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SERBIAN ADAPTATION OF THE BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE (BPS): AN APPLICATION TO TOURISM DESTINATIONS²

The main aim of this research was to validate a Serbian adaptation of the Brand Personality Scale (BPS: Aaker, 1997) while applying it to tourist destinations. The BPS was developed as a measure of five personality traits of any kind of brand: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. In the first study that was carried out on 192 (76% female) tourists from student population, exploratory factor analysis of the BPS resulted in a four-factor structure: Competence, Excitement, Sophistication, and Sincerity. The factor Ruggedness was not extracted in this study. In the second study that was carried out on 490 (56% females) tourists from general population, the confirmatory factor analysis was applied in order to validate the four-factor solution from the first study. Results indicated that this solution, with certain allocations and reductions of items, reached a satisfactory fit. The factors Excitement and Sincerity mainly matched the same factors from the original Aaker's model, while the factors Competence and Sophistication had somewhat different structure. The factor Excitement represented destination as vibrant, energetic, and youthful, while the factor Sincerity represented destination as honest, warm, and welcome. The factor Competence represented a successful and technically modern destination. It retained only two items from the original model (*technical* and *leader*), but the rest of items captured the same aspect of destination, such as contemporary and glamorous destination in which upper class status were featured. The factor Sophistication also retained only two items from the original model (*feminine* and *good-looking*), which were related to physical attractiveness and appearance, but the rest of the items captured skilled and industrious desti-

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nation. It seems that sophisticated destinations are those that strongly rely on physical appearance to achieve success. It could be concluded that there is a cultural specificity in describing the tourist destinations.

Keywords: Brand Personality Scale, tourist destination personality, Serbian tourists, factor validity, reliability

People are prone to assign human personality traits to inanimate objects (Aaker, 1996; Solomon, 1999). Anthropomorphism is present in everyday life, culture, and religion (Barrett & Keil, 1996; Guthrie, 1997). It is so pervasive because humans are not comfortable with what is non-human (Guthrie, 1997). Seeing everything through familiar, humanlike characteristics, comforts people and attenuates their fears of the unknown and unpredictable. People have extensive knowledge about themselves, and therefore it is reasonable to use themselves as models for interpreting the external non-material world (Guthrie, 1997).

In this study, the focus is on anthropomorphism of the brand, specifically of tourist destination as a brand. There are several reasons to connect human traits (i.e. personality) to a brand, or, in this case, to a destination brand. According to American Marketing Association, brand represents the name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers (AMA, 2016). Thus, brand is a set of all characteristics of the product, including the customer's perception of that product. Brand involves all features that the consumer recalls when he/she is exposed to it. Representation that the consumer creates about a certain brand can be based on real, as well as on imagined characteristics. Brand features can be both objective (such as the price and appearance of the product) and subjective. One of the most explored subjective features of a brand is brand personality (Aaker, 1997). People find it easier to accept and remember a brand if they attribute any human feature to it (Cohen, 2014). Identity of a brand is related to the targeted group through planned marketing personification. Previous researches show that brand preference rises if brand personality is in accordance with consumer's personality (Huang, Mitchell, & Rosenaum-Elliot, 2012; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). Brand personality can be seen as a crucial component of an effective brand (Murphy, Beckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007a). Also, when consumers see brand attributes as similar to competing brands, brand personality could help them to differentiate and decide which one to buy (Haigood, 1999). Previous studies have shown that brand personality evokes emotions in consumers and increases levels of trust and loyalty (Aaker, 1997).

In the studies of travel destinations, there are different conceptions of what represents a destination. Traditionally, travel destination is regarded as a well-defined geographical area such as a country, an island or a city (Hall, 2000). However, more and more researchers see destination as a product or a brand (Buhalis, 2000; Kozak, 2002; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Presently, destination is described as a combination of tourist products and services which together represent a brand (Beerli & Mortin, 2004). Van Raaij (1986) defines destination as a product which is partly natural (climate, beaches, mountains, etc.) and partly manmade (hotels, pack tours, transportation, etc.). Faced with global competition in which destinations become very replaceable, destination marketing organisations (DMO) have to struggle to attract tourists (Pike & Ryan, 2004). DMOs are increasingly starting to use slogans and logos in order to attract visitors

(Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Therefore, it is clear that destination is no longer just a geographical area, but a specific place that undergoes branding process in order to become relevant on the market.

Since a tourist destination could be defined as a product with its own brand (Buhalis, 2000; Kozak, 2002; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), previously mentioned findings about brand personality of tangible and intangible products should also be applicable to tourist destinations. If destination personality is seen as unique, then such destination can create favourable associations in consumer's memory and positive emotions about such place (Keller, 1993). Destination personality is still largely unexplored. It represents a sum of all human characteristics that can be attributed to a destination. It is influenced by the people who represent the destination (locals, employees or promoters of a given destination), but anthropomorphic characteristics are attributed to the destination by tourists. Linking human characteristics to a certain destination strengthens the bond between a visitor and the destination. What significantly supports the applicability of brand personality to destinations is that people have no difficulty to describe destinations by using human personality traits (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). For example, Europe is seen as traditional and sophisticated; Wales as honest, welcoming, romantic, and down to earth; Spain as friendly and family oriented; London as open-minded, unorthodox, vibrant and creative, and Paris as romantic.

Although brand personality concept exists for over 60 years, its application in tourism research is relatively new. Brand personality is in practice more related to consumer products (e.g. cars and chocolate), but recently more and more researches apply it to travel destinations (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Lee, Soutar, & Quintal, 2010; Lee & Xie, 2011; Murphy et al., 2007a; Sirgy & Su, 2000).

For exploring destination personality, researchers mostly use the BPS – Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997). The scale has been constructed to measure brand personality dimensions: sincerity (e.g. *honest, real*), excitement (*daring, cool*), competence (*reliable, corporate*), sophistication (*glamorous, charming*) and ruggedness (*masculine, outdoorsy*). The summary of the previous research on destination personality is given in Table 1.

Table 1
Destination personality studies and its similarity to original BPS

Selected reference	Method	Used or extracted dimensions	Similarity to original BPS Aaker's (1997) model
Ekinci & Hosany (2006)	structured: reduced BPS (27 items)	sincerity, excitement, and conviviality	sincerity and excitement
Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Baloglu (2007)	structured: 20-items recommended by Ekinci and Hosany (2006)	conviviality, sincerity, and excitement	sincerity and excitement; new adjectives suggested
Murphy et al. (2007a)	structured: reduced BPS (20 items)	sophistication and competence, sincerity, excitement, and ruggedness	sincerity, excitement, and ruggedness; sophistication and competence merged in one dimension
Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo (2007b)	structured: reduced BPS (20 items); unstructured: open-ended questions	3 dimensions for Clarins: sincere, sophisticated, and outdoorsy; Whitsunday Islands - 4 dimensions: upper class, honest, exciting, and tough	In case of Clarins: sincere and sophisticated; in case of Whitsunday Islands: only exciting
Pitt et al. (2007)	structured: a list of 922 synonyms to original BPS 42 items were collected, and then categorized according to original model	the same as in the Aaker's model (1997)	similar
Prayag (2007)	unstructured: projective techniques and in-depth interview	no dimensions, however he confirmed that certain personality traits (i.e. confident, independent, sophisticated, and exciting) can be attributed to	no similarities; destination-specific personality traits obtained

Table 1 (continued)

Selected reference	Method	Used or extracted dimensions	Similarity to original BPS Aaker's (1997) model
		destinations, and some of them match some factors revealed in the previously mentioned studies (i.e. sophistication and excitement)	
D'Astous & Boujbel (2007)	structured: personality scales; unstructured: interviews	agreeableness, wickedness, snobbism, assiduousness, conformity, and unobtrusiveness	no similarities
Sahin & Baloglu (2009)	structured: reduced BPS (23 items), 5 items based on content analysis of travel brochures and internet sites about Istanbul; unstructured: open-ended questions	competence and modernity, originality and vibrancy, sincerity, cool and trendy, and conviviality	sincerity
Usaki & Baloglu (2011)	structured: original 42-item BPS, but in final model 23 items retained	sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication; for Las Vegas: vibrancy, sophistication, competence, contemporary, sincerity	similar, but without ruggedness
Jovanović (2014)	structured: original 42-item BPS, but in final model only 17 items retained	sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication,	similar, but without ruggedness

Studies of tourism destinations as brands support the notion that humans are prone to perceive destinations in terms of personality features. However, these studies have shown that there is a problem in defining a precise number of factors of brand personality of a tourist destination. It seems that the most replicated factors in the previous studies are excitement, sophistication and sincerity, while the other factors largely differ from study to study (Table 1). But, if the studies are analysed more closely, it can be concluded that most researchers have used modified or shortened versions of the BPS which makes difficult comparison of the results. Also, some researchers have used their own scales or even different methodology (projective techniques, interviews). Therefore, in order to provide comparable results, the researchers should reach a consensus in using one valid and reliable methodology and instrument.

While the Big Five model of human personality (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990) is universal, brand personality attributions are partly culture-specific, even though they are inspired by Big Five model. We can find many studies on brand personality in the literature, which emphasize the fact that the structure of brand personality varies across cultures (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001; Bosnjak, Bochmann, & Hufschmidt, 2007; Sung & Tinkham, 2005). For instance, Sung and Tinkham (2005) asked respondents' to describe 12 global brands, and discovered the two culture-specific factors in Korea (passive likeableness and ascendancy), which supported their hypothesis that Korean brand personality structure carried cultural meaning, reflecting the importance of Confucian values in Korea's social and economic systems. Moreover, they also revealed the two unique factors (white collar and androgyny) that emerged in the U.S. sample, which are associated with occupational status and gender roles. They also argued that cultures that were quite different in their values and needs (such as Western vs. East Asian cultures) were more likely to exhibit culture-specific differences in brand personality. However, some of the studies, besides discovering cultural specific dimensions, also revealed that some dimensions of brand personality stayed consistent in different cultural contexts, and could be considered universal. For instance, Aaker and associates (Aaker et al., 2001) revealed a set of 'brand personality' dimensions common to both Japan and the United States (sincerity, excitement, competence, and sophistication), as well as the culture specific for Japanese (peacefulness) and American (ruggedness) dimensions. Application of the BPS in Spain also yielded brand personality dimensions common to both Spain and the U.S. (sincerity, excitement, and sophistication), plus non-shared Spanish (passion) and American (competence and ruggedness) dimensions (Aaker et al., 2001). This implies that some of the dimensions are certainly culturally specific, but also indicates that BPS could be in some way modified by excluding certain items, which would make a scale culturally invariant. This would enable the comparison of the results, in this case cross-culturally, as the scale would be applicable to any nation. This is an important contribution, especially for the specific products such as tourist destinations, visited by tourists coming from very different cultures.

The problem of this study was to determine the applicability of Serbian adaptation of Brand Personality Scale (BPS: Aaker, 1997) on travel destinations. With this research, intention was to explore whether the BPS items were appropriate for describing destination personality by the Serbian tourists, and test the factor structure of BPS. Most of the current research concerning destination personality are based on BPS, and have been applied on different cultures and on international tourists (such as Turkey – Sahin & Baloglu, 2009; Ekinci et al., 2007, Africa – Pitt et al., 2007, Australia – Murphy et al., 2007a, US – Usakli & Baloglu, 2011, UK – Ekinci & Hosany, 2006, etc.). However, the findings suggest that there are specificities in applying BPS on travel destinations in different cultures (Bishnoi & Kumar, 2016). Also, there are no consistent results about a number of factors, such as the structure of BPS in application for destination descriptions in different cultures (Ekinci et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 2007a; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). There is certainly a need for a consensus, one universally accepted version of the scale, or a set of common dimensions that all researchers of destination personality would employ. If every study modifies BPS differently, comparison of the results becomes impossible. Bearing this in mind, the main aim of this study was to validate a Serbian adaptation of the BPS on tourist destinations. Unlike most previously mentioned studies based on international tourists, all tourists in this study were from one country, i.e. culture (Serbian), in order to get a clear picture of cultural specificities encompassed by this scale. To our knowledge, there were no information about relations between the characteristics of tourists, such as gender and age, with BPS dimensions. Therefore, we tested those relations in order to determine the stability of the scale.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants were 192 students (76% female) from the University of Novi Sad, who had some touristic experience. Participant's age varied from 18 to 40 (91% from 18–23), with average age of 20.95 ($SD = 3.01$, $Mdn = 20$). All respondents have agreed to voluntarily participate in this study providing information about their gender, age, and employment status.

Instrument. Brand Personality Scale (BPS: Aaker, 1997). BPS full version contains 42 items which represent adjectives of brand personality (see Appendix). In this research, participants rated each adjective on the scale from 1 = *not at all descriptive* to 5 = *extremely descriptive*, in order to describe the last tourist destination (place) they visited and stayed there more than 3 days continuously. Respondents mostly assessed four types of destinations: seaside localities (51.2%), cities (29.2%), mountain resorts (11.4%) and spa centres (4.5%). The rest (3.7%)

assessed lakes, villages, canyons and entire countries³. BPS contained five dimensions: Sincerity (11 items), Excitement (11), Competence (9), Sophistication (6) and Ruggedness (5). The scale was translated from English to Serbian, and then back translated to assure original meaning of the items.

Results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA). First, participants were asked to evaluate the clarity of each item by checking “not clear” box if some of items were unclear and/or inapplicable to destinations. Only one item (*down-to-earth*), yielded 26% of “not clear” answers, and it was excluded. The reason for unclearness of this item could be an inadequate translation, because a less frequent word (*prizemno* on Serbian) was used, or simply because this item was not applicable to travel destinations, i.e. tourists did not use it when describing destination personality. The rest of the items had considerably lower percentage of “not clear” answers (between 5–10%). This was in accordance with the claim of Morgan and Pritchard (2002).

Before applying EFA, items with lower corrected item-total correlations – r_{i-t} ($< .30$) were eliminated (*family-oriented*, *small-town*, *secure*, *outdoorsy*, *tough*, and *rugged*). The rest of the items had r_{i-t} 's between .33 and .64. In previous researches, the factor structure of the BPS was generally explored by principal component analysis and Varimax rotation (e.g. Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). In this study, however, a common factor analysis (i.e. maximum likelihood estimation method) was used as a generally less biased and more appropriate procedure to obtain parameters reflecting latent constructs or factors (Widaman, 1993). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .90 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2(595) = 3514.62$, $p < .001$, which indicated sufficient correlations among the variable, was set to run a factor analysis. Oblique Promax rotation was employed in order to provide a more realistic picture, where factor correlations were allowed. Also, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) argued that if factor correlations exceed .32, then there was an overlap in variance among the factors and oblique rotation was warranted, which was the case in this study (Table 2).

Based on the parallel analysis (O'Connor, 2000), four factors were extracted by using means criteria, with eigenvalues that were 11.45 (parallel pair was 1.91), 3.48 (1.78), 2.40 (1.70), 1.63 (1.62), and 1.36 (1.55) for the fifth factor eigenvalues. Four factors accounted to 48.40% of the common variance. The item *independent* was excluded since it did not have a significant loadings on any of the extracted factors. The pattern matrix of retained factors was presented in Table 2.

³ The perception of destination personality for different types of destination (sea, city, and mountain) was tested, and there were no differences in the factor structure of the full version of the BPS (Jovanović, 2014).

Table 2
Pattern matrix from EFA maximum likelihood of the BPS (n = 192)

	Competence	Excitement	Sophistication	Sincerity
27 Technical	.82			
32 Upper class	.72			
20 Up-to-date	.66			
33 Glamorous	.65			
40 Western	.63			
22 Contemporary	.63			
30 Leader	.55		.31	
13 Trendy	.51	.45		
29 Successful	.49			
28 Corporate	.45		.33	
15 Spirited		.84		
14 Exciting		.83		
16 Cool		.69		
9 Cheerful		.67		
17 Young		.59		
18 Imaginative		.51		
8 Original		.48		
11 Friendly		.44		.33
19 Unique		.32		
36 Feminine			.70	
39 Masculine			.69	
35 Charming			.66	
12 Daring			.52	
26 Intelligent			.45	
24 Hard working			.45	.30
23 Reliable			.43	
10 Sentimental			.39	.32
34 Good looking			.31	
21 Independent				
4 Honest				.75
5 Sincere				.66
6 Real				.64
7 Wholesome		.33		.60
37 Smooth				.53
31 Confident				.42

Note. Loadings lower than absolute .30 were omitted.

The four factors could be interpreted as Competence, Excitement, Sophistication, and Sincerity. All factors, except for Sophistication, are the most similar to the original Aaker's dimensions (Table 2). Sophistication includes items from various dimensions from the original study (such as *masculine* from Ruggedness and *daring* from Excitement).

Table 3
Intercorrelations between BPS factors (n = 192)

	Competence	Excitement	Sophistication
Competence	–		
Excitement	.41	–	
Sophistication	.39	.56	–
Sincerity	.51	.44	.20

Note. All correlations are significant at the $p < .01$.

Intercorrelations between the factors are positive and medium (Table 3). The highest correlations are between the factors Sophisticated and Excitement, and between Competence and Sincerity, while the lowest correlation is between Sophisticated and Sincerity.

Discussion. The Serbian adaptation of the BPS resulted in a four-factor structure. The first factor, labelled as Competence, was comprised of the items describing a destination that is highly technical, upper class and trendy, and they represent a successful and competent vacation spot. It is interesting to see that the item *western* belongs to this factor (originally, it was a part of Aaker's Ruggedness dimension). The meaning of the adjective *western*, was probably seen as indicative of western culture and lifestyle, which is described by most of the Eastern European countries, such as Serbia, as something successful, advanced and contemporary (Buchanan, 2002). Almost half of the items that have significant factor loadings on this factor are the same as in the Aaker's original Competence factor (*technical, corporate, successful, leader*). Other half of the items have been previously a part of Excitement (*up-to-date, contemporary, trendy*) and Sophistication (*upper class and glamorous*). This leads to the conclusion that Serbian tourists consider destination competent if it is modern and extravagant.

The factor Excitement is the second extracted factor, and it includes items such as *cool, young, cheerful* and *spirited*. Out of eight, three items (*cheerful, original, and friendly*) were not in the Aaker's factor Excitement. Even though they originated as a part of Sincerity, these items have certain level of youthful exuberance that can be considered characteristic to Excitement.

The third factor, Sophistication, includes three items of Aaker's Sophistication and six items that originated from other factors. Item *masculine* is a part of this factor, which was a part of Ruggedness in Aaker's model. In combination with

the item *feminine*, it resembles the Androgyny dimension from the research of Sung and Tinkham (2005). It seems that gender roles and identity are important in assessing destinations as brands. Besides gender characteristics, this factor also describes destinations that are intelligent, daring, hard-working, reliable, and sentimental. Thus, if destinations are seen with both masculine and feminine qualities, they will also be seen as emotional, attractive, industrious, and skilled.

The fourth factor, Sincerity, describes destinations that are honest, real, secure, and family-oriented. The structure of this factor resembles Aaker's factor Sincerity, with four items that are the same. *Smooth* (Sophistication) and *Confident* (Competence) are the items that have originally not been a part of Sincerity. Since the meaning of the *smooth* (Serbian – *dobro organizovano*) is somewhat changed in the translation in order to be applicable to tourist destination, it is believed that this might have resulted in the change of its position. The authors believe that this item is also culturally biased since there is no good translation for this expression in Serbian language. It is very specific to the English speaking cultures, and it denotes something that is charming and sophisticated. When translated into Serbian, it loses this figurative (slang) meaning and becomes something that runs smooth without obstacles, being well organised. In the context of Sincerity, it could be interpreted that sincere destination is also a destination that is well-organised, since there are no false relations and dishonest contracts between the tourists and the destination (people who represent this destination). On the other hand, *confident* could be related to the factor *Sincerity*, because if the brand is seen as honest and real, it could be also viewed as confident and trustworthy by the consumers.

In general, even though there are allocated items from original factors of Aaker's model (1997), the obtained structure of the BPS is similar in meaning to the original one. Correlations between factors indicate that the dimensions are not fully independent. For example, one destination can be described as both exciting and sophisticated.

Study 2

Method

Participants and procedure. The sample included 492 tourists from Serbia (56% females), from 18 to 84 years old (83% from 18 to 55), with the average age of 33.27 ($SD = 15.92$, $Mdn = 26$). Two participants were excluded due to the large amount of missing data (over 25%), and the final number of participants in this phase was 490. The instrument was administrated by the trained students from the Faculty of Science, University of Novi Sad, as a part of their course requirement.

Instrument. *Brand Personality Scale (BPS: Aaker, 1997)* was used as in Study 1 (see Appendix).

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA was conducted in order to validate latent structure of the BPS from the Study 1. Since the value of multivariate kurtosis was over 7, there were used extension of the Satorra-Bentler (1994, as cited in Bentler, 2006) robust methodology, and robust standard errors (Bentler & Dijkstra, 1985, as cited in Bentler, 2006). The following indicators were calculated in order to determine a model fit: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), which should be smaller than .08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), Bentler's Comparative Fit Index (CFI) which should be larger than .90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), Satorra-Bentler χ^2 (S-B χ^2) which should not be statistically significant, and ratio χ^2/df that should be either lesser than 2 (Hoelter, 1983) or lesser than 3 (Kline, 2005). According to Kline (2005), and Hu and Bentler (1999), a combination of cut-off criteria for mentioned fit indices are sufficient for the conclusion about model fit. CFA was conducted by using EQS 6.1 software. Fit indices of proposed BPS models were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Some goodness-of-fit indices for the tested measurement models of the Brand Personality Scale

Model	S-B χ^2 (df)	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA (90% CI)	SRMR
1 (from the Study 1)	1786.62**(514)	3.48	.777	.071 (.067–.075)	.096
2 (reduced model from Study 1)	502.36**(183)	2.75	.903	.060 (.053 – .066)	.062

Note. S-B χ^2 = Satorra-Bentler χ^2 ; CFI = Bentler's Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

** $p < .001$.

The initially tested model, which was obtained in Study 1, showed less than satisfactory fit indices (Model 1 in Table 4). In several iterations, 12 items were excluded since they had low parameters ($< .30$) on extracted factors (*charming, friendly, trendy, masculine, corporate, original, wholesome, smooth, unique, imaginative, sentimental, and confident*). Finally, LM test suggested that the item *successful* should also be included in the factor Sophistication. Due to the significant cross-loadings, this item was excluded in order to get a clearer factor structure. This reduction of the BPS model resulted in satisfactory model fit indices (Model 2 in Table 4) and parameter estimates (Figure 1). All correlations between factors

were medium or high, except between Sincerity and Competence, and Sincerity and Excitement. Further modifications did not contribute to the better fit.

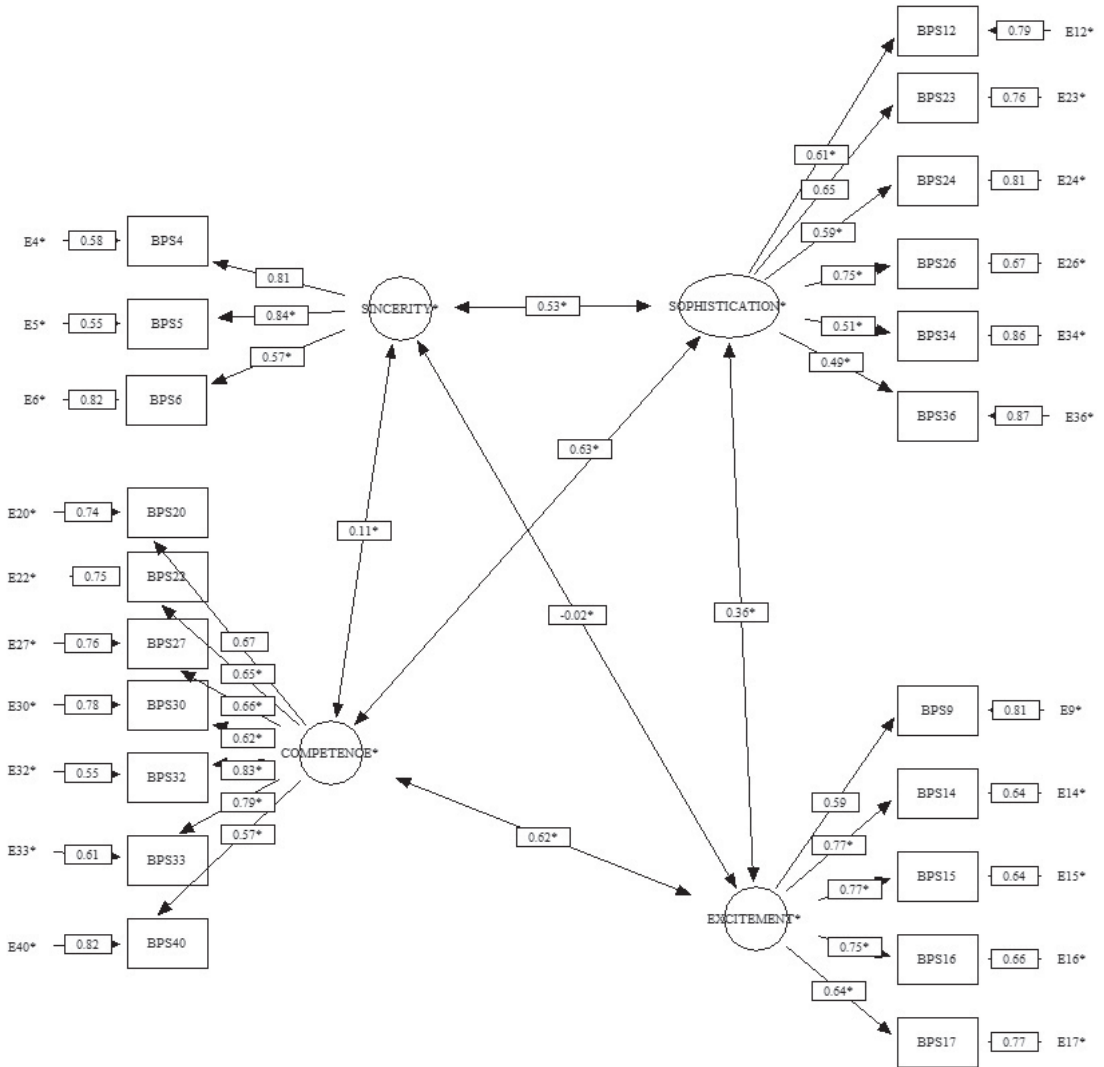


Figure 1. Standardized parameter estimates for accepted measurement model of the Brand Personality Scale ($n = 490$).

Table 5

Descriptive statistics, some metric characteristics, gender differences and correlations with age (n = 490)

BPS scale (number of items)	Whole sample				Male		Female		Age	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	h_1	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (489)	<i>r</i>
Competence (7)	3.17	0.96	.86	.47	3.25	0.95	3.11	0.96	1.63	.01
Excitement (5)	3.82	0.93	.83	.50	3.86	0.87	3.79	0.97	0.75	-.28**
Sincerity (3)	3.63	1.05	.78	.54	3.59	1.06	3.66	1.05	-0.70	.21**
Sophistication (6)	3.05	0.99	.77	.36	3.03	0.90	3.06	1.05	-0.24	.07

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; α = reliability: Cronbach's alpha; h_1 = homogeneity: inter-mean of items intercorrelations; *t* = *t*-test for gender differences; *df* was given in parenthesis; *r* = Pearson correlation. All statistics are for final BPS version.

** $p < .001$.

There were no significant gender differences (Table 5), which suggested that the scale was applicable to both males and females without the need for separate analysis by gender. Correlations between age and scores on scales were significant only in the case of Excitement and Sincerity, but these correlations were generally small (Table 5). As it could be expected, correlation with Excitement was negative, and correlation with Sincerity was positive. Homogeneity (h_1) of the BPS scales could be taken as high, and Cronbach's alpha as acceptable, considering the number of items per scale (Table 5).

Discussion. The results have shown that the model proposed in Study 1 has a good fit, with a certain reduction of items. The first factor, Competence, characterises a destination that is successful and technically modern. It comprises of items such as *technical*, *upper class*, *contemporary*, *up-to-date* and *leader*. It seems that tourists highly value destinations that follow current trends in tourism, and radiate competence and confidence. The authors believe that tourists appreciate comfort rather than a competent destination projects, since travelling itself provokes insecurity and lack of self-confidence in a tourist. While only two items are from the original Competence scale (*leader* and *technical*), the remaining five items are from different original factors – Sophistication, Excitement, and Ruggedness. This different allocation of items is expected in most cases. When destination is competent, it is considered *upper class* and *glamorous*, and it sets the standards of classy to the other similar destinations. Also, it has to follow modern trends, and be *up-to-date* and *contemporary*. However, appearance of the item *western* is somewhat peculiar without understanding of the cultural context. Serbian tourist associates adjective this to something advanced and competent, not something that is manly and rugged. Therefore, the authors advise caution in the use of this item, since it shows certain cultural biasness.

The factors Excitement and Sincerity are very similar to the original Aaker's dimensions (1997). In the case of Excitement, tourists can see destinations as vibrant, energetic and youthful, and they desire to visit such destinations because of their need for socialising, energy and activity. The factor Excitement has only one item, *cheerful*, which was originally a part of Sincerity, and the remaining four items are from the original Excitement scale. Since cheerful means something energetic and merrily, it could be easily attributed to Excitement. In the case of Sincerity, tourists can describe destinations as honest and real, and they would visit these destinations because they expect warmth and acceptance from these destinations. In the final model, Sincerity consists of only three items, but all of them are from the original structure of this factor (Aaker, 1997).

Sophistication consists of many different items from which only two items are from the original Aaker's structure (1997), while four items are from other four dimensions. In the final model it includes gender trait *feminine*, besides the items such as *daring* and *good looking*. A physical appearance is very important in promoting any kind of brand, and tourists evaluate destinations depending on whether the service providers are attractive and sexually appealing. Masculine and feminine qualities should both exist in one destination, since there are both male and female tourists. However, masculine has been excluded in the final model because it has had low factor parameters, probably because attractiveness is more associated with femininity than with masculinity in this study. Besides the traits which are in accordance with the original, theoretical assumptions about Sophistication, the factor extracted in this study also includes items such as *intelligent*, *reliable*, and *hard-working*. Thus, it appears that sophisticated destinations are also viewed as capable and worthy destinations, but in a slightly different way than competent destinations. Competent destinations are not necessarily seen as attractive, while sophisticated destinations are those that strongly rely on physical appearance to achieve success.

General discussion

The aim of this study was to validate the Serbian adaptation of the Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997) in order to describe destination personality. The results show that the BPS can be used to assess the destination personality on Serbian sample of tourists, and it can be described with the four dimensions: competence, excitement, sincerity, and sophistication. However, in the final solution, the number of items has been reduced from 42 to 21. Twenty-one items have been excluded mainly because of the low item-total correlations, factor loadings, or significant cross-loadings. It seems that the BPS cannot be used as a whole in exploring destination personality. Certain items have been shown as inadequate (e.g. *down-to-earth*, *smooth*, *small-town*), and therefore the previous studies have

justifiably modified and reduced the BPS (Murphy et al., 2007a; Murphy et al., 2007b; Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011).

The four extracted factors in this study mostly coincide with the original Aaker's factors (Aaker, 1997), except for Ruggedness which has not been extracted (Study 1). Taking into account the results of the previous studies of destination personality, we can conclude that the factors Excitement and Sincerity have been replicated in almost all studies. However, some specificities in the structure of isolated factors can be noted. After confirmatory factor analysis (Study 2), all retained items in both factors are from the original structure of factors. Only the factor Excitement has one item, *cheerful*, which was originally a part of Sincerity. The factor Competence have retained only two items from the original model: *technical* and *leader*, as well as the factor Sophistication: *feminine* and *good-looking*. The rest of the items in these two factors are a part of other dimensions in Aaker's study (1997), but the original meaning of those factors is preserved.

The factor Ruggedness has not been extracted in this research, which is in line with many previous studies of destination personality (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). In the original Aaker's model (1997), it consists of five items (*masculine*, *tough*, *western*, *rugged*, and *outdoorsy*), and describes a destination that is untouched and rough. In Aaker's model (1997) this factor is more focused on exploring American ideals of masculinity and strength (characteristic for brands such as Marlboro and Levi's), but in the context of destination, it becomes more nature based, like an untouched scenery or rustic housing. Future research of destination personality concept should not completely exclude this dimension. More items should be generated that are more appropriate for this type of brand. Tourists might prefer this trait in the destination when they desire to experience true nature or "survival" adventure. In line with that, Ruggedness factor could have more items such as wild, resistant, intact, etc.

Significant correlations between the obtained factors in both studies indicate that those factors are not independent, contrary to the assumption of the original model of Aaker (1997). All four factors have shown satisfactory psychometric characteristics. They are independent of tourist age and gender, which shows that Serbian adaptation of the BPS is stable and independent of these sample characteristics. On the other hand, other socio-demographic characteristics of the sample should be taken into consideration in the future research, since they might influence the latent structure of BPS as well (occupation, marital status, etc.). Predictive validity of the BPS should be further explored, by using constructs such as tourist activities and destination preferences. This study has been conducted after the trip i.e. it has been carried out at the post-consumption behaviour stage (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). That might have affected the perception of destination personality, since memory might have changed the initial impression of the destination. Even though the BPS has been proven as an adequate scale to explore destination personality, it might be quite appropriate to conduct qualitative researches in order to deepen understanding of what destination personality really

means to tourists. It is evident that there are certain specificities of destinations when compared to other types of brands.

Perception of animate and inanimate objects is tied to the system of meanings that people use to interpret the world around them. This system depends on the culture, language, education, and age of the person who uses it. Application of this system is atypical, since destination is a hybrid, made of people and inanimate objects (hotels, scenery and transport). When destination personality is explored, perception of characteristics that are part of animate and inanimate objects is simultaneously explored. Therefore, destinations are different than other brands (such as consumer products and companies), and that might influence the latent structure of the BPS. Also, the factors that shape the system of meanings are also exceedingly important. Other researchers and Aaker herself have concluded that there are cultural differences in perceiving brands (Aaker & Schmitt, 1997, Aguirre-Rodriguez, 2014). The results of this study certainly differ from the results of previous studies which have been mainly conducted on the samples from Western Europe. This could indicate cultural specificities between Eastern and Western European societies, but this would require further exploration in the future cross-cultural studies.

Overall, the BPS gives an insight into subjective qualities of a destination i.e. how consumers see the destination personality. Based on these facts, destination marketers should model the tourist destination, so that it can obtain the subjective image that consumers expect from it. Also, understanding the perception of one destination's personality can offer marketers tools to manage the process of marketing communication during the promotion of that destination.

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SRPSKA ADAPTACIJA SKALE LIČNOSTI BRENDA (BPS): PRIMENA U IZBORU TURISTIČKIH DESTINACIJA

Cilj ovog istraživanja je ispitivanje validnosti srpske adaptacije Skale ličnosti brenda (Brand Personality Scale – BPS: Aaker, 1997) u primeni na turističke destinacije. BPS je razvijen kao mera pet osobina ličnosti bilo koje vrste brenda: Iskrenost, Uzbudljivost, Kompetentnost, Sofisticiranost i Sirovost. U prvoj studiji urađenoj na 192 (76% žena) turista iz studentske populacije, eksplorativnom faktorskom analizom je zadržano četiri faktora: Iskrenost, Uzbudljivost, Kompetentnost i Sofisticiranost. Faktor Sirovost nije ekstrahovan u ovoj studiji. U drugoj studiji urađenoj na 490 (56% žena) turista iz opšte populacije, primenjena je konfirmatorna faktorska analiza kako bi se proverilo četvorofaktorsko rešenje iz prve studije. Rezultati ukazuju na to da ovo četvorofaktorsko rešenje, uz određeno alociranje i redukciju ajtema, ima zadovoljavajuće indikatore saglasnosti. Faktori Uzbudljivost i Iskrenost se u većoj meri poklapaju sa istim faktorima u originalnom modelu, dok faktori Kompetentnost i Sofisticiranost imaju nešto drugačiju strukturu. Faktorom Uzbudljivost je predstavljena živa, energična i mladalačka destinacija, dok je faktorom Iskrenost predstavljena poštena, topla i gostoljubiva destinacija. Faktorom Kompetentnost je predstavljena uspešna i tehnički moderna destinacija. Ovaj faktor sadrži samo dva ajtema iz originalnog istoimenog faktora (*tehnički moderno* i *predvodeće*), ali ostali ajtemi pokrivaju isti aspekt destinacije kao što je savremena i glamurozna destinacija u kojoj se naglašava visoki status. Faktor Sofisticiranost, takođe, obuhvata samo dva ajtema iz originalne istoimene skale (*ženstveno* i *zgodno*), koji se odnose na fizičku atraktivnost i pojavu, dok se ostatak ajtema odnosi na destinacije u kojima se naglašava marljivost i veštine. Može se pretpostaviti da destinaciju koja se opsiuje kao sofisticirana karakteriše fizički dojam u cilju ostvarivanja uspeha. Rezultati generalno ukazuju da postoji kulturna specifičnost u opisu turističke destinacije.

Ključne reči: Skala ličnosti brenda, ličnost turističke destinacije, srpski turisti, faktorska validnost, pouzdanost

Appendix A

Item	Serbian translation	Original scale	Final version of Serbian adaptation	Reason for omitting	Study in which item is omitted	$M (SD)$ from Study 2	r_{i-t} from Study 2
Down-to-earth	Obično	Sincerity		inapplicable to destination	Preliminary study	2.01 (1.67)	.13
Family-oriented	Porodično	Sincerity		low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	3.73 (1.23)	.11
Small-town	Provincijalno	Sincerity		low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	2.57 (1.40)	.13
Honest	Pošteno	Sincerity	Sincerity			3.46 (1.32)	.34
Sincere	Iskreno	Sincerity	Sincerity			3.54 (1.30)	.40
Real	Realno	Sincerity	Sincerity			3.86 (1.18)	.39
Wholesome	Dobro	Sincerity	Sincerity	low parameter	Study 2	4.35 (0.88)	.48
Original	Originalno	Sincerity		low parameter	Study 2	3.88 (1.20)	.53
Cheerful	Veselo	Sincerity	Excitement			4.12 (1.05)	.42
Sentimental	Osećajno	Sincerity		low parameter	Study 2	3.47 (1.26)	.52
Friendly	Prijateljsko	Sincerity		low parameter	Study 2	4.14 (1.07)	.35
Daring	Odvažno	Excitement	Sophistication			3.01 (1.46)	.63
Trendy	U trendu	Excitement		low parameter	Study 2	3.62 (1.27)	.52
Exciting	Uzbudljivo	Excitement	Excitement			3.82 (1.18)	.49
Spirited	Živahno	Excitement	Excitement			3.82 (1.20)	.46
Cool	Kul	Excitement	Excitement			3.64 (1.34)	.48
Young	Mladalačko	Excitement	Excitement			3.65 (1.25)	.36
Imaginative	Maštovito	Excitement		low parameter	Study 2	3.49 (1.21)	.60
Unique	Jedinstveno	Excitement		low parameter	Study 2	3.50 (1.39)	.54
Up-to-date	Osvremenjeno	Excitement	Competence			3.43 (1.22)	.55
Independent	Nezavisno	Excitement		non-sig. loadings	Study 1	3.17 (1.26)	.69

Appendix A (continued)

Contemporary	Aktuelno	Excitement	Competence	Competence	3.72 (1.21)	.54
Reliable	Samouvereno	Competence	Sophistication	Sophistication	3.13 (1.47)	.56
Hard working	Marljivo	Competence	Sophistication	Sophistication	3.11 (1.40)	.48
Secure	Bezbedno	Competence	low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	3.83 (1.13)	.29
Intelligent	Inteligentno	Competence	Sophistication	Sophistication	3.20 (1.45)	.60
Technical	Tehnički moderno	Competence	Competence	Competence	3.30 (1.22)	.51
Corporate	Korporativno	Competence	Competence	low parameter	2.53 (1.57)	.46
Successful	Uspešno	Competence	Competence	sig. cross-loadings	3.78 (1.08)	.59
Leader	Predvođeće	Competence	Competence	Competence	3.00 (1.34)	.54
Confident	Pouzdzano	Competence	low parameter	low parameter	3.53 (1.24)	.47
Upper class	Elitno	Sophistication	Competence	Competence	3.15 (1.30)	.58
Glamorous	Glamurozno	Sophistication	Competence	Competence	2.84 (1.35)	.54
Good looking	Zgodno	Sophistication	Sophistication	Sophistication	3.39 (1.34)	.53
Charming	Šarmantno	Sophistication	low parameter	low parameter	3.60 (1.26)	.53
Feminine	Ženstveno	Sophistication	Sophistication	Sophistication	2.60 (1.53)	.44
Smooth	Dobro organizovano	Sophistication	low parameter	low parameter	3.82 (1.09)	.48
Outdoorsy	Orijentisano na aktivnosti napolju	Ruggedness	low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	3.64 (1.42)	.31
Masculine	Muževno	Ruggedness	low parameter	low parameter	2.53 (1.54)	.43
Western	Zapadnjački	Ruggedness	Competence	Competence	2.63 (1.39)	.45
Tough	Žilavo	Ruggedness	low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	1.92 (1.43)	.20
Rugged	Sirovo	Ruggedness	low r_{i-t}	Preliminary study	1.66 (1.26)	.04

Note. r_{i-t} = corrected item-total correlation.