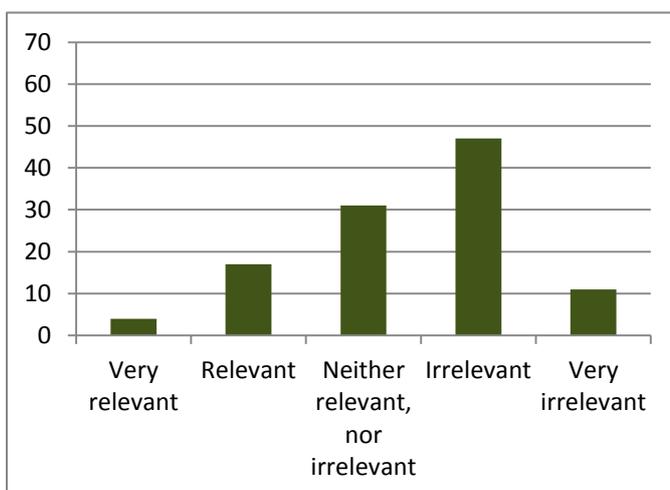
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	4
Relevant	17
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	31
Irrelevant	47
Very irrelevant	11

16 Beach
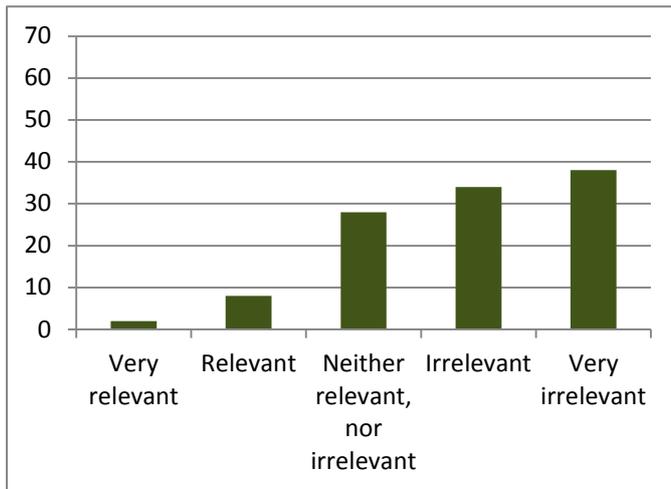
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	2
Relevant	8
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	28
Irrelevant	34
Very irrelevant	38

17 Sports
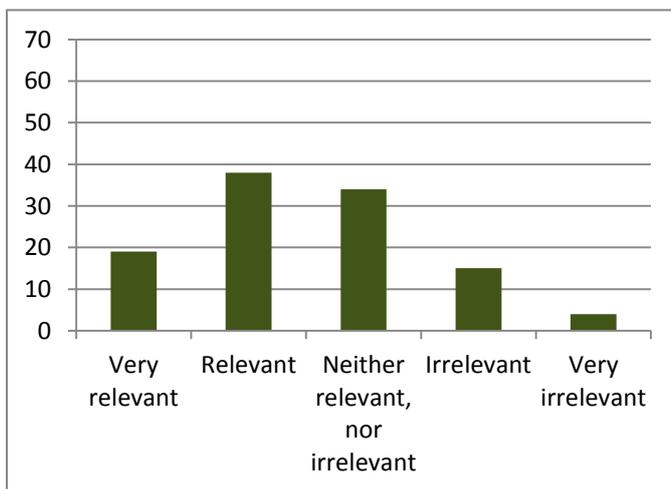
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	19
Relevant	38
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	34
Irrelevant	18
Very irrelevant	4

18 Outdoor sports
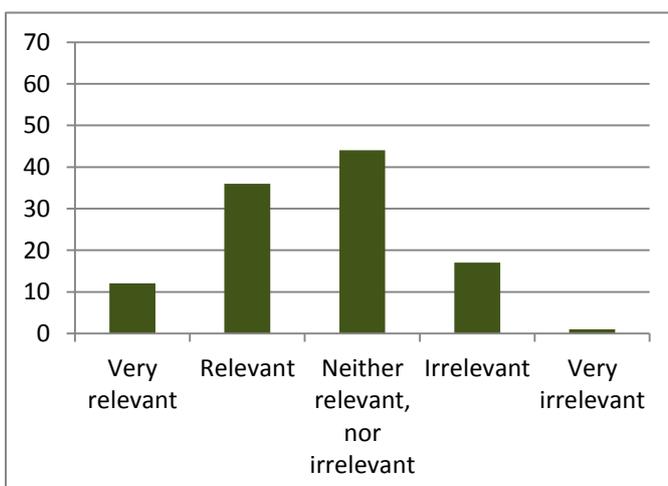
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	12
Relevant	36
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	44
Irrelevant	17
Very irrelevant	1

19 Winter sports
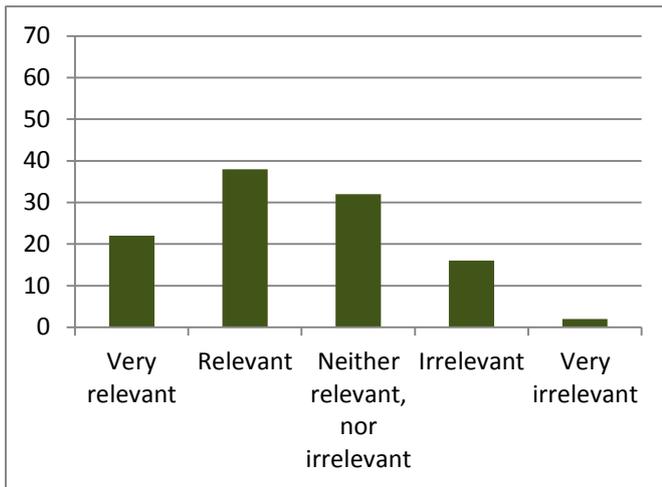
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	22
Relevant	38
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	32
Irrelevant	16
Very irrelevant	2

20 Cold weather, snow
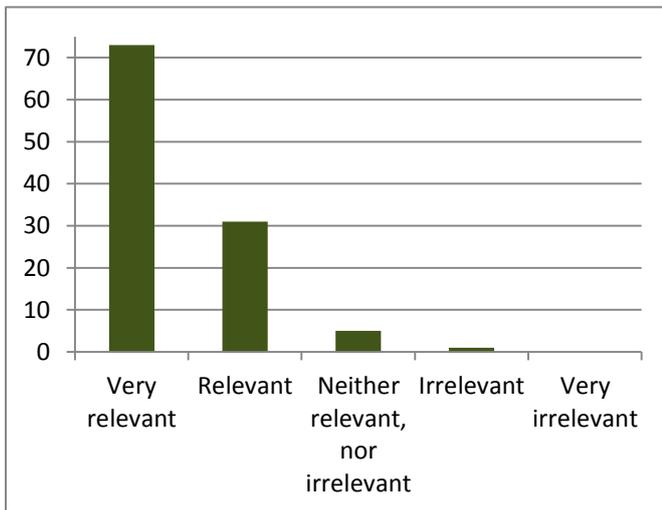
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	73
Relevant	31
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	5
Irrelevant	1
Very irrelevant	0

21 Various climates
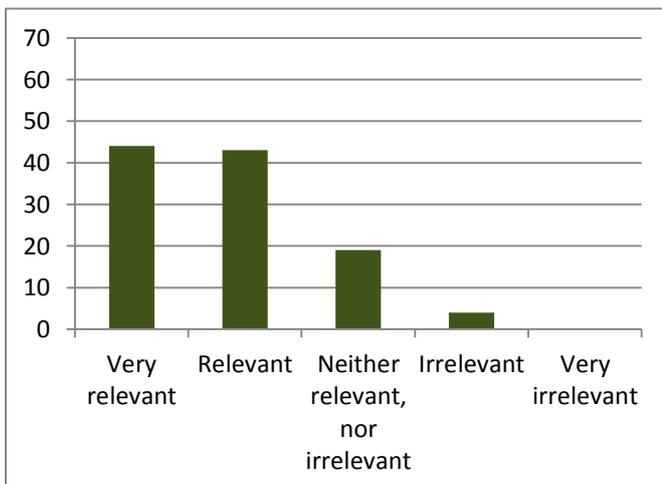
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	44
Relevant	43
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	19
Irrelevant	4
Very irrelevant	0

22 Authenticity
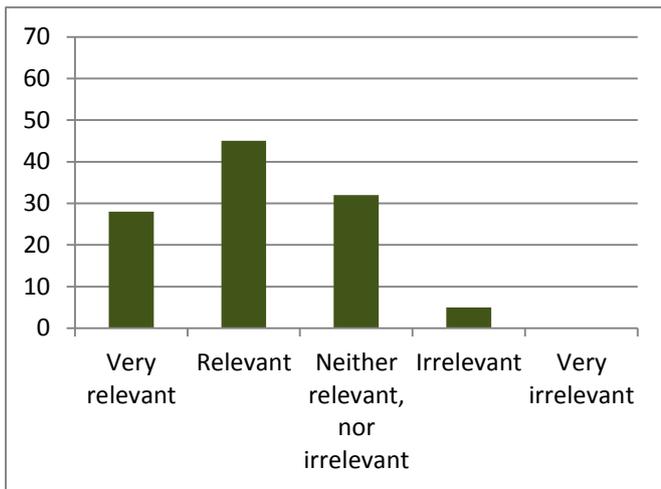
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	28
Relevant	45
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	32
Irrelevant	5
Very irrelevant	0

23 Pride
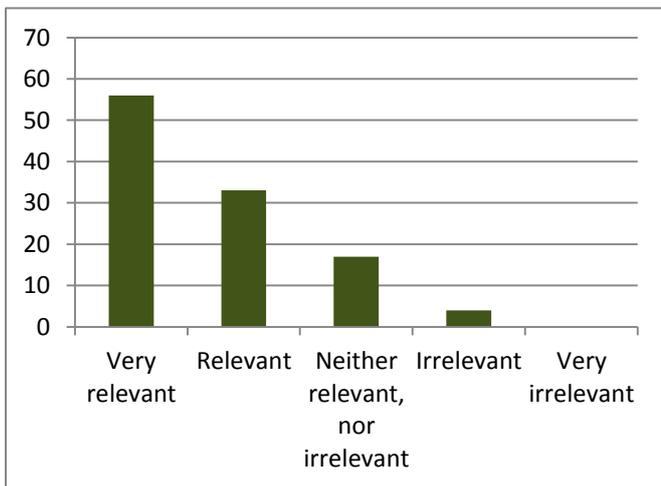
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	56
Relevant	33
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	17
Irrelevant	4
Very irrelevant	0

24 Splendor, glory
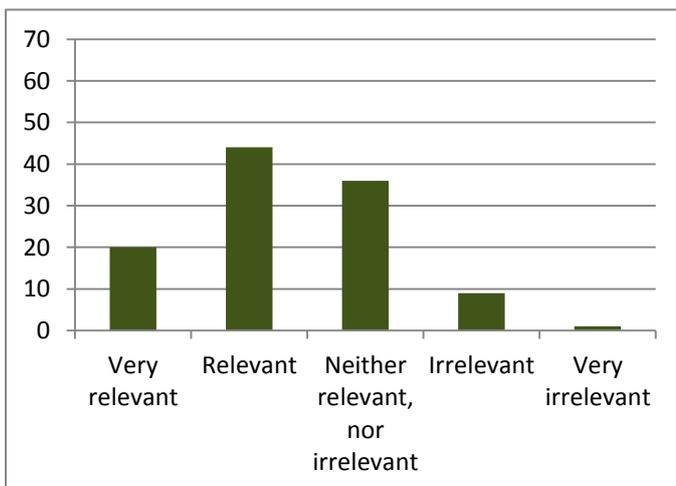
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	20
Relevant	44
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	36
Irrelevant	9
Very irrelevant	1

25 Power
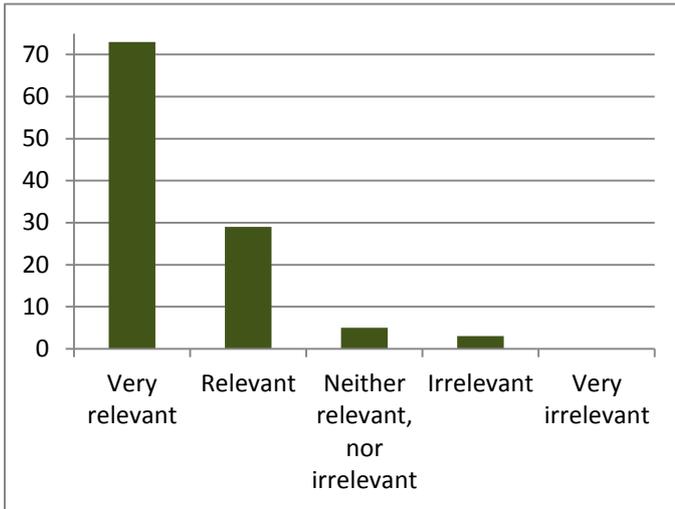
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	73
Relevant	29
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	5
Irrelevant	3
Very irrelevant	0

26 Passion
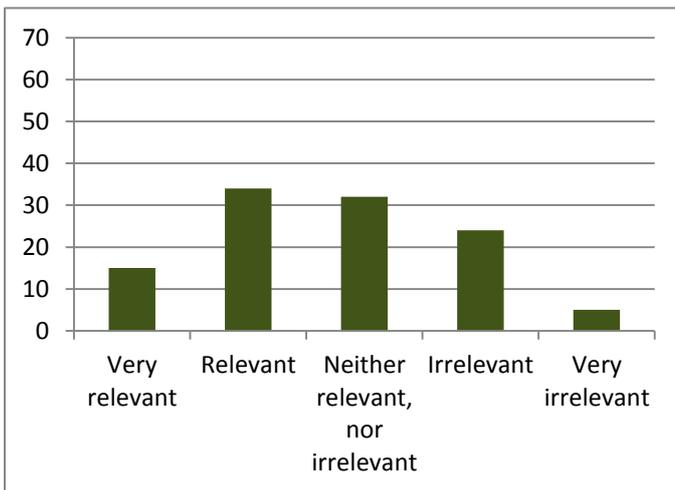
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	15
Relevant	34
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	32
Irrelevant	24
Very irrelevant	5

27 Romance
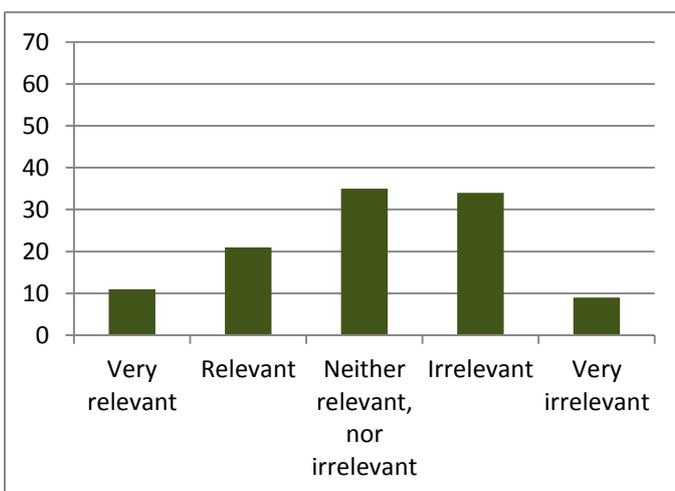
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	11
Relevant	21
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	35
Irrelevant	34
Very irrelevant	9

28 Friendliness
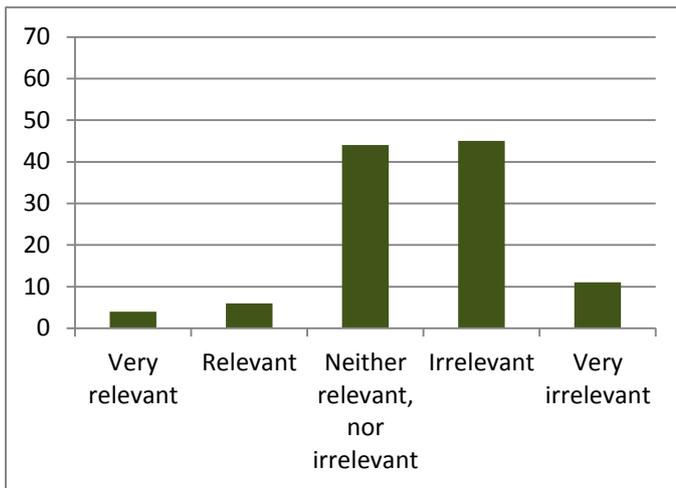
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	4
Relevant	6
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	44
Irrelevant	45
Very irrelevant	11

29 Adventure
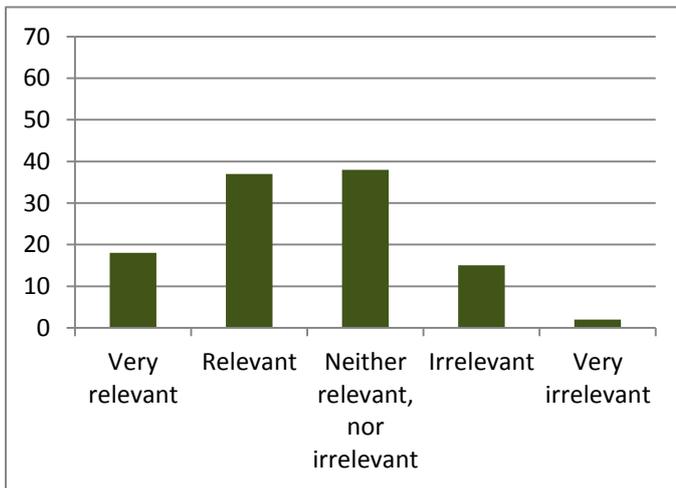
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	18
Relevant	37
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	38
Irrelevant	15
Very irrelevant	2

30 Rest
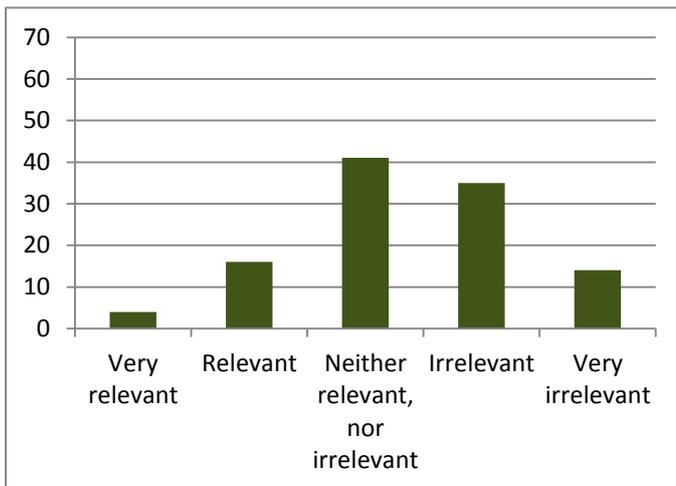
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	4
Relevant	16
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	41
Irrelevant	35
Very irrelevant	14

31 Luxury
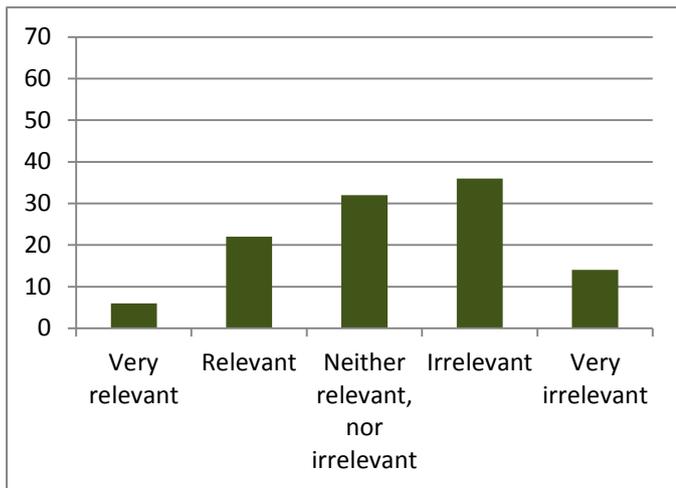
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	6
Relevant	22
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	32
Irrelevant	36
Very irrelevant	14

32 Wealth, Richness
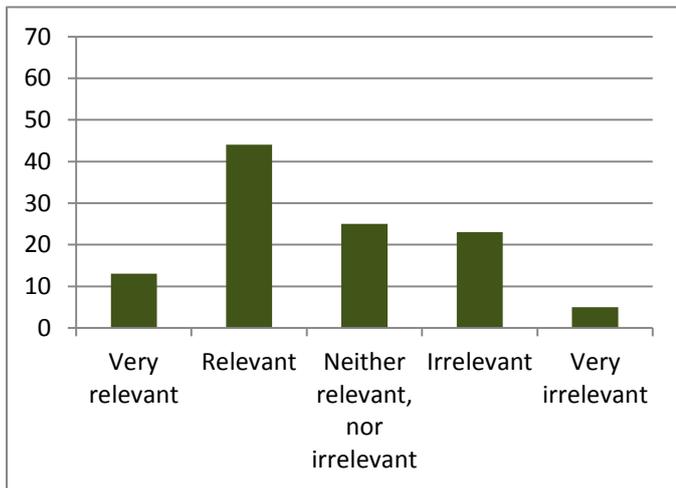
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	13
Relevant	44
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	25
Irrelevant	23
Very irrelevant	5

33 Poverty
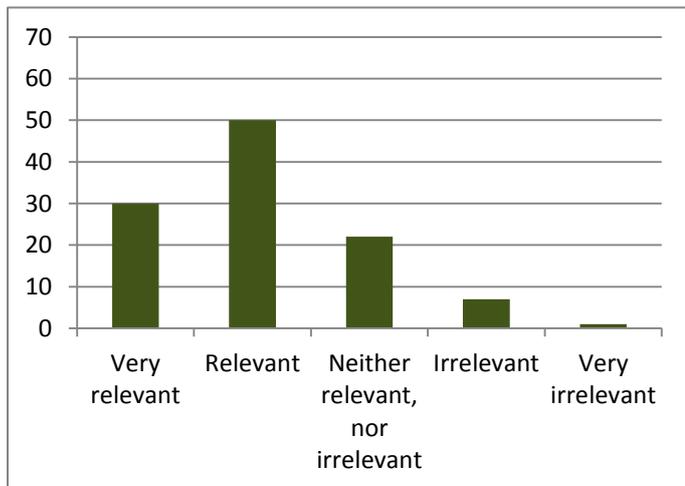
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	30
Relevant	50
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	22
Irrelevant	7
Very irrelevant	1

34 Expensive
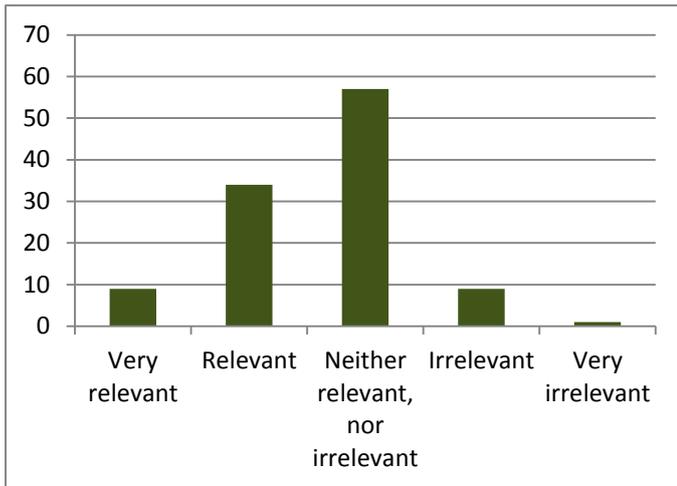
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	9
Relevant	34
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	57
Irrelevant	9
Very irrelevant	1

35 Cheap
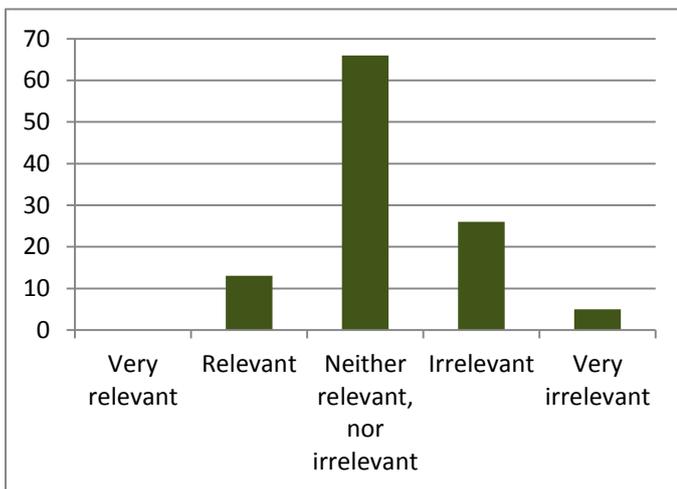
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	0
Relevant	13
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	66
Irrelevant	26
Very irrelevant	5

36 Tasty meals
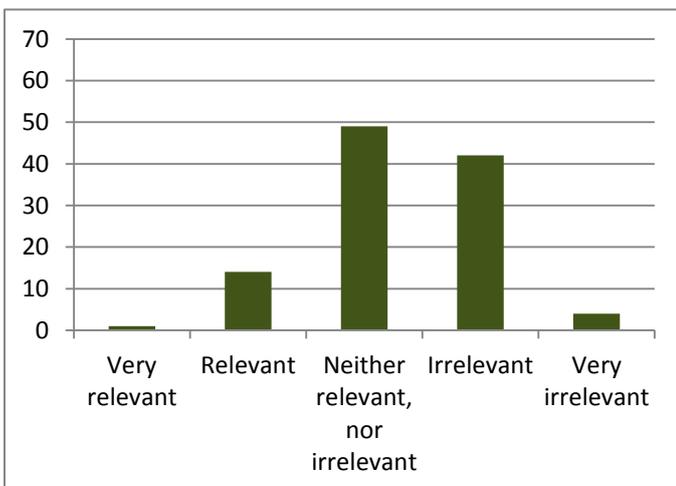
Answer	Frequency
Very relevant	1
Relevant	14
Neither relevant, nor irrelevant	49
Irrelevant	42
Very irrelevant	4

Question 8: to what extend are the following elements important for you when planning a holiday?

1 Beautiful and diverse nature
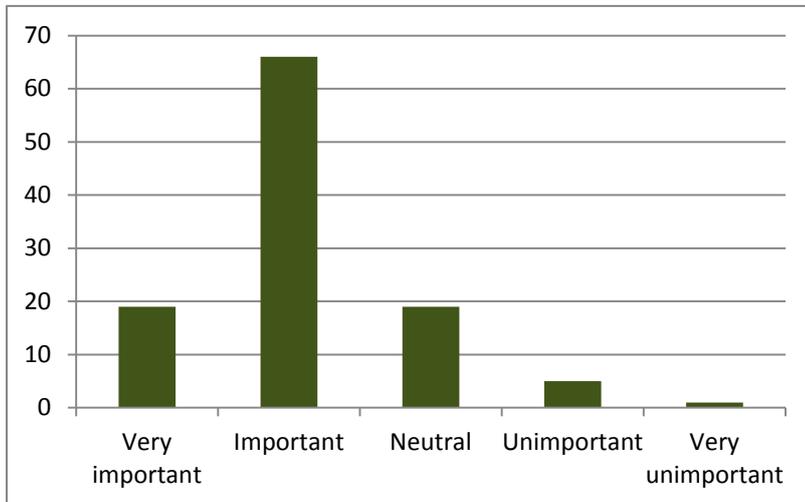
Answer	Frequency
Very important	19
Important	66
Neutral	19
Unimportant	5
Very unimportant	1

2 Beautiful and interesting culture
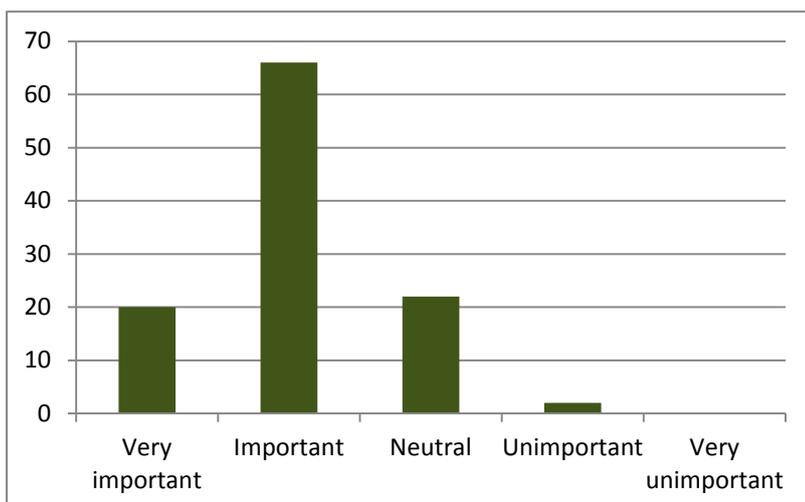
Answer	Frequency
Very important	20
Important	66
Neutral	22
Unimportant	2
Very unimportant	0

3 Rich history
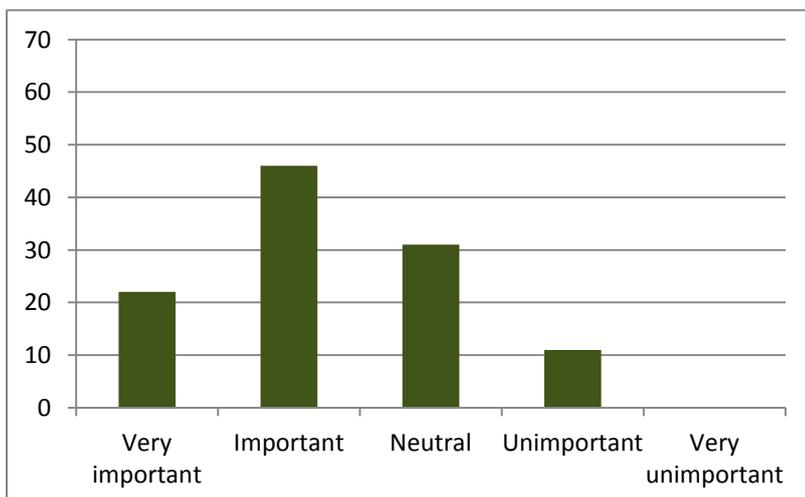
Answer	Frequency
Very important	22
Important	46
Neutral	31
Unimportant	11
Very unimportant	0

4 Historic cities
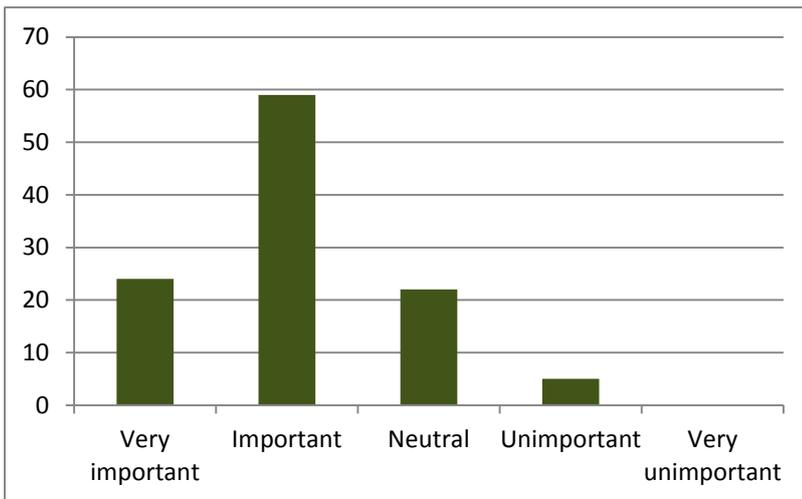
Answer	Frequency
Very important	24
Important	59
Neutral	22
Unimportant	5
Very unimportant	0

5 Modern cities
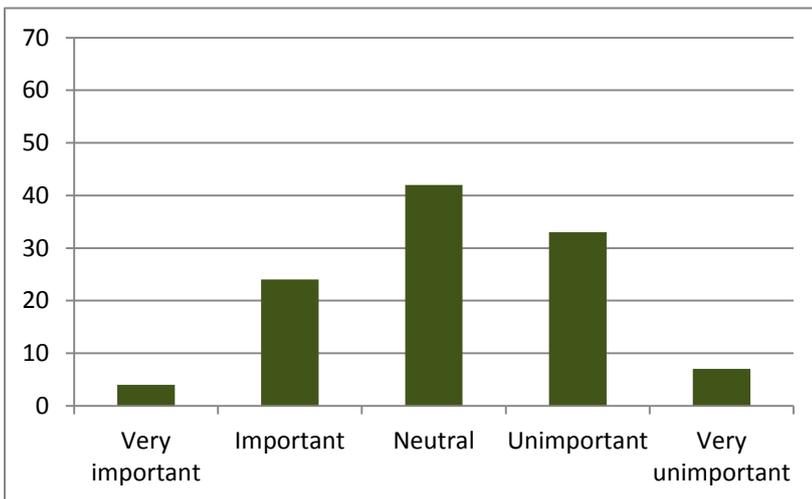
Answer	Frequency
Very important	4
Important	24
Neutral	42
Unimportant	33
Very unimportant	7

6 Beautiful architecture
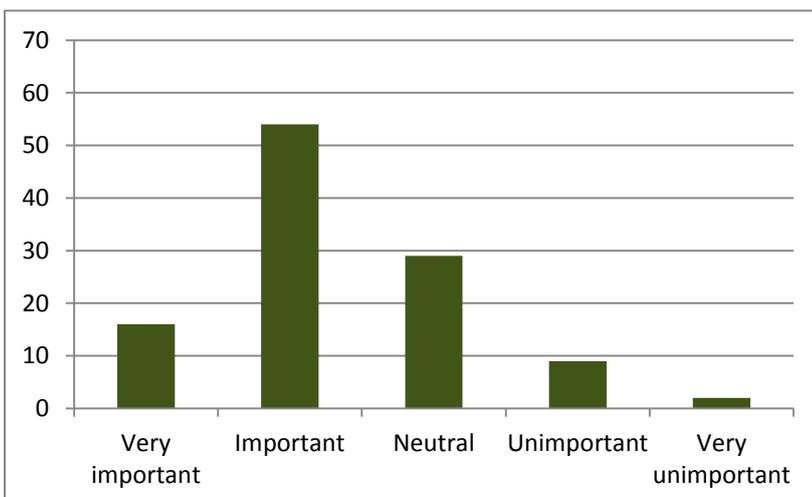
Answer	Frequency
Very important	16
Important	54
Neutral	29
Unimportant	9
Very unimportant	2

7 Churches and cathedrals
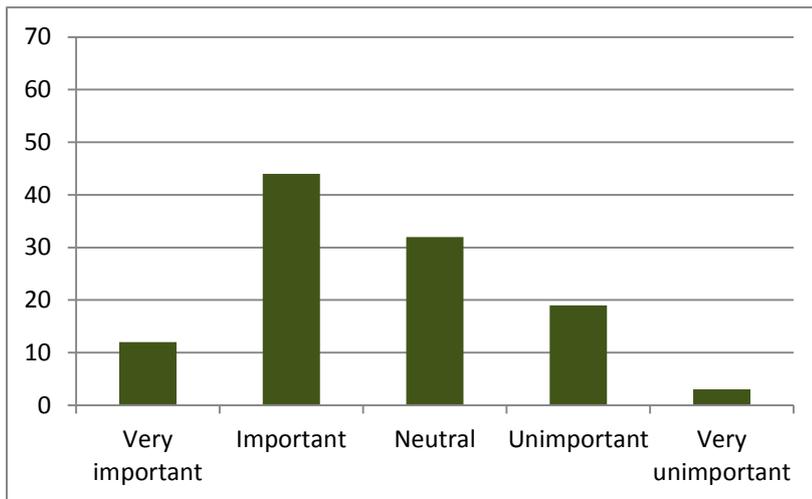
Answer	Frequency
Very important	12
Important	44
Neutral	32
Unimportant	19
Very unimportant	3

8 Museums and visual arts
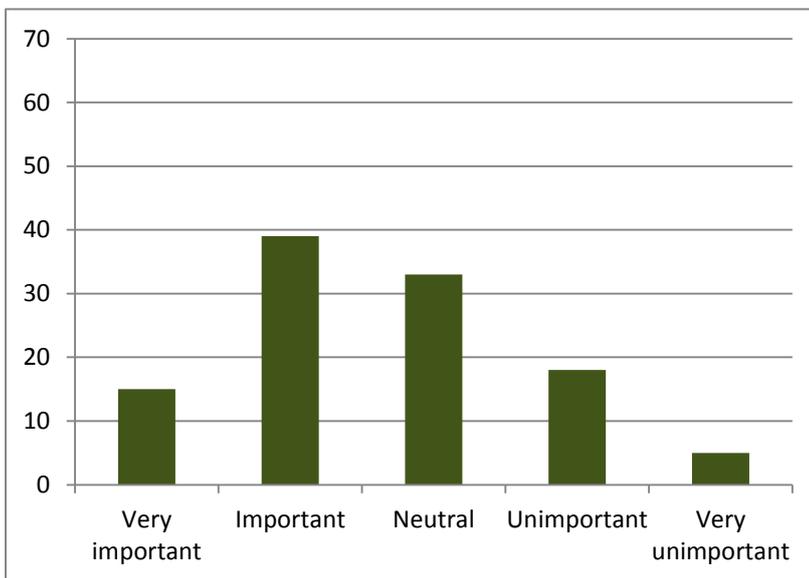
Answer	Frequency
Very important	15
Important	39
Neutral	33
Unimportant	18
Very unimportant	5

9 Theatre and dance
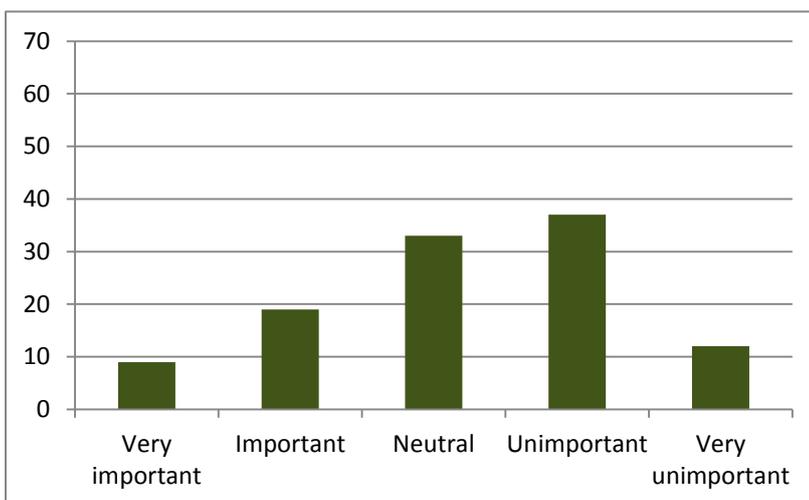
Answer	Frequency
Very important	9
Important	19
Neutral	33
Unimportant	37
Very unimportant	12

10 Festivals and clubbing
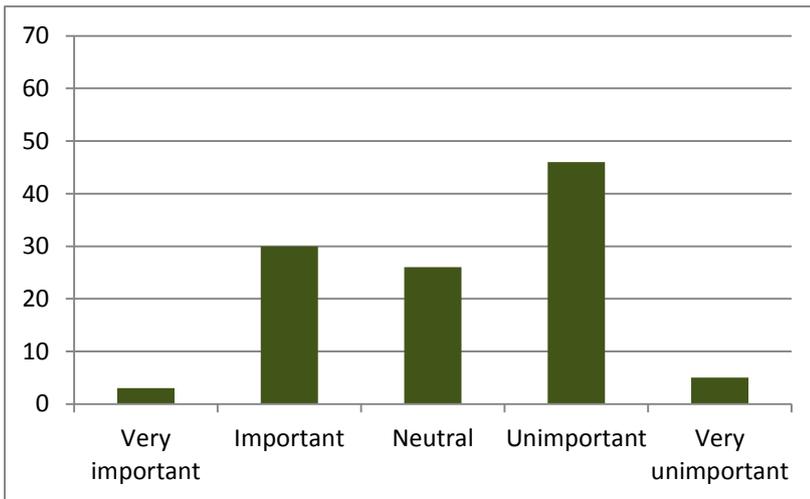
Answer	Frequency
Very important	3
Important	30
Neutral	26
Unimportant	46
Very unimportant	5

11 Sportive activities
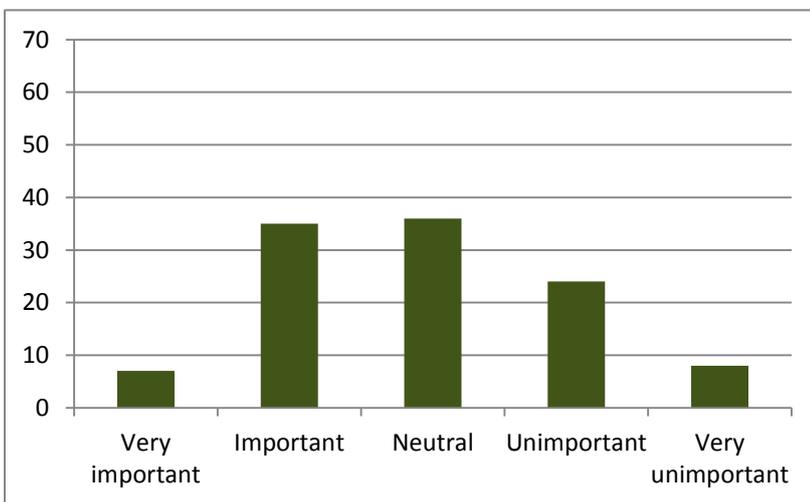
Answer	Frequency
Very important	7
Important	35
Neutral	36
Unimportant	24
Very unimportant	8

12 Sport events
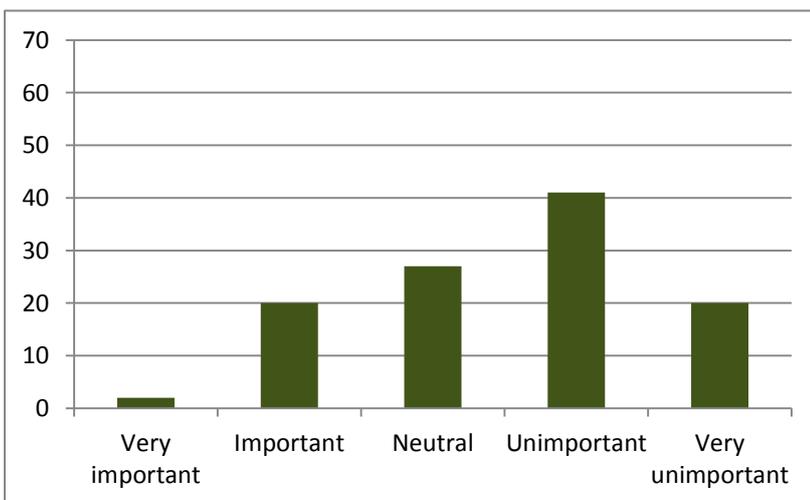
Answer	Frequency
Very important	2
Important	20
Neutral	27
Unimportant	41
Very unimportant	20

13 Tasty (local) meals and delicacies
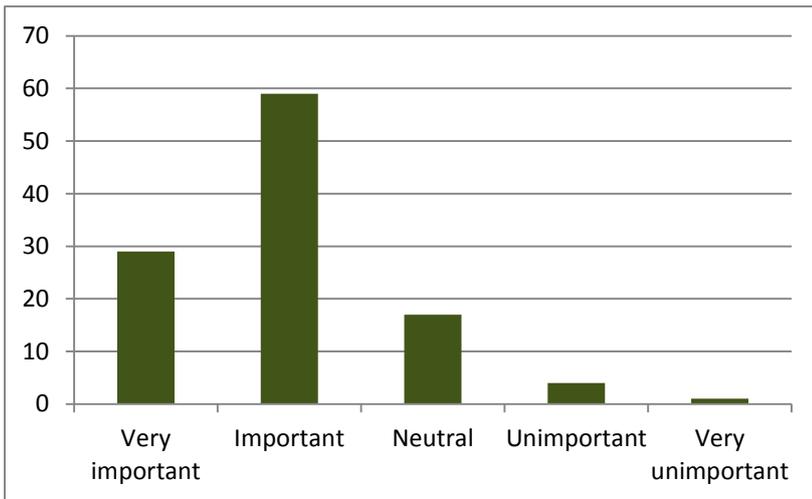
Answer	Frequency
Very important	29
Important	59
Neutral	17
Unimportant	4
Very unimportant	1

14 Folklore
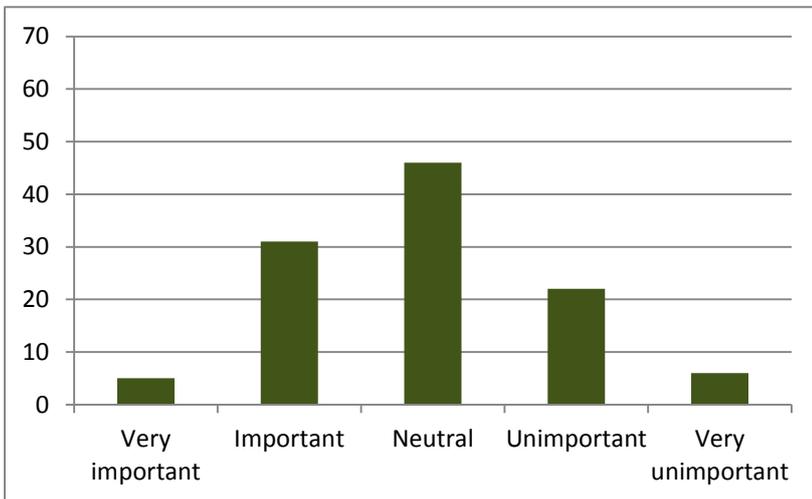
Answer	Frequency
Very important	5
Important	31
Neutral	46
Unimportant	22
Very unimportant	6

15 Fashion
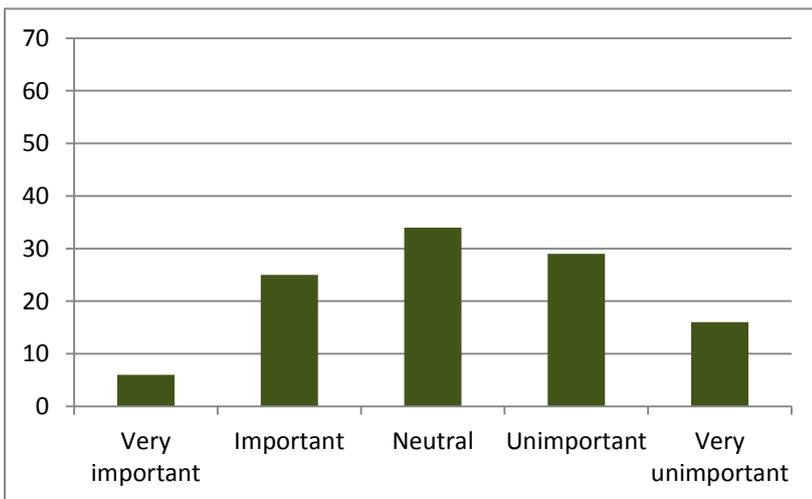
Answer	Frequency
Very important	6
Important	25
Neutral	34
Unimportant	29
Very unimportant	16

16 Adventure
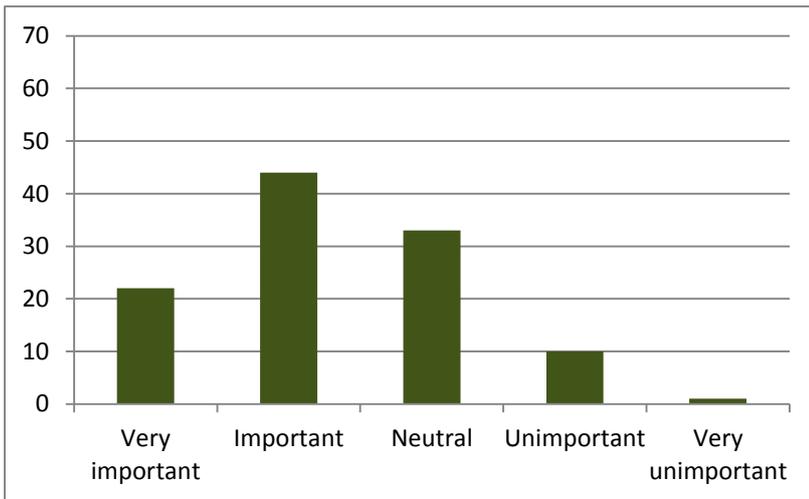
Answer	Frequency
Very important	22
Important	44
Neutral	33
Unimportant	10
Very unimportant	1

17 Safety
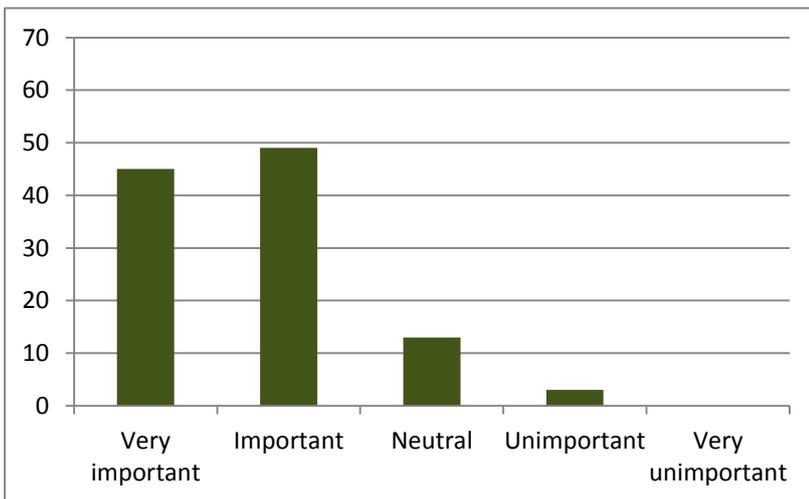
Answer	Frequency
Very important	45
Important	49
Neutral	13
Unimportant	3
Very unimportant	0

18 Luxury and comfort
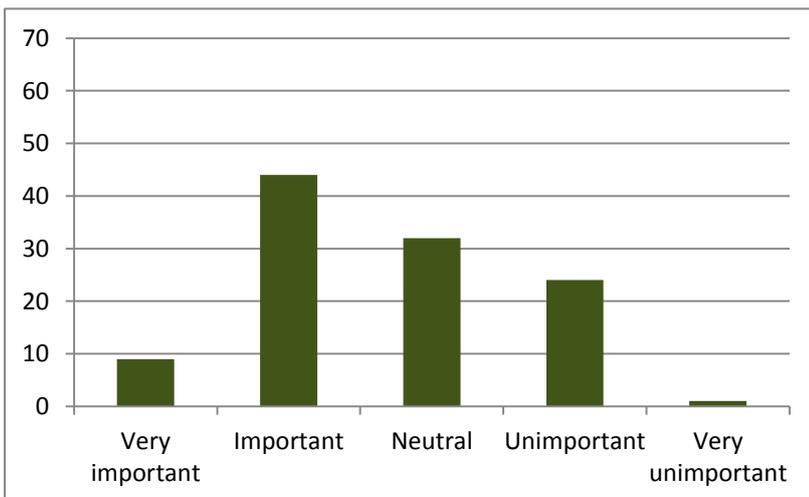
Answer	Frequency
Very important	9
Important	44
Neutral	32
Unimportant	24
Very unimportant	1

19 Friendly local population
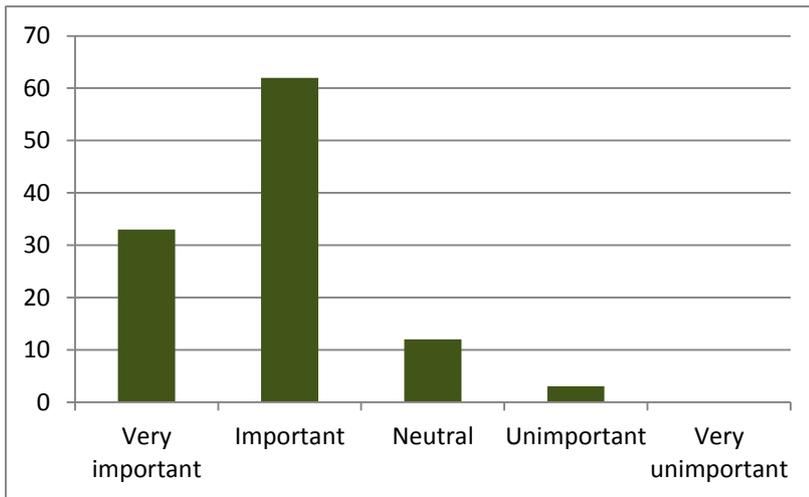
Answer	Frequency
Very important	33
Important	62
Neutral	12
Unimportant	3
Very unimportant	0

Question 9: Do you agree or disagree upon the following statements?

1: Russia is an excellent destination for nature tourism
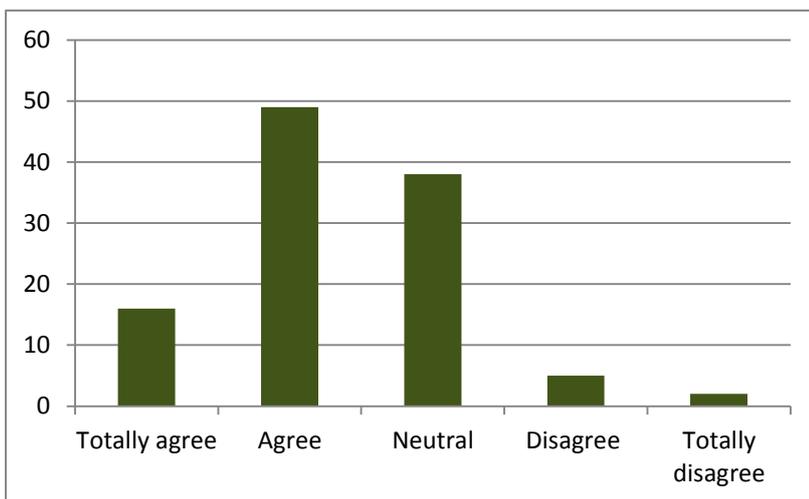
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	16
Agree	49
Neutral	38
Disagree	5
Totally disagree	2

2 Russia is an excellent destination for culture tourism
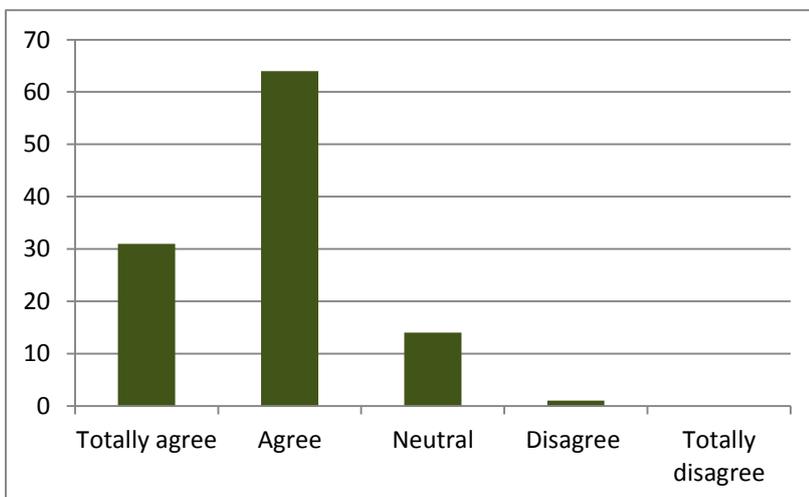
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	31
Agree	64
Neutral	14
Disagree	1
Totally disagree	0

3 Russia is an excellent destination for wellness tourism
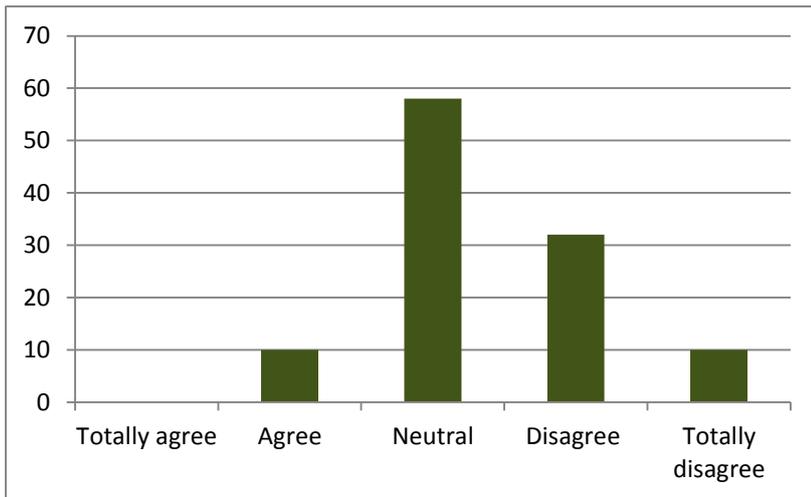
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	0
Agree	10
Neutral	58
Disagree	32
Totally disagree	10

4 Russia is an excellent destination for adventurous holidays
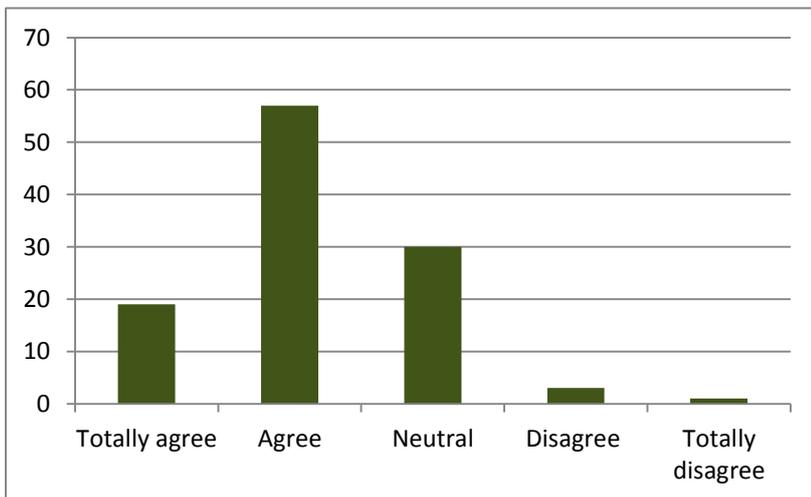
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	19
Agree	57
Neutral	30
Disagree	3
Totally disagree	1

5 Russia is an excellent destination for beach holidays
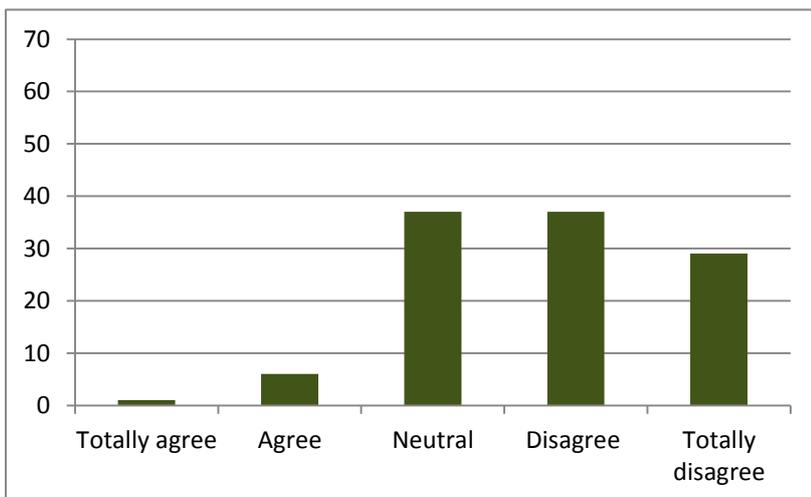
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	1
Agree	6
Neutral	37
Disagree	37
Totally disagree	29

6 Russia is an excellent destination for summer holidays
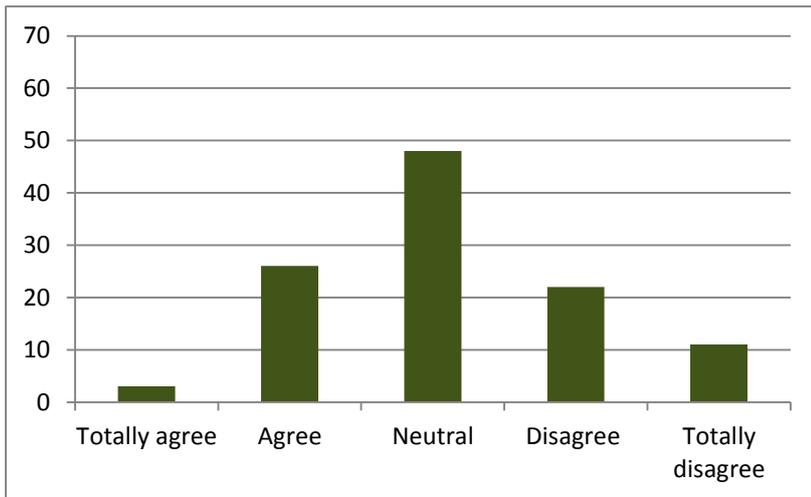
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	3
Agree	26
Neutral	48
Disagree	22
Totally disagree	11

7 Russia is an excellent destination for winter holidays
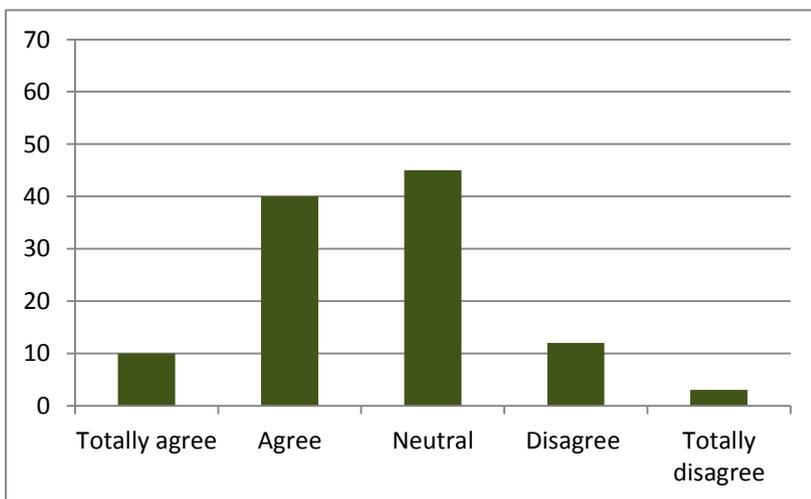
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	10
Agree	40
Neutral	45
Disagree	12
Totally disagree	3

8 Russia is an excellent destination for sportive and active holidays
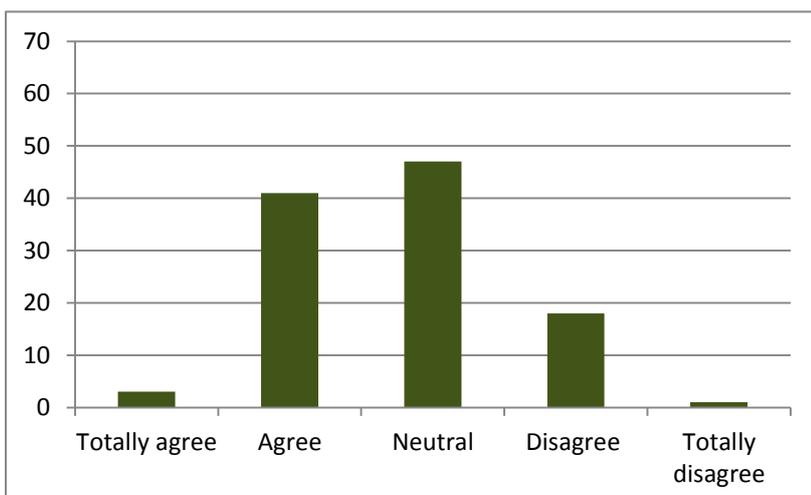
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	3
Agree	41
Neutral	47
Disagree	18
Totally disagree	1

9 A holiday to Russia makes me a trendsetter
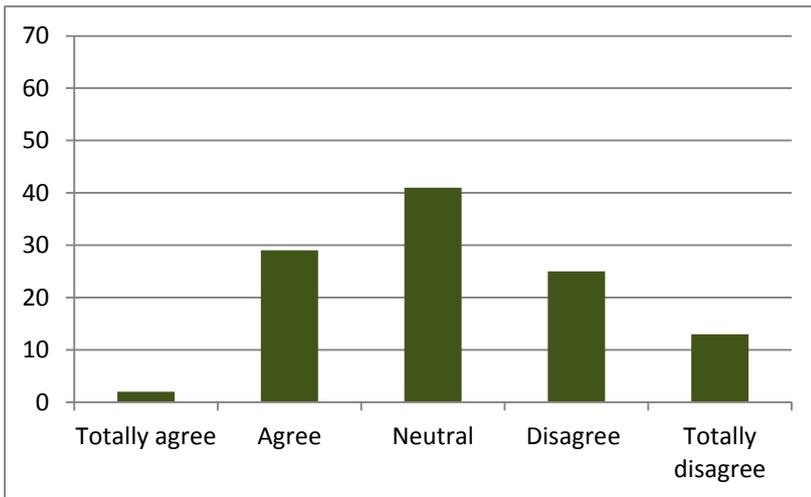
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	2
Agree	29
Neutral	41
Disagree	25
Totally disagree	13

10 A holiday in Russia is interesting and educational
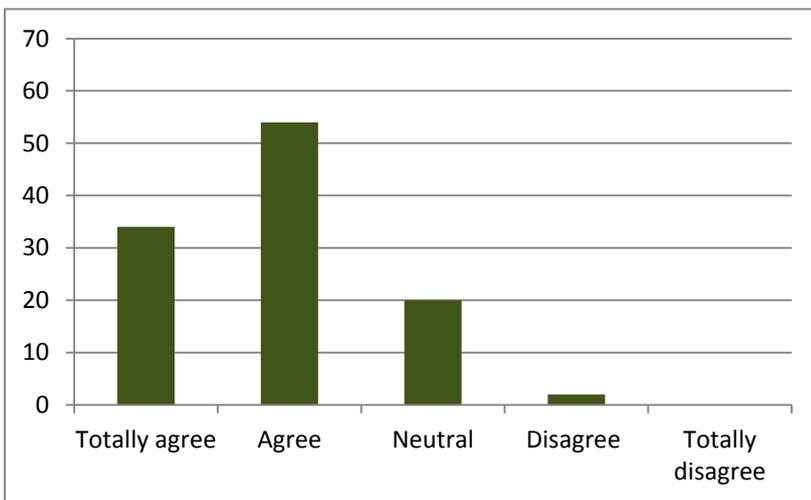
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	34
Agree	54
Neutral	20
Disagree	2
Totally disagree	0

11 A holiday in Russia is safe
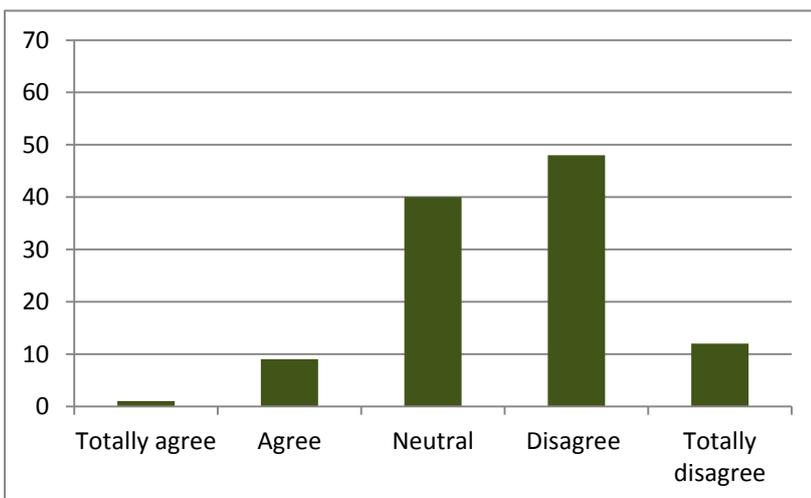
Answer	Frequency
Totally agree	1
Agree	9
Neutral	40
Disagree	48
Totally disagree	12

Question 10: Is it likely that you will ever book a holiday to Russia?
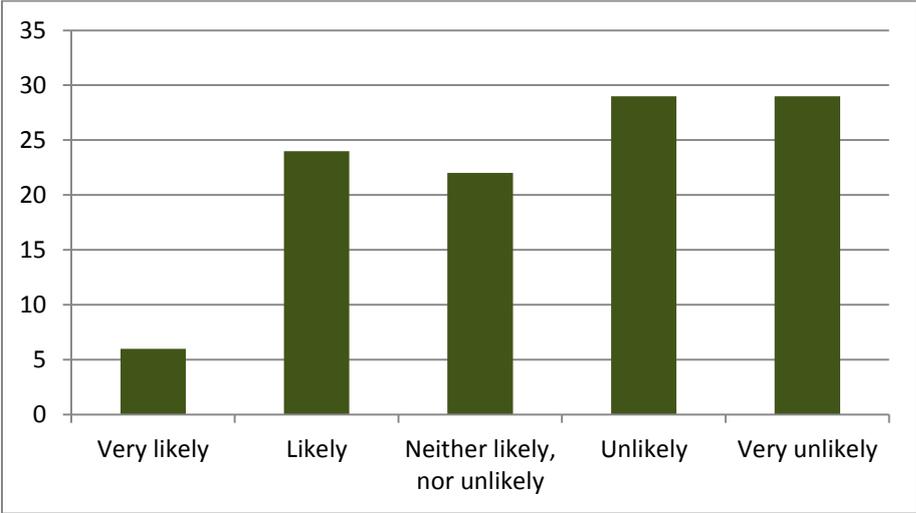
Question 11: What is your marital status?
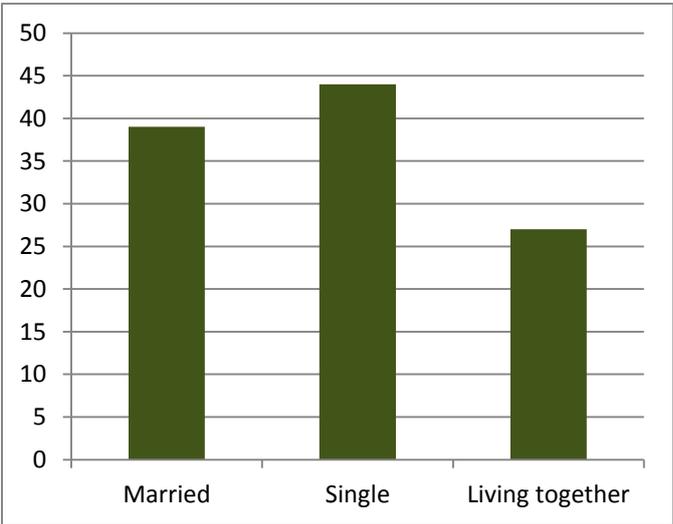
Question 13 Do you have children living at home?
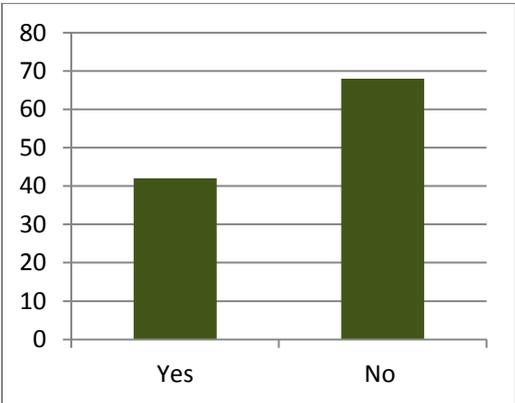
Question 14: What is your employment status?
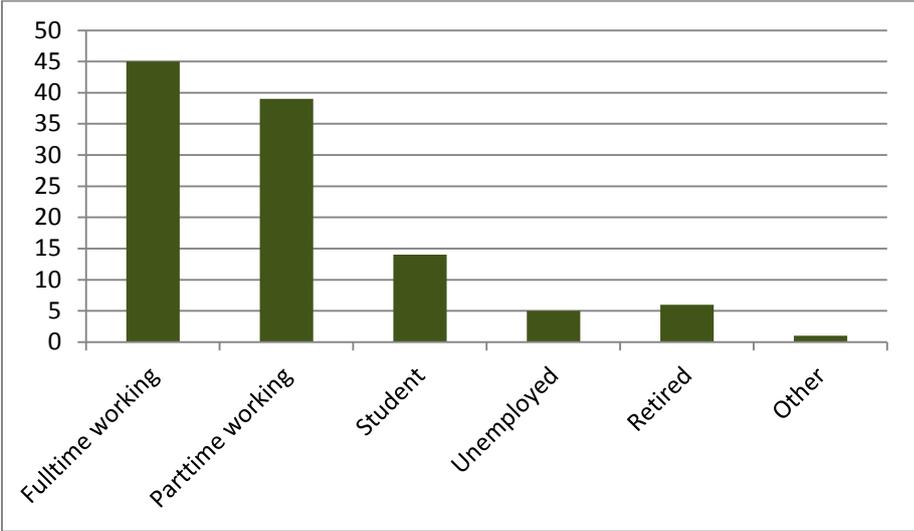
Appendix 9: Survey

Enquête Rusland en toerisme

1. Bent u ooit in Rusland geweest?   (Kruis het antwoord van uw keuze aan.)

- O   Ja (→ Beantwoord vraag 1B)
- O   Nee (→ Ga door naar vraag 2)

1B. Zo ja, met welke reden was u voor het laatst in Rusland?

- O   Vakantie
- O   Zakenreis
- O   Bezoek aan familie, vrienden of kennissen
- O   Andere reden,
  namelijk:………………………………………………………………………

2. In hoeverre is uw mening over Rusland positief?

- O   Zeer positief
- O   Positief
- O   Neutraal
- O   Negatief
- O   Zeer negatief

3. Is uw mening over Rusland gedurende het afgelopen jaar veranderd?

- O   Ja, ik ben positiever over Rusland gaan denken
- O   Ja, ik ben negatiever over Rusland gaan denken
- O   Nee, mijn mening is niet veranderd.

4. Welke van onderstaande kanalen helpen u bij het vormen van een mening over Rusland?
(Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

- O   Informatie in de media (tv, radio, krant, nieuws applicaties etc.)
- O   Verhalen en ervaringen van familie, vrienden en kennissen
- O   Verhalen en ervaringen van Russen
- O   Eigen ervaringen in Rusland
- O   Informatie van reisorganisaties
- O   Anders, namelijk……………………………………………………………………

5. Waar denkt u als eerste aan als u aan Rusland denkt? Noem 5 dingen/woorden.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

6. In hoeverre vindt u de volgende elementen/associaties **bij Rusland passen**? Kruis het vakje van uw keuze aan.	Zeer toepasselijk	Toepasselijk	Neutraal	Niet toepasselijk	Helemaal niet toepasselijk
Afwisselende natuur	O	O	O	O	O
Bijzondere cultuur	O	O	O	O	O
Rijke geschiedenis	O	O	O	O	O
Historische steden	O	O	O	O	O
Moderne steden	O	O	O	O	O
Bijzondere architectuur	O	O	O	O	O
Religie, orthodoxe kerken en kathedralen	O	O	O	O	O
Paleizen en paleistuinen	O	O	O	O	O
Historische monumenten	O	O	O	O	O
Beeldende kunst	O	O	O	O	O
Muziek	O	O	O	O	O
Poëzie	O	O	O	O	O
Literatuur	O	O	O	O	O
Dans, ballet	O	O	O	O	O
Mode	O	O	O	O	O
Strand	O	O	O	O	O
Sport	O	O	O	O	O
Buitensport	O	O	O	O	O
Wintersport	O	O	O	O	O
Koud weer, sneeuw en ijs	O	O	O	O	O
Verschillende klimaten	O	O	O	O	O
Authenticiteit	O	O	O	O	O
Trots	O	O	O	O	O
Pracht	O	O	O	O	O
Macht	O	O	O	O	O
Passie	O	O	O	O	O
Romantiek	O	O	O	O	O
Vriendelijkheid	O	O	O	O	O
Avontuur	O	O	O	O	O
Rust	O	O	O	O	O
Luxe	O	O	O	O	O
Rijkdom	O	O	O	O	O
Armoede	O	O	O	O	O
Duur	O	O	O	O	O
Goedkoop	O	O	O	O	O
Smakelijke maaltijden	O	O	O	O	O

7. In hoeverre vindt u onderstaande elementen **belangrijk bij het plannen van een vakantie**?

Kruis het vakje van uw keuze aan.

	Zeer belangrijk	Belangrijk	Niet belangrijk, niet onbelangrijk	Niet belangrijk	Helemaal niet belangrijk
Afwisselende natuur	O	O	O	O	O
Bijzondere cultuur	O	O	O	O	O
Rijke geschiedenis	O	O	O	O	O
Historische steden	O	O	O	O	O
Moderne steden	O	O	O	O	O
Bijzondere architectuur	O	O	O	O	O
Kerken en kathedralen	O	O	O	O	O
Musea en beeldende kunst	O	O	O	O	O
Theater en dans	O	O	O	O	O
Festivals en uitgaansgelegenheden	O	O	O	O	O
Sportieve activiteiten	O	O	O	O	O
Sportevenementen	O	O	O	O	O
Smakelijke maaltijden en (lokale) delicatessen	O	O	O	O	O
Folklore	O	O	O	O	O
Mode en shoppen	O	O	O	O	O
Avontuur	O	O	O	O	O
Veiligheid	O	O	O	O	O
Luxe en comfort	O	O	O	O	O
Vriendelijke bevolking	O	O	O	O	O

8. In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen?

Kruis het vakje van uw keuze aan.

	Helemaal mee eens	Mee eens	Niet mee eens, niet mee oneens	Niet mee eens	Helemaal niet mee eens
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor natuurvakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor cultuurvakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor wellnessvakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor avontuurlijke vakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor strandvakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor zomervakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor wintervakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Rusland is een uitstekende bestemming voor sportieve vakanties	O	O	O	O	O
Een vakantie in Rusland maakt mij een trendsetter	O	O	O	O	O
Een vakantie in Rusland is leerzaam en interessant	O	O	O	O	O
Een vakantie in Rusland is veilig	O	O	O	O	O

5. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u in de toekomst een vakantie in Rusland zult plannen?

- O Zeer waarschijnlijk
- O Waarschijnlijk
- O Niet waarschijnlijk, niet onwaarschijnlijk
- O Onwaarschijnlijk
- O Zeer onwaarschijnlijk

Achtergrondvragen

1. Wat is uw leeftijd?

        ....

2. Noteer uw geslacht

- O Man
- O Vrouw

3. Wat is uw burgerlijke staat?

- O Getrouwd
- O Alleenstaand
- O Samenwonend

4. Heeft u thuiswonende kinderen?

- O Ja
- O Nee

5. Wat is uw arbeidsstatus?

- O Fulltime werkend
- O Parttime werkend
- O Student
- O Werkeloos
- O Gepensioneerd
- O Anders, namelijk…………………..

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname.

Appendix 10: Questions qualitative interview

1: What do you personally think of Russia as a holiday destination?

2: What activities or attractions do you recommend for Dutch tourists who want to visit Russia?

3: What is the core identity of Russia? What core values do you think fit this identity the best?

4: Which of these values are important for Russia as a holiday destination?

5: How can the holiday destination Russia best be described? (Is Russia more a destination for nature tourism or a destination for cultural tourism?)

6: What type of tourist fits the destination Russia the best?

7: Russia currently deals with a negative image in The Netherlands. Why do you think this is?

8: Do you think the negative image among Dutch tourists can be improved? If so, how can this image be improved?

9: What can tourism organizations do in order to stimulate tourism to Russia, despite the countries negative image?

10: Do you think the historical bound between Russia and the Netherlands can stimulate an improved image for Russia?

Appendix 11: The winter road poem

The Winter road

Through the cool and wavy hazes
Cuts the moon her slow way;
On the glades of sadness, endless,
Her distressing light she spays.

The exhausting winter road
Leads the troika, full of strength;
The light bell with one tone loaded,
Weary rings through all time's length.

One can hear something native
In the coachman's long songs –
Or a revel, superlative,
Or a soul's sadness, strong.

Nor a light nor a dark house –
Wild and snow… On my way,
Just the striped versts arouse
And, this moment, run away.

Aleksandr Pushkin

Translated by Yevgeny Bonver, *October 7, 2004*
Derived from: http://www.poetryloverspage.com/yevgeny/pushkin/winter_road.html