

RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE
AMONG AMERICAN PLEASURE TRAVELERS

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GLOSSARY

There are several key terms and abbreviations that are used throughout this thesis. The definitions are given below.

Destination

In the context of this study, the term “destination” refers to large entities, i.e., countries, regions, or major cities, rather than individual attractions within these entities (Echtner, 1991).

Destination image

Different definitions of destination image and discussion of the destination image construct are given in CHAPTER 2. In this study, destination image is understood as a complex, multi-faceted construct that is the sum of interrelated cognitive perceptions and affective evaluations about a destination, which comprise a total holistic impression.

Destination image measurement

Destination image measurement is a methodology adopted for qualitative and quantitative assessment of perceptions that potential visitors hold of a destination in which they do not reside.

Pleasure travelers

In this study, the term “pleasure travelers” is referred to people who conduct “pleasure trips”, i.e., “vacations, sightseeing excursions, as well as trips taken for the purposes of rest and relaxation, visiting friends and family or outdoor recreation” (National Household Travel Survey, 2001).

Ambassadair Travel Club (ATC)

ATC is one of the largest travel clubs in the U.S., which kindly let the author use its membership database for conducting this image study.

Russia/Russian Federation

Russia, or the Russian Federation, is a federal state comprised of 89 administrative entities. Russia is the largest country in the world with the area of 17 mln sq. km (11.5% of the world territory). Russian territories west of the Urals Mountains geographically belong to Europe, whereas areas east of the Urals Mountains belong to Northern Asia.

CIS countries

“The Commonwealth of Independent States... is a confederation or alliance consisting of 12 of the 15 states of the former Soviet Union, the exceptions being the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Its creation signaled the dissolution of the Soviet Union.” (<http://encyclopedia.laborlawtalk.com>, 2005).

DMO/ NTO/ Destination’s tourism authorities

The terms DMO (Destination Marketing Organization), NTO (National Tourism Organization), and/or destination’s tourism authorities are used interchangeably in this study and refer to a destination’s governmental agency responsible for promoting inbound tourism to the destination.

Federal Tourism Agency of Russian Federation (FTA)

The Federal Tourism Agency of Russian Federation, or FTA, is a Russian governmental agency responsible for promoting Russia’s inbound tourism in the world.

Russia’s Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat)

Rosstat (former Russian State Statistics Committee, or Goskomstat) is a governmental statistics agency. One of the annual Rosstat publications is a yearbook “Tourism and tourist resources in Russia”. The 2004 year issue contains information for year 2003 and is published by May, 2005. Therefore, Russian tourism data is available with a two-year lag.

World Tourism Organization (WTO)

“The World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), a specialized agency of the United Nations, is the leading international organization in the field of tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and practical source of tourism know-how. With its headquarters in Madrid, Spain, the WTO plays a central and decisive role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, with the aim of contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms.” (www.world-tourism.org, 2005)

ABSTRACT

Stepchenkova, Svetlana. MS, Purdue University, December, 2005. Russia's Destination Image among American Pleasure Travelers. Major Professor: Alastair M. Morrison.

This study measured Russia's destination image among U.S. pleasure travelers by the means of a Web-based survey. A research instrument comprised of structured and unstructured methodologies was employed. A combination of two software programs, CATPAC and WORDER, was used to analyze responses to free-elicitation questions and to facilitate statistical comparisons of textual data. The study found that American travelers' perceptions of Russia are often negatives and there is a lack of awareness about Russia's destination features. Marketing implications for Russia's Federal Travel Agency based on the study results were discussed.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The purpose of this study is to examine and assess Russia's destination image among American pleasure travelers. Starting in the early 1990s and to date, Russia has undergone changes in the political, economic, and social spheres that have had a huge impact on Russian inbound tourism. While in the former Soviet Union international travelers had limited tourist options to choose from, today, numerous tourist companies offer exciting and diverse Russian tourism products. The openness of Russia as a travel destination and the rising quality of its tourism offer have been reflected in the growing numbers of tourist arrivals for the last 10 years, despite some occasional annual fluctuations (Rosstat, 2004). In 2003, Russia held the 21st position in the world among the top destinations, with 8.02 million international arrivals (WTO, 2004b), and, according to WTO, Russia's tourism potential is 47 million international travelers by 2020 (WTO, 2003), which will place Russia within the 10 most visited countries in the world. The U.S. is one of the most important countries for inbound Russian tourism: in 2003, it had the 5th largest share of visitors to Russia (without arrivals from the former Soviet republics), with the absolute figure of 281,000 travelers (Rosstat, 2004). Given the size of the U.S. tourist market and the fact that American pleasure travelers are the world's leading travel spenders (WTO, 2004a), this segment is very attractive for the Russian tourism industry from an economic standpoint.

In the current marketplace, tourism is one of the fastest growing industries. More people in the world travel to long-haul destinations for vacations and pleasure.

Some destinations become fashionable and then fall out of favor with the tourists for a variety of reasons. In the modern world, there is competition for tourists among the destinations. Why do people prefer one destination over several other, seemingly similar places? This is where a concept of destination image comes into play, since, as consumer behavior theory states (Boulding, 1956), people act on their images, or perceptions, rather than on facts. And vice versa, strong images, or brands, influence people's perceptions of particular destinations (Gensch, 1978; Gartner, 1986). To be successfully promoted in a particular market, "a destination must be favorably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the consumers" (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003:37). A desirable differentiation and positioning can be achieved by a destination's marketing organization by creating and managing the perceptions, or images, that potential travelers hold about the destination. Such differentiation is problematic without a thorough understanding of what visitors' perceptions or images are in the first place (Hunt, 1975; Ahmed, 1991). Destination positioning is a result of a complex set of perceptions, impressions, and feelings that tourists as consumers have for the product, as compared with competing products (Ahmed, 1991). That is why destination marketers want to identify prevailing, most favorable images, in order to position for the most receptive consumer groups. As Morgan & Pritchard (2001:275) pointed out, a country's "clichéd identity can ... be reshaped and given greater complexity through effective and consistent marketing."

1.2. Overall Research Goals

The main overall goal of this study is to identify images that U.S. pleasure travelers hold about Russia as a travel destination. This study aims to answer the following research questions about the Russia' image:

1. What stereotypical holistic images do American pleasure travelers associate with Russia?
2. What affective feelings does Russia as a travel destination evoke?

3. What unique places and features do American pleasure travelers associate with Russia?
4. What are American pleasure travelers' perceptions of Russia's destination attributes? Are all attributes equally important in influencing the decision to travel to the destination?
5. Does the degree of familiarity with the destination (previous visitations, having friends or relatives in Russia) affect the destination image of Russia and propensity to travel there?

To answer these two research questions and to better understand the relationship between image and other travel-related variables, three hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Americans who have visited Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who have not.

Hypothesis 2: Americans who have friends or relatives in Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who do not.

Hypothesis 3: Americans who give higher scores on Harris' and Crompton's attributes will exhibit a higher propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years.

Harris' and Crompton's attributes are listed in section 3.1.1.

The other overall research goal is to test an approach for content analysis of digital textual data, proposed by Stepchenkova & Morrison (2005), on responses to free elicitation questions obtained in a Web-based survey in order to better answer the research questions 1, 2 and 3, as well as provide the means of testing hypotheses 1 and 2 on textual data.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The proposed research has practical significance for modern Russia. To become a competitive global destination, the Federal Tourism Agency of Russian

Federation (FTA) is set to develop Brand Russia (Izvestia, issue 03.11.03), which would firmly position the country among the competitive destinations of Eastern Europe and Asia. However, positioning of the country for the U.S. consumer segment is problematic without a thorough understanding of how Russia as a vacation destination is perceived by potential U.S. pleasure travelers (Hunt, 1975; Ahmed, 1991). The lack of information is evident: destination image literature review conducted by Pike (2002) for the period of 1973-2000 found that only one out of 142 articles had dealt with Russian image, yet, the study of Pizam, Jafari, & Milman (1991) reflected the old, "Soviet" image of the country.

Images can be shared by groups of people (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977) and, as such, encompass stereotypes about a destination (Jenkins, 1999). Furthermore, a number of previous studies (Gunn, 1972; Pearce, 1982; Um & Crompton, 1990; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Baloglu, 1999, 2001) have found a correlation between a destination's image and visitation intent. The analysis of Russian destination image as held by U.S. pleasure travelers should be useful to both FTA and Russian travel providers, to see how Russia is perceived by one of the largest tourist markets in the world, and to counter negative or inaccurate perceptions of potential visitors (Kale & Weir, 1986). Given the size and spending propensity of the U.S. pleasure travel market, this research is important from the economic standpoint for the Russian tourism industry.

The conducted study of Russia's destination image is also timely. Russia as a tourist destination has experienced growth in the last years despite serious difficulties: accommodation shortages, complicated visa procedures, and political instability due to military confrontation in Chechnya and terrorist activity. The 2004 terrorist attacks in Russia resulted in numerous cancellation of trips planned by foreign travelers and further highlighted the importance of maintaining a favorable destination image of the country (Pravda, issue 09.09.2004).

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Destination Image Research

The concept of destination image was introduced into tourism studies in the early 1970s by Hunt (1971, 1975), Mayo (1973), and Gunn (1972) and has since become one of the most researched topics in the field. During the last two decades there have been several attempts to provide an overview of the previous destination image studies in order to help researchers better navigate the field. The earliest reviews were made by Chon (1990) and Echtner & Ritchie (1991), followed by Ko & Park (2000), Gallarza et al. (2002), and Pike (2002) a decade later. These meta-analyses of destination image studies surveyed the body of literature on destination image along the following main streams of research:

1. Conceptualization and dimensions of the destination image construct (Echtner & Ritchie, Ko & Park, Gallarza et al.);
2. Assessment and measurement of destination image (Chon, Echtner & Ritchie, Ko & Park, Gallarza et al., Pike);
3. Formation and change of image (Chon, Ko & Park, Gallarza et al.);
4. Relationship of destination image and traveler buying decision making (Chon);
5. Destination image and tourism development (Chon, Gallarza et al.); and
6. Relationship of destination image and traveler satisfaction with travel (Chon).

Discussion and review of literature on the first four topics is conducted in the following sections of this chapter. Relationship of destination image and traveler

buying decision making is considered from the aspect of the relationship between familiarity with a destination and destination selection behavior. Theoretical aspects of topics 5 and 6, as well as their implications about Russia as a travel destination, are discussed in Chapter 5 with regard to the results of this study.

2.2. Destination Image Construct

The concept of “image” has been studied for several decades in such disciplines as social and environmental psychology, marketing, and consumer behavior (Ahmed, 1996). Studies related to the tourism sector were led by practical necessity to answer questions such as:

- How do potential tourists perceive different destinations?
- Are there any stereotypical images associated with a certain destination shared by large groups of people?
- Are there any positive unique images associated with a certain destination which might make it easier to differentiate from the set of competitive destinations?
- On what basis do tourists make their choices while evaluating their destination alternatives?

These studies have made numerous attempts to conceptualize the destination image construct. However, a number of scholars noted that due to its complexity, subjectivity, and elusive nature, the concept of destination image has not yet been well defined and has been understood differently by different researchers (Chon, 1990; Ko & Park, 2000; Gallarza et al., 2002; White, 2004). In the next sections of this chapter different interpretations and conceptualizations of the destination image construct are discussed.

2.2.1. Image as an overall impression

By some tourism researchers, destination image is considered as simply an overall impression. Hunt (1971) stated that “state tourism image is the impression

that a person holds about a state in which they do not reside” (cited in Gartner & Hunt, 1987:15). A similar interpretation of what constitutes destination image is held by Reilly (1990), who cited Ditcher’s definition from the social psychology field: “The concept of ‘image’ can be applied to a political candidate, a product, a country. It describes not individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others” (Dichter, 1985:75). This view of destination image as an overall impression is rooted in psychological tradition and consumer behavior theory, where image has long been viewed as

- The sum total of the impressions a consumer receives from many sources (Herzog, 1963);
- A total perception of a product that is formed by processing information from various sources over time (Assael, 1984);
- A mental representation of an object or place which is not physically before the observer (Fridgen, 1987).

However, operationalization of the destination image construct, based on understanding image as an overall impression, without breaking it into separate, more evaluative elements, is problematic.

2.2.2. Cognitive and affective components of destination image

Tourism scholars generally agree that destination image holds at least two distinctive components – cognitive and affective. The cognitive, or perceptual, element refers to one’s knowledge and beliefs about a destination, while affective element refers to a traveler’s feelings towards a destination. Definitions of destination image from this school of thought can be found in Baloglu & Brinberg (1997) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999) and include:

- The expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices, and emotional thoughts an individual or a group has of a particular object or place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977);

- An overall or total impression, which is formed as a result of the evaluation of individual attributes, which may contain both a cognitive and emotional component (Oxenfeldt, 1974-1975; Dichter, 1985);
- A set of cognitions and affects that represent an entity to an individual (Mazursky & Jacoby, 1986);
- A perceptual phenomenon formed through consumers' reasoned and emotional interpretation (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990).

Despite the composite nature of the destination image construct, in most destination image studies researchers emphasized the cognitive dimension (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Pike & Ryan, 2004) and interpreted destination image as:

- Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979:18);
- Organized representations of a destination in a cognitive system (Crompton, 1977);
- Perceptions of vacation attributes (Richardson & Crompton, 1988:128);
- Sum of knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, evaluations and attitudes towards a destination (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993).

Strong support for cognitive interpretation of image as a set of relevant attributes is given by Gensch (1978): "Products seldom are measured or evaluated as single lump sum entities; rather, it is the attributes of the alternatives that are measured, compared, and form the basis for choice" (cited in Gartner, 1986:636). This view was further supported by Engel et al. (1986), who stated that image is the consumer's subjective perceptions, which refer to how an alternative performs on important evaluative criteria. In this particular study, the cognitive component of destination image is understood as perceptions of vacation attributes that a potential pleasure traveler holds toward Russia as a travel destination.

Social and environmental psychological tradition regards cognition and affect as interrelated elements, where affect is largely dependent on cognition; references to his view can be found in Baloglu & McCleary (1999). However, Russel & Snodgrass (1987) argued that the affective component should be separated from the perceptual/cognitive component to better understand how people evaluate environments or places. The affective component of destination image expresses feelings toward a destination, which can be favorable, unfavorable, or neutral. Gartner (1993) suggests that the affective component comes into play at the stage when different travel alternatives are evaluated. Affect has generally been overlooked by destination image researchers: only six out of 142 studies surveyed by Pike (2002) studied affective images.

2.2.3. Three-element model of destination image

Some tourism scholars (Gartner, 1993; Pike & Ryan, 2004; White, 2004) also recognize a third – conative, or behavioral, – element in the destination image construct, which is related to how a traveler acts toward a destination on the basis of cognition and affect they have about it. Conation reflects a likelihood of destination selection, or brand purchase, and can be interpreted as a propensity to visit a destination within a certain time frame (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Cognitive, affective, and conative components are interrelated and form a hierarchical structure (Gartner, 1993). This view is based on a three-component model of attitudes from psychology, which states that attitudes are formed through interactions of cognitive, affective, and behavior elements. Numerous references as to the evolution of the three-element model can be found in Breckler (1984). However, a distinction between images and attitudes has not been firmly established in the destination image studies (Ko & Park, 2000; White, 2004), and these terms are often used interchangeably. One view is that “‘images’ as opposed to attitudes must not contain judgments relating to objective, denotative evaluation criteria. The image construct implies some overriding impression or stereotype” (Mazanec and Schweiger, 1981, cited in Gartner 1993:192).

The conative element of destination image is influenced by both cognitive and affective components. Gartner (1986) and Ahmed (1991) state that product image in tourism heavily depends on attribute perceptions rather than attributes themselves, and that people act on their perceptions rather than on facts. Not all destinations' attributes, however, are equally important in influencing the decision to travel. According to Harris (1972) and Crompton (1977), the most influential, or highest importance, destination attributes in determining destination choices are (in descending order): 1) safe drinking water and clean sanitary facilities; 2) assuredness of being safe from physical harm; 3) finding real scenic beauty; 4) cost of trip; 5) friendly and welcoming people in the country; 6) good weather and climate; 7) ability to visit famous cities; 8) good quality food; 9) chance to see how people really live; and 10) knowing something of a country's history. Hypothesis 3 of this study was set to determine whether a more positive evaluation of these 10 attributes results in higher propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years.

With regard to the affective dimension, Russel and Snodgrass (1987:246) argue that "behavior may be influenced by the (estimated, perceived, or remembered) affective quality of an environment rather than by its objective properties directly." Furthermore, there are recent indications that emotions might be better predictors of behavior than perceptual evaluations (Yu & Dean 2001; White 2003).

2.2.4. Destination image construct by Echtner & Ritchie (1991)

In the whole body of destination image studies, Echner & Ritchie (1991, 1993) proposed a somewhat unique conceptualization of the destination image construct. Based on an extensive review of literature on destination image research for the period of 1975 – 1990, they concluded that it had favored quantitative techniques of image measurement that did not fully capture all aspects of destination image. As a result of their analysis, Echner & Ritchie

(1991:11) proposed the following conceptualization of the destination image construct:

- Destination image should be envisioned as consisting of two main components; those that are attribute based and those that are holistic.
- Each of these components of destination image contains functional, or more tangible, and psychological, or more abstract, characteristics.
- Images of destinations can also range from those based on “common” functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras.

It can be seen that this approach recognizes both cognitive and affective components of destination image, as well as image as an overall impression, and, in this way, is consistent with MacKay's & Fesenmaier's (1997:538) view that “a destination image is a composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression.” The attribute-based component is captured by a series of scale items that range from tangible, or functional (beaches, shops, sports facilities, etc.), to more intangible, or psychological (receptiveness of local people, quality of service, etc.). These attributes also represent a common dimension of a destination, since every destination can be evaluated on the basis of these general criteria.

The holistic component is captured by two open-ended items (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991:11):

- “What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXXXX as a travel destination?”
- “How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXXXX?”

The first question is functional, while the second one is more psychologically oriented. Responses to the second item include affective evaluations, such as exciting, relaxing, boring, etc., and, therefore, resemble the Baloglu & Brinberg

(1997) affective component (White, 2004). Altogether, the holistic component is positioned as a mental picture, or overall representation, of the destination, and, as such, resembles the overall component of the destination image. The holistic component is important for understanding how a particular destination is categorized in the minds of consumers, and what prevailing images and stereotypes are associated with a given destination. In the further sections of this thesis, images derived from the answers to these two questions will be referred to as “stereotypical” and “affective”, respectively. The uniqueness dimension is assessed by the item:

- “Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXXXX.” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991:11)

This component is very important for differentiating a destination from a competitive set of destinations, and will be further referred to as “uniqueness image”.

Based on the preceding discussion, Echtner’s & Ritchie’s (1993) conceptualization of the destination image construct lies within the cognitive-affective-overall image tradition. The valuable contribution of their approach to the destination image research body is that these authors suggested a conceptual framework for operationalization of all specified components of destination image, as well as proposed a convenient format for visual representation of the image components. Their methodological approach will be discussed in section 2.3 of this chapter.

2.3. Destination Image Measurement

Perceptual, affective, and behavioral phenomena require the selection of appropriate techniques for their measurement. Typically, destination image research employs Likert or semantic differential scales to measure the image construct. There have been numerous studies that examined psychometric properties of various scales: their list can be found in Driskoll et al. (1994). In the

last three decades, image research has greatly benefited from the advancements of data handling methodology and introduction of such techniques as factor analysis, discriminant analysis, multidimensional scaling (MDS), correspondence analysis, perceptual maps, conjoint analysis, etc. to image assessment (Mazanec, 1994). However, the majority of studies reviewed by Pike (2002) favored measuring the cognitive component by using the Likert scale, and the subsequent factor analysis for data reduction was a common technique to employ. There are much fewer studies which measured the affective component with the use of semantic differential scales, e.g., Baloglu & Brinberg (1997), and just a few which measured both components in the same study, e.g., Pike and Ryan (2004). One of the reasons of such disproportion might be that cognition, affect, and conation require separate measurement scales (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Thus, surveys incorporating all three components can be burdensome for respondents.

The framework proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) has three main advantages, which made it a popular approach for destination image measurement. First, it uses structured and unstructured methodologies for operationalization of all components of destination image. Three open-ended questions, which capture holistic functional and psychological elements of destination image, as well as its unique component, were developed by a panel of academic experts and practitioners in the tourism field. These questions were proved to be capable of providing the stereotypical and unique images of destinations in a number of subsequent studies (Murphy, 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003; Rezende-Parker et al., 2003). Second, the questionnaire contains a parsimonious set of 35 attribute scales, which is used for measuring common, attribute-based elements of destination image. In designing the scale, Echtner & Ritchie followed the framework proposed by Churchill (1979) for marketing studies. Steps such as specifying the domain of the image construct, generating a sample of items, purifying the measure using Cronbach's alpha as an indicator,

and iterative factor analysis were conducted. Thus, the issues of content validity, dimensionality, and internal consistency reliability (Peter, 1979) of the proposed scale were addressed by the researchers. However, the issues of assessing the reliability with new data and construct validity (convergent and discriminant) were left to be dealt with in the subsequent research. Finally, the results can be easily visualized. Echtner & Ritchie (1993) proposed a comprehensive visual format for destination image by placing image elements along three pairs of axes, i.e., functional-psychological/attribute-holistic, attribute-holistic/common-unique, and common-unique/functional-psychological. Placing image elements with the highest frequencies in the corresponding plain quadrants provides uncluttered visualizations of the main aspects of destination image sufficient for both categorization (stereotypical holistic impressions) and differentiation (unique destination features and auras) of a given destination.

2.4. Destination Image Formation and Change

Destination image is a varying, evolving construct. It depends on the traveler's personality, previous experience with a destination, as well as amount and quality of information received about a particular destination. A number of destination image formation models have been proposed in the last three decades (Gunn, 1972; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) that suggest that destination image is developed under the influence of different information sources, or agents, which can be basically divided into organic and induced categories, a division first proposed by Gunn (1972). The destination image construct, therefore, can be considered from the aspect of how it is formed, i.e., has organic and induced components. The organic component is the knowledge acquired in the natural course of life, while the induced component is influenced by the marketing efforts of the destination and suppliers.

A detailed typology of destination image formation agents from the perspectives of their influence and credibility can be found in Gartner (1993). As Gartner

argues, more credible agents are those that do not have a vested interest in promoting a destination, i.e., mass-media broadcast news, television programs, documentaries, travel guides, books, etc., as well as word of mouth, which are further collectively referred to as organic information sources. More than 10 years after Gartner's work, the online versions of these sources could also be included in the organic group. The influence and credibility of organic information sources was confirmed, albeit to a moderate degree, by Beerli & Martin (2004), who tested whether the importance attached to these sources significantly influenced the cognitive component of the perceived destination image of first-time tourists to Lanzarote, Spain. Research conducted by Stepchenkova, et al. (2005) revealed that main organic image themes about Russia in U.S. general media for the period of 2002-2004 were associated with foreign policy, economy, human rights issues, the Chechnya conflict, space co-operation, sports, and human exchange.

Induced sources include tour operators' travel brochures and Website content, promotional videos, advertisements, etc. The possibility for destination image to be induced has important marketing implications. Although the physical product, i.e., the destination's attributes and attractions, is rarely altered or altered slowly, the potential visitor's perceptions, or images, can be manipulated through informational sources. Generally, a country's DMO has very little or even no influence over organic sources, although it is important for the DMOs to know what is being communicated about the country by organic agents to the potential travel audience. Based on the knowledge of the current media coverage, the DMO can amplify the positive aspects of the image, as well as counter, if needed, negative or inaccurate information in their induced materials (Kale & Weir, 1986). Gartner (1993) summarized several basic principles with regard to destination image change that can be used as guidelines in any marketing activity of a destination's DMO. They are:

- The larger the entity, the more slowly images change;

- Induced image formation attempts must be focused and long term;
- The smaller the entity in relation to the whole, the less of a chance to develop an independent image; and
- Effective image change depends on an assessment of presently held tourism images.

The last principle is particularly pertinent to this study. Before destination image can be used to influence destination choice, it is important to understand what images are and what factors form the image (Hunt, 1975; Brokaw, 1990).

Knowing factors influencing image would help to identify target markets and develop image promotion strategies to different segments of the market (Goodall, 1990).

2.5. Familiarity and Destination Image

Familiarity plays important role in destination image formation. It influences destination perceptions and attractiveness (Hu & Ritchie, 1993) and represents a key marketing variable in segmenting and targeting the potential visitors (Baloglu, 2001). Familiarity can be understood as previous experience with a destination (experience dimension) and knowledge about it (informational dimension).

One stream of research on familiarity and destination image compares pre- and post-visitation destination images. Phelps (1986) recognizes secondary destination images, as formed by travelers' exposure to different information sources, and primary images, which are created after actual visitation. Her research, as well as the studies done by Pearce (1982), Chon (1991), and Dann (1996) suggest that visitation affects images and changes some of the perceptions about a destination. Post-visitor perceptions were found to be more positive than those of pre-visitors. However, there are indications that a relationship between visitation and destination images is more complicated. Pizam et al. (1991) studied pre- and post-images of a group of U.S. students who visited the Soviet Union, and found that, basically, the images stayed the same.

The other stream of research is set to determine how destination images differ between visitors and non-visitors (Fridgen, 1987; Ahmed, 1991; Chon, 1991; Millman & Pizam, 1995) or non-visitors, first-timers and repeated visitors (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Images of visitors tend to be more favorable; however, no significant differences were found between perceptions of first-timers and repeated visitors. This suggests that most changes in destination image occur during the first visitation.

Previous visitation is not the only measure of familiarity. Informational familiarity is understood as exposure to information sources, from which potential tourists are likely to receive destination related information. However, measuring a degree of exposure to informational sources presents certain difficulties. In his study, Baloglu (2001) developed a destination familiarity index, based on the reported number of information sources his research subjects were exposed to. The larger the number, the larger familiarity index was assigned to a subject. It would be reasonable to suggest, however, that not all reported sources might have been equally influential in shaping the destination image of the respondents. Among informational sources, "word of mouth" is considered to be particularly influential with regard to destination image promotion (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In this study, a "friends or relatives in Russia" variable was selected as a proxy to a word of mouth information source variable.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Instrument

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What stereotypical holistic images do American pleasure travelers associate with Russia?
2. What affective feelings does Russia as a travel destination evoke?
3. What unique places and features do American pleasure travelers associate with Russia?
4. What are American pleasure travelers' perceptions of Russia's destination attributes? Are all attributes equally important in influencing the decision to travel to the destination?
5. Does a degree of familiarity with the destination (previous visitations, friends or relatives in Russia) affect the destination image of Russia and propensity to travel there?

These research questions were associated with three research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Americans who have visited Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who have not.

Hypothesis 2: Americans who have friends or relatives in Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who do not.

Hypothesis 3: Americans who give higher scores on Harris' and Crompton's attributes will exhibit a higher propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years.

The central part of this study was to assess the image of Russia as a tourist destination as held by U.S. pleasure travelers. The image measurement approach followed the framework developed by Echtner & Ritchie (1993), who suggested a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies to assess destination image along the following dimensions: attributes – holistic, functional – psychological, and common – unique. As was discussed in section 2.2.4, these dimensions can be also interpreted as stereotypical, affective, and common/uniqueness components of Russia's destination image. The conative, or behavioral, component in this study was assessed by measuring the likelihood that a person would visit the destination in the next five years.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts, the full version of the survey instrument is given in Appendix A. Three open-ended questions from Part 1, as formulated by Echtner & Ritchie (1993), were directly linked to research questions 1, 2, and 3 about the stereotypical, affective, and uniqueness aspects of Russia's destination image. Questions on whether a respondent had visited Russia before, and had friends or relatives in Russia, were included to obtain information for testing hypotheses 1 and 2. Question about the affective images and familiarity with the destination information provided the basis to test hypotheses 1 and 2 for textual survey responses.

In Part 2, 44 attribute-based questions measured on 1 to 5 Likert scale, where value "1" corresponded to Strongly Agree and value "5" corresponded to Strongly Disagree, were included to address the research question 4 about American travelers' perceptions of Russia's destination attributes. One item about respondents' propensity to visit Russia in the next five years was included to test the hypothesis 3 for 10 Harris' and Crompton's attributes. Evaluations of 44 Russia's destination attributes, together with information about familiarity with the destination obtained from Part 1, provided the basis to test hypotheses 1 and 2 for attribute-based items. Part 3 asked the respondents for their demographic

characteristics: gender, the highest level of education they had obtained, the type of job they hold, their age, marital status, and income, to address the research questions 1 through 5. The conceptualization of the destination image construct for this study is given in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Operationalization of Research Questions

3-element Model	Echtner & Ritchie (1991)	Russia's Image Study: Operationalization of the Image Components
Overall Impression	Holistic Functional (open-ended)	RQ1: Stereotypical Holistic Images: What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination? (E&R)
Affect	Holistic Psychological (open-ended)	RQ2: Affective Images: How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia?(E&R)
Cognition	Unique Destination Features (open-ended)	RQ3: Uniqueness Images: Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Russia. (E&R)
	Common attributes, functional and psychological (35 scale items)	RQ4: Perceptions of Attributes, 44 scale items 34 (common) – E&R 10 (common) – H&C (3 are different from E&R) 7 (Russia specific) – Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2005; Stepchenkova, Chen, & Morrison, 2005.
Behavior		RQ5: Behavioral Component: I will visit Russia in the next 5 years (Propensity variable). Scale item.

3.1.1. Construction of the list of attributes

The list of Russia's destination attributes was constructed using several sources including works of Echtner & Ritchie (1993), Harris (1972), Crompton (1977), and Stepchenkova & Morrison (2005). As a result of literature review, focus group discussions and experts' assessments, Echtner & Ritchie specified 35 main destination attributes arranged along the functional –psychological continuum, with such attributes as museums, beaches, shopping facilities on the “functional” end, and atmosphere, reputation, or quality of service on the opposed

“psychological” end. All Echtner’s & Ritchie’s attributes represent common features of a destination and are on the “common” end of the common – unique continuum. The original questionnaire (Echtner, 1991), with two items for each attribute, was obtained. For this study, it was decided to use only one item per attribute to shorten the questionnaire, and, therefore, reduce the burden on the respondents. Two attributes, namely, Degree of Urbanization (items “Most of the people live in rural areas” and “Russia is highly urbanized”) and Extent of Commercialization (items “Russia is unspoiled and undeveloped for tourists” and “Russia has been overly commercialized for tourists”) were thought to be better applicable to small destinations and confusing for such a large country as Russia. These attributes were excluded from the final version of the research instrument. An Accommodation/Restaurants attribute was split into two items: “There are few good quality hotels in Russia” and “First class restaurants are easy to find in Russia.” It was thought that the change was justified because accommodation shortage is a known problem for the Russian tourist sector, but the situation is much better with restaurants.

To be able to test the hypothesis 3, the lists of attributes by Echtner and Ritchie and by Harris and Crompton were compared. Six out of 10 Harris’ and Crompton’s attributes have their equivalents in the Echtner’s & Ritchie’s list: safe drinking water and clean sanitary facilities, assuredness of safety, finding real scenic beauty, friendly and welcoming people in the country, good weather and climate, and ability to visit famous cities. To shorten the survey, a single item was developed to correspond to “Cost of trip” attribute by Harris and Crompton and “Costs/Price levels” attribute by Echtner & Ritchie: “Overall, vacations in Russia offer a good value for the dollar.” The phrasing of the item was borrowed from previous studies conducted for the ATC by Purdue Hospitality and Research Center (Morrison et al., 2004). The other three Harris’ and Crompton’s attributes – good quality food, chance to see how people really live, knowing something of a country’s history – were included in the survey.

Prior to this research, the author conducted two exploratory studies (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2005; Stepchenkova et al., 2005) to gain insights into some aspects of Russia's destination image. In addition, five travel professionals and seven 'ordinary' people were asked to provide answers via e-mail to the three Echtner's & Ritchie's open-ended questions on Russia's image. As a result of these prior efforts, seven attributes were added to the questionnaire: Cruises, Combined Trips, Non-Capital Russia, Fishing and Hunting, Unique Natural Resources, Trans-Siberian Railroad, and Arts.

3.1.2. Item selection and phrasing

To ensure clarity of the survey instrument, the phrasing of attribute items was borrowed, when possible, from the work of Echtner & Ritchie (1993) and Kale & Weir (1986). Criteria for attribute and item selection and phrasing were specified as follows:

1. Relevance to Russia. E.g., item "Nightlife and entertainment are available in most cities" (Kale & Weir, 1986) was preferred over items "Russia has good nightlife" and "Russia offers a large variety of entertainment at night" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993), since nightlife and entertainment can be found mostly in cities of a certain size, rather than in rural areas or in national parks. The phrasing by Echtner & Ritchie was considered as confusing when applied to Russia.
2. Short and easy to read. E.g., item "Russia has impressive scenery" was preferred over the item "Russia offers a lot in terms of natural scenic beauty" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).
3. Varying but simple language structure to keep a subject's interest: There are numerous...; Russia has...; Russian cities are...; Russia offers...
4. One negatively formulated sentence for every five items to reduce the number of "yes" or "no" saying tendencies (Churchill, 1979).
5. Possible negative score on any single attribute/item should indicate the area of improvement for the FTA. According to this criterion, the

Accessibility item “Entry formalities (visas, border crossings) are simple” was preferred over “There are many packaged vacations available to Russia, ” since the FTA, arguably, has more influence over entry procedures than over the creation of vacation packages for such companies as the Ambassador Travel Club.

Table 3-1 shows the sources of both the survey attributes and item phrasing.

Table 3-2 Russia’s Destination Image Attribute Items

Source	Attribute	Survey Item	Phrase	Survey #
E&R*	Tourist sites/activities	Russia has a large variety of tourist attractions to visit.	SS****	Q2-3
E&R	National Parks/wilderness activities	Russia lacks nature preserves and wildlife areas.	E&R	Q2-2
E&R	Historic sites/museums	Numerous historical sites and museums exist in Russia.	E&R	Q2-1
E&R	Beaches	Russia has nice beaches for swimming.	E&R	Q2-4
E&R	Fairs, Exhibits, Festivals	There are very few interesting festivals and celebrations to observe.	E&R	Q2-7
H&C**; E&R	Scenery/natural attractions	Russia has impressive scenery.	E&R	Q2-5
E&R	Nightlife and entertainment	Nightlife and entertainment are available in most cities.	K&W***	Q2-6
E&R	Shopping facilities	Shopping facilities are poor in Russia.	E&R	Q2-13
E&R	Facilities for information and tours	Tours/excursions are readily available in Russia.	E&R	Q2-10
E&R	Sports facilities/activities	There are many opportunities to engage in sports activities.	E&R	Q2-9
E&R	Local infrastructure/transportation	Local transportation in Russia is convenient.	K&W	Q2-8
H&C; E&R	Cities	There are many attractive cities in Russia.	E&R	Q2-11
E&R	Accommodation/restaurants	There are few good quality hotels in Russia.	SS/E&R	Q2-35
		First class restaurants are easy to find in Russia.	SS/E&R	Q2-43
E&R	Architecture/buildings	There is a lot of interesting architecture in Russia.	E&R	Q2-23
H&C; E&R	Costs/price levels	Overall, vacations in Russia offer a good value for the dollar.	M*****	Q2-12
H&C; E&R	Climate	Russia has a disagreeable climate.	E&R	Q2-17
E&R	Crowdedness	Russian cities are crowded.	S-M J*****	Q2-22
H&C; E&R	Cleanliness	Local standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high.	E&R	Q2-16
E&R	Economic development	The standard of living in Russia is high.	E&R	Q2-24

E&R	Political stability	There is a lot of political instability and turmoil in Russia.	K&W	Q2-29
E&R	Accessibility	Entry formalities (visas, border crossings) are simple.	E&R	Q2-14
H&C; E&R	Personal safety	In general, Russia is a safe place to visit.	E&R	Q2-18
E&R	Ease of communication	Many people speak English in Russia.	E&R	Q2-19
E&R	Customs/culture	Very distinctive customs and culture exist in Russia.	SS/E&R	Q2-20
E&R	Different cuisine/food and drink	There is interesting local cuisine to sample.	E&R	Q2-15
H&C; E&R	Hospitality/friendliness	Russian people are friendly.	E&R	Q2-21
E&R	Restful/relaxing	Russia is a restful and relaxing place to visit.	E&R	Q2-26
E&R	Atmosphere (familiar vs. exotic)	In Russia, everything is different and fascinating.	E&R	Q2-40
E&R	Opportunity for adventure	Russia is a good place for adventure tourism (skiing, kayaking, mountaineering, etc.)	SS	Q2-25
E&R	Opportunity to increase knowledge	Russia is a good destination for an educational or learning experience.	E&R	Q2-30
E&R	Family or adult oriented	Russia appeals more to adults than children.	E&R	Q2-28
E&R	Quality of service	There is a shortage of well-trained staff in hotels and restaurants.	E&R	Q2-39
E&R	Fame/reputation	Russia's tourist attractions are well-known and famous.	E&R	Q2-27
H&C	Good quality food	Quality food is readily available in Russia.	SS	Q2-31
H&C	Knowledge of country's history	I have some knowledge of the Russia history.	SS	Q2-32
H&C	Chance to see how people really live	In Russia there are numerous opportunities to see how people really live.	SS	Q2-33
SS	Cruises	Boat rides and cruises are available in Russia.	K&W	Q2-34
SS	Combined trips	Trips to Russia can be easily combined with trips to other countries (e.g., Finland, China, and Ukraine)	SS	Q2-36
SS	Non-capital Russia	There are many historical attractions in Russia besides Moscow and St.Petersburg.	SS	Q2-41
SS	Fishing and hunting	There are ample opportunities for fishing and hunting in Russia.	SS	Q2-38
SS	Unique natural resources	Russia has unique natural attractions of global importance (e.g., lakes, mountains, etc.)	SS	Q2-37
SS	Trans-Sib	Travel by a trans-Siberian train provides opportunities to see authentic Russia.	SS	Q2-44
SS	Arts	Russia offers opportunities to see world-class performances (opera, ballet, etc.)	SS	Q2-42

*E&R - Echtner (1991); **H&C - Harris (1972), Crompton (1977); ***K&W - Kale & Weir (1986); ****SS - Stepchenkova & Morrison (2005); *****M - Morrison et al.(2004); *****S-M J - Jeon, 2003

3.1.3. Independent and dependent variables

The independent variables in this study were: “previous visitations”, “having friends or relatives in Russia”, and six demographic variables – “gender”, “education”, “occupation”, “age”, “marital status”, and “income”. The “previous visitations” and “having friends or relatives in Russia” variables are nominal type of data with yes/no responses. The “gender”, “occupation”, and “marital status” variables are nominal type of data, with two, ten, and four levels respectively. The “education”, “age”, and “income” variables are ordinal type of data with seven, six, and seven levels respectively.

There were three dependent variables in this study: the “Russia’s image”, “favorability”, and “propensity” variables. The composite “Russia’s image” variable consists of 44 semi-continuous attribute variables measured on a scale from 1 to 5, and three complex textual image variables obtained from open-ended questions. In this particular study, the “Russia’s image” variable is a function of the “previous visitations”, “having friends or relatives in Russia”, and demographic variables. The “favorability” variable described in section 3.5 of this chapter is of continuous type and its values lie within [-10; +10] interval. This variable is a function of the “previous visitations” and “having friends or relatives in Russia” variables. The “propensity” variable is of semi-continuous type and ranges from 1 to 5. This variable is a function of Harris’ and Crompton’s attributes and the “favorability” variable.

3.1.4. Population for the study

Ambassador is America’s oldest and largest private travel club, serving tens of thousands of families in many states (~75,000 members, 30,000 households). However, the majority of Ambassador members are people from the American Midwest. According to the study of the Ambassador membership by Morrison et al. (2004), more than three thirds of ATC members are in the “45 and older” age group. The majority of Ambassador travelers are highly educated (60% hold

Bachelor's and postgraduate degrees) and relatively well-off. More than half of the households have an annual income of USD 75,000 or larger. Only 25% are single or widowed. ATC travelers are mostly managers, professionals, self-employed, and retirees. The Ambassador membership demographic profile can be found in Appendix F.

The population for this study were Ambassador Travel Club members with Internet access. According to the ATC, the size of this population is about 20 thousand. For the purposes of this study, a random sample of 5,000 e-mail addresses was selected from the Ambassador database.

3.1.5. Web-based surveys

The study was conducted in the form of a Web-based survey. Online surveys are gaining in popularity in the modern information age. They have a number of advantages over paper-based surveys, such as eliminated costs of paper and postage, as well as highly reduced costs of data entry. The time required to implement a Web-based survey is shortened as well. Reminders and follow-up letters are easy to administer, and data can be imported into data analysis programs relatively easily (Dillman, 2000; Archer, 2003).

The main disadvantage of online surveys is that the actual sample is limited to those with Internet access. An Ambassador database contained ~20,000 e-mail addresses, while the total membership amounted to ~75,000 people. Additionally, even connected, not all respondents are equally computer savvy, which can lead to mistakes and invalid entries. Screen configurations may be significantly different from one respondent to another, depending on settings of individual computers, which prevents consistency of administering of the survey (Dillman, 2000; Archer, 2003).

Microsoft Front Page software was used to design the Web-based questionnaire for this study. The survey was placed onto a secure Website which supported Front Page scripts for data collection. The cover page of the survey was placed onto a Purdue University supported server to emphasize the affiliation with Purdue University. Screen snapshots of the survey are given in Appendix A. There was no direct link that would allow the researcher to connect survey responses to the subjects. IP addresses were initially saved in order to eliminate duplicate responses. After this procedure was done, the IP addresses were permanently deleted.

3.1.6. Data collection

The clarity of the proposed research instrument, as well as technical issues associated with online surveys, was tested in July 2005 using a group of graduate students from Purdue University university. As a result of the testing procedure, the Internet Explorer browser was suggested for the respondents to use, since the first page of the survey was not represented as it was supposed to be by the Mozilla Firefox browser. Also, upon completion of the testing procedure, a change in phrasing of one attribute-based survey item, namely Cities, was made. The final phrasing of the Cities attribute was by Echtner & Ritchie.

The data was collected in July-August 2005. E-mail letters with an invitation to participate in Russia's Image Study by completing an online questionnaire were sent by the Ambassador Travel Club management team to 5,000 Ambassador members. The sample size represented approximately 25% of the Club's total e-mail database. The link to access the online survey was provided in the invitation letter (Appendix B. Invitation Letter to Ambassador Members). One hundred and eighty-nine responses were collected in the first round. A follow-up letter was sent to the same group of Ambassador members with a reminder to take part in the study a week after the survey was released (Appendix B. Follow-up Letter to

Ambassadair Members). One hundred and forty-eight responses were collected in the second round. The data collection period lasted three weeks. The total number of Russia's Destination Image Survey Website hits was 503. The total number of submitted responses was 341, the number of usable responses was 337. There were 25 respondents who had the same IP addresses among them, though no two responses were the same. These IP addresses were checked to ensure that the same addresses were given by the Internet provider to a number of residents because they were connected to the same gateway.

Since the survey design did not force respondents to answer all questions (though they were asked to do so), several submitted surveys contained missing data. A certain percentage of respondents chose not to submit some of the demographic data about themselves; predictably, the highest number of refusals was for the income question, where the refusal rate equaled 14.6%. Overall, the open-ended questions produced fewer responses than the attribute statements. The three open-ended questions are coded for the convenience of further reference as Q1-3 (stereotypical image), Q1-4 (affective image), and Q1-5 (uniqueness image). Some people left one or more answer fields blank, some put "None comes to mind" or "Don't know." Out of 337 total survey responses, the number of useful responses for open-ended questions was as follows:

- Q1-3: What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination – 316;
- Q1-4: How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia – 313;
- Q1-5: Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Russia – 273.

Some respondents chose to give the same answers to questions Q1-3 and Q1-4 or Q1-3 and Q1-5, putting in the answer field "See above", "Same as #3", or "See # 3". There were 11 such entries, and substitutions were made as indicated.

There were a number of responses that contained missing values for one or a few attributes. However, the number of missing entries was small relative to the sample size, and the responses with missing entries were kept in the data.

3.2. Analysis of Textual Data: Proposed Approach

The composite nature of the destination image construct presents great challenges for its measurement. Strong preference has been given to structured methods of image measurement when data were obtained as answers to closed-ended survey questions (Pike, 2002). While structured methodologies have a number of advantages over qualitative methods, they focus on particular destination attributes and generally neglect the holistic, or overall, aspect of destination image. Qualitative studies, on the contrary, are advantageous to measuring the holistic aspect, but do not facilitate statistical and comparative analyses of destination images (Jenkins, 1999). The nature of this difficulty is two-fold. The primary problem is operationalization of the variables of interest based on the information contained in textual data, while the secondary problem is purely technical – obtaining the responses on these variables from every observation in the sample.

Among the studies that dealt with content analysis of textual or pictorial materials are those by Reilly (1990), Echtner & Ritchie (1993), Dann (1996), MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997), Tapachai & Waryszak, (2000), Andsager & Drzewiecka (2002), and Echtner (2002). These researchers employed sorting and categorization techniques to identify the frequencies of certain words, concepts, objects, or people, which, for ease of reference, will be referred to as meaningful words. The most frequent meaningful words in these and other qualitative studies were treated as image variables, or dimensions, of the destination image construct. Thus, the complex and multi-dimensional concept of destination image is simplified to a set of meaningful words and themes most frequently mentioned by the respondents. The final set of image variables can contain nouns, verbs,

and descriptors (i.e., adjectives and adverbs), since nouns are used to focus attention on attractions (e.g., museums, Lake Baikal), verbs describe actions or tourism types (e.g., rafting, sightseeing), and descriptors (e.g., ancient, exciting) create atmosphere (Echtner, 2002).

One of the overall goals for this study was to test a content analysis approach proposed by Stepchenkova & Morrison (2005) on answers to open-ended survey questions in order to better answer the research questions 1, 2 and 3, as well as provide the means of testing hypotheses 1 and 2 on textual data. The proposed approach uses a combination of long-on-the-market CATPAC software (Woelfel, 1998) and the recently developed WORDER program (Kirilenko, 2004). As stated in the CATPAC II manual, "CATPAC is a self-organizing artificial neural network that has been optimized for reading text. CATPAC is able to identify the most important words in a text and determine patterns of similarity based on the way they are used in text." (Woelfel, 1998:11). CATPAC has been employed in content analysis of political speeches, focus groups interviews, marketing and tourism-related research (Schmidt, 1998; Doerfel & Marsh, 2003; Kim et al., 2005). However, CATPAC analyzes only one textual file at a time, and the program's output format is not very convenient for further SPSS input. WORDER software can count up to 1,000 specified words in up to 1,000 textual files in one run, which opens broad possibilities for the researchers working with qualitative data. The table formatted output makes the transfer of the results into any other statistical software package quick and easy. Ultimately, the approach allows: 1) identification of destination image variables in free elicitation responses using CATPAC; and 2) counting the occurrences of these variables in every response with WORDER. How the proposed approach deals with such problems of content analysis as different spellings, multi-word concepts, synonyms, singular/plural, negatives, is described in 3.2.1.

3.2.1. Special problems of content analysis

Normally, a laborious ‘smoothing out’ process regarding the meaningful words should be performed on the textual data prior to using the CATPAC program (Schmidt, n.d.). Different spellings of variables of interest, as well as synonyms, multi-word concepts, singular/plural, and negatives have to be identified and appropriate changes made in the textual data. The proposed approach of combining CATPAC and WORDER makes the process of “cleaning-up” the data consistent and much quicker than if done by hand.

Spelling issue. Proper names can be misspelled in a number of ways, because it is always difficult to transliterate proper nouns to a different language. One is bound to meet different spellings, e.g., Saint-Petersburg versus Sankt-Petersburg. Even within a single response, spelling may be inconsistent; across all responses the issue is further amplified. Every misspelling will be counted as a different word by CATPAC and, therefore, alter the real picture of image variables frequencies. WORDER can perform a “smoothing out” process, as indicated by the researcher, to make the spelling consistent across all responses.

Multi-word concepts. Another potential problem is multi-word concepts, e.g., “Peter the Great” would be broken down by CATPAC as single words and counted separately. In the final output given by CATPAC, it would be difficult to distinguish how many times the word “great” referred to Peter the Great and how often it was counted with the meaning of “magnificent” or “splendid.” WORDER can change multi-word concepts, e.g., “Peter the Great” or “Red Square” into a one-word format, chosen by the researcher, e.g., “Petergr” and “Redsquare”.

Synonyms and plural/singular issues. WORDER can count synonyms as one word. For example, “monastery”, “cloister”, “convent”, and “abbey” can be counted, e.g., as “monastery” to reinforce the concept. Nouns in the plural form

can be changed into singular form, so, for example, “palaces” would be counted as “palace” and, thus, reinforce the concept.

Negatives. In open-ended responses, negatives are widely used to express a concept, e.g., “People are not particularly friendly” or “I wouldn’t feel safe there.” This issue is especially important for analysis of responses to question Q1-4 that describes atmosphere/mood and contains affective evaluations of Russia.

All these problems are resolved in the same manner. WORDER has a “built-in” function which allows making changes in the data as indicated by the researcher by the means of an input table. Therefore, first, CATPAC identifies the variables of interest, i.e., the most frequent meaningful words. Second, specified words or word combinations within response files can be changed by WORDER onto the ones indicated by the researcher, example provided in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Image Variables Input File

Performance	Performances	Concert	Concerts	Show	Shows
Peterhof	Peterhoff	Petergof	Petergoff		
Redsquare	Red Square				
Unsafe	Not safe	Wouldn’t feel safe	Questionable person safety	Afraid	Risky

Image variables identified by CATPAC are placed in the first column of the input table. WORDER scans any given response file as many times as there are rows in the table. Using the example provided by Table 3-3, during the first scan, whenever WORDER encounters words “performances”, “concert”, “concerts”, “show”, and “shows” it replaces them onto the word “performance” and counts as such. On the second run, WORDER does the same procedure with the image variable indicated by the second row, etc., until the entire table is exhausted. As a result, a new, “smoothed-out” file is created for every original response as

indicated by the input table. WORDER creates a copy of analyzed files and does not make any changes in the original data.

3.2.2. Two-step procedure

This section describes the two-step procedure of combining CATPAC and WORDER to identify the image variables and count their occurrences in every open-ended response to the survey. In the first step, CATPAC software is run on the pooled responses to any of the open-ended questions. CATPAC can identify up to 160 most frequent meaningful words in the file. Some auxiliary words, such as “the”, “to”, “we”, etc., are excluded from counting by the means of a default Exclude file which can be inputted into CATPAC prior to the analysis. After the first run some words in the output do not belong to image variables (e.g., “Russia”, “often”). These words can be excluded from the further analysis by adding them into an Exclude file before CATPAC is run again. Several iterations are usually enough to receive the desired number of frequent image words. The number of runs is dependent on the variable frequency level at which a cut-off line had been placed. For stereotypical images a research might want to put this line at 10 or 20 occurrences, and for the uniqueness images they might want the exhaustive list, which would require more iterations. In the second step, image variables identified by CATPAC are used as the input for WORDER software. WORDER counts every occurrence of every image variable in every response file. The result is a table where rows are the names of analyzed files and columns are image variables. Table cells contain image variables frequencies counted in every response. This table can be easily transferred into SPSS for further data analysis. “Cleaning up” the data regarding the selected image variables can be done simultaneously with the counting process by WORDER.

Conducting the analysis on the pooled data using only CATPAC software gives an aggregated picture and limits the way the data can be used to establish relationships between destination image and other research variables. WORDER

produces numerical values for image variables which can be transferred into SPSS to facilitate further statistical analysis of image variables in relation to other survey variables. WORDER interface is described in Appendix C.

3.3. Hypotheses Testing

3.3.1. Hypotheses 1 and 2

To test the hypotheses 1 and 2 (H1: Americans who have visited Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who have not; H2: Americans who have friends or relatives in Russia have more favorable images of the destination than those who do not) for attribute-based statements, two pairs of means (visitors vs. non-visitors and friends or relatives in Russia vs. no friends or relatives in Russia) for every attribute statement have to be compared using t-tests. The sizes of the samples have to be taken into consideration. A sample size of more than 50 is preferable to conduct the comparisons. Although t-tests are quite robust to the deviations from normality, in the case of large differences in sample sizes (e.g., 50 and 250) the normality distribution for a smaller sample has to be verified for reliable statistical results (Johnson & Wichern, 2002). The two-step approach for analysis of qualitative survey responses proposed in section 3.2.2 allows testing hypotheses 1 and 2 for affective evaluations of Russia given as answers to Q1-4. To do so, the “favorability” variable has to be operationalized. One possible way of such operationalization is given in section 3.5.2 of this chapter. When the values of the “favorability” variable are defined for every response to Q1-4, testing the hypotheses 1 and 2 includes t-test comparisons of favorability means for visitors and non-visitors, as well as for “friends or relatives in Russia” and “no friends or relatives” in Russia independent samples.

3.3.2. “Favorability” variable

Affective evaluations can be positive, negative, or neutral: thus, the “favorability” variable can be operationalized for responses to question Q1-4 in order to test hypotheses 1 and 2 not only on the attribute-based items, but on the textual survey data as well. This study identified all evaluative descriptors used by the Russia’s image survey respondents to answer question Q1-4 and grouped them into a set of 42 affective image variables by synonymous meaning as suggested by context, the thesaurus, and by opinion of a native English speaker.

Next, a large group of Americans, native English speakers age 30 and above (approximately 80 people) was asked to assign a favorability score ((+2) – for positive meaning; (+1) – for somewhat positive meaning; (0) – for neutral meaning; (-1) – for somewhat negative meaning; and (-2) for negative meaning) to every one of these affective image variables. These people were not Ambassador members, and a large share of them did not have a direct connection to the researcher. They were “recruited” through some of the researcher’s friends, members of Purdue university staff, and the researcher’s church connections and were thought to be culturally close to the population under study. They had to do evaluations by the means of an online survey (Appendix D). In the introductory part of the evaluation survey it was stated that the Russia’s image survey had produced 42 descriptors of Russia as answers to question Q1-4, and the evaluators were asked to assign a favorability score to these descriptors.

The evaluations of all respondents were averaged, and the mean score was assigned to every affective image variable. The forty-three evaluators were considered an expert panel, and their averaged evaluations of the affective image variables were regarded as a group consensus on a question under study (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Weber & Ladkin, 2003). The size of this “expert panel”

was defined as 35 people minimum to ensure that averaged evaluations are close to the population mean for every variable.

Since the frequencies of every image variable were counted by WORDER in every response to the original Russia's image survey, the "favorability" values were computed for every response to Q1-4 by simply adding together all occurrences of positive and negative image variables multiplied by their score. The operationalized "favorability" variable was of continuous data type.

For example, to calculate the favorability value for the response: "Fascinating country. Overall, people are friendly but reserved. Boring nightlife, dull food, though"), the averaged favorability scores for all the affective image variables in the response (1.97 for "fascinating", 1.92 for "friendly", 0.08 for "reserved", and -1.19 for "boring" and "dull", since they are synonyms) are multiplied by the number of their occurrences and summed up. The favorability value for such a response is, therefore, 1.59, i.e., favorable.

3.3.3. Hypothesis 3

To test the hypothesis 3 (H3: Americans who give higher scores on Harris' and Crompton's attributes will exhibit a higher propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years) for the attribute-based statements, it is proposed to divide the respondents into two clusters on the basis of their responses to the 10 Harris' and Crompton's attributes, so that the difference between the clusters is maximized and the variability within the clusters is minimized using K-means clustering procedure. One consideration should be the size of the sample, more than 250 responses (www2.chass.ncsu.edu, 2005). "K-means cluster analysis uses Euclidean distance. Initial cluster centers are chosen in a first pass of the data, then each additional iteration groups observations based on the nearest Euclidean distance to the mean of the cluster. The researcher must specify in advance the desired number of clusters, K. Thus cluster centers change at each

pass. The process continues until cluster means do not shift more than a given cut-off value or the iteration limit is reached” (www2.chass.ncsu.edu, 2005). After the responses are classified into two clusters, a t-test for independent samples can be used to compare difference in the “propensity” variable means for the two clusters.

3.4. Analysis of Attribute-based Items

The purpose of the attribute-based items analysis is to see how potential tourists evaluate Russia on the set of 37 common and seven Russia-specific destination attributes. Ranking the attributes from the most to the least favorably viewed provides information on potential areas of improvement to the FTA. The consequent factor analysis reduces the number of variables to a smaller number of factors for easier dealing with multivariate data and its better interpretation. With enough responses to the survey, i.e., minimum 4-5 per attribute statement, factor analysis on 44 attributes can be conducted to reduce the number of attributes to a smaller number of factors (~8-10 factors with 3-5 items per factor, as recommended by Kline, 1994). Finally, identified factors can be used as clustering variables to see if the image of Russia depends on demographics, previous visits, having friends or relatives in Russia, or some other characteristics, which might be useful from the marketing standpoint. Propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years can be compared for the clusters, which has direct marketing implications for both Ambassador and the FTA.

“The essential purpose of factor analysis is to describe ... the covariance relationships among many variables in terms of a few underlying, but unobservable, random quantities called factors” (Johnson & Wichern, 2002). The decomposition of the variance-covariance or correlation matrix can be done by a number of methods, the most frequently used being principal component analysis. The factor analysis technique includes rotation of the principal components axes to increase the interpretability of the solution, but to keep all

explained variance. The choice of rotation depends on the nature of data. Varimax rotation keeps the axes orthogonal, so the identified factors are uncorrelated. Oblimin rotation allows for correlation of the factors.

Cluster analysis is a number of methods and algorithms which are used to group objects of similar kinds into a certain number of categories. "Cluster analysis is an exploratory data analysis tool which aims at sorting different objects into groups in a way that the degree of association between two objects is maximal if they belong to the same group and minimal otherwise" (www.statsoft.com, 2005). There are methods when the number of clusters is predetermined by a researcher, as well as where the optimal number of existing clusters in the data is discovered by an algorithm itself. Generally, two-step or K-means clustering procedure is employed for clustering. The nature of the data suggests a cluster analysis technique. If the number of observations is more than 200, k-means procedure is usually used. This procedure assumes that data fall into a known number of clusters. Given this number, the procedure assigns cases to clusters (www.umkc.edu, 2005). However, K-means procedure is sensitive to outlying cases, and gives different results if different sets of outlying observations are taken out. Depending on the sensitivity of the data to the K-means algorithm, the final choice of clustering technique should be made.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondent Profile

A profile of respondents was constructed using demographic information obtained from Part 3 of the survey, as well as information about previous visitations and friends or relatives in Russia obtained from Part 1. This profile is given in Table 4-2. The responses, received after the invitation letter had been e-mailed, were coded as 1st round and those submitted after the follow-up letter was sent were coded as 2nd round. The comparison between 1st and 2nd round respondent profiles revealed significant differences between the two groups for the “income” variable only. The 2nd round respondents were more affluent. Overall, the respondents are well-educated, with Bachelor's or higher degree (70%), over 45 years old (85%), married (74%), and relatively well-off (60% have income higher than \$75,000). There is a good portion of retirees (33%) and professionals (25%) among the respondents. More women than men (56% to 44%) answered the questionnaire. The numbers of visitors and non-visitors groups, as well as respondents having friends or relatives in Russia, are given in Table 4-1. Demographic profiles of visitors (n=54) versus non-visitors (n=283) were compared. No significant differences at 0.05 level was found between the groups.

Table 4-1 Familiarity Levels Sample Sizes

	Visitors	Non-visitors	Total
Friends or Relatives in Russia	9	22	31
No Friends or Relatives in Russia	45	260	305
Total	54	282	336

Table 4-2 Respondent Profile

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Levels</i>	<i>1st round</i>		<i>2nd round</i>		<i>Whole sample</i>	
<i>Chi-sq., df, p</i>		<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>
Visitation	Visitors	35	18.1	19	13.2	54	16.0
	Non-Visitors	158	81.9	125	86.8	283	84.0
	Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.0
F&R in Russia	F&R	17	8.8	14	9.7	31	9.2
	No F&R	176	91.2	130	90.3	306	90.8
	Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.0
Gender	Male	76	39.6	71	50.0	147	44.0
	Female	116	60.4	71	50.0	187	56.0
	Total	192	100.0	142	100.0	334	100.0
Education	High school	11	5.7	8	5.6	19	5.6
	Some college	26	13.5	27	18.8	53	15.7
	Associate	17	8.8	7	4.9	24	7.1
	Bachelor	58	30.1	47	32.6	105	31.2
	Master	53	27.5	40	27.8	93	27.6
	Ph.D.	27	14.0	12	9.0	40	11.9
	Prefer not to answer	1	0.5	2	1.4	3	0.9
	Total	193	100.0	143	100.0	337	100.0
Job	Administrative	15	7.8	5	3.5	20	5.9
	Educator	11	5.7	10	6.9	21	6.2
	Executive	11	5.7	10	6.9	21	6.2
	Managerial	10	5.2	10	6.9	20	5.9
	Professional	55	28.8	32	22.2	87	25.8
	Sales/Marketing	5	2.6	9	6.3	14	4.2
	Self-employed	11	5.7	13	9.0	24	7.1
	Student	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.3
	Retired	64	33.2	47	32.6	111	32.9
	Other	9	4.7	6	4.2	15	4.5
	Prefer not to answer	1	0.5	2	1.4	3	0.9
Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.0	
Age	18-24	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.3
	25-34	6	3.1	2	1.4	8	2.4
	35-44	20	10.4	9	6.3	29	8.6
	45-54	46	23.8	28	19.4	74	22.0
	55-64	63	32.6	67	46.5	130	38.6
	65 and older	51	26.4	35	24.3	86	25.5
	Prefer not to answer	6	3.1	3	2.1	9	2.7
Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.1	
Marital Status	Single	34	17.6	13	9.0	47	13.9
	Married	138	71.5	114	79.2	252	74.8
	With a partner	2	1.0	2	1.4	4	1.2
	Widowed	15	7.8	12	8.3	27	8.0
	Prefer not to answer	4	2.1	3	2.1	7	2.1
Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.0	
Income	Less than \$30,000	1	0.5	5	3.5	6	1.8
	\$30,000 - \$49,999	20	10.4	4	2.8	24	7.1
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	28	14.5	20	13.9	48	14.2
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	33	17.1	25	17.4	58	17.2
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	46	23.8	35	24.3	81	24.0
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	20	10.4	11	7.6	31	9.2
	\$200,000 and above	17	8.8	24	16.7	41	12.2
	Prefer not to answer	28	14.5	20	13.9	48	14.2
Total	193	100.0	144	100.0	337	100.0	

* significant at 0.05 level

4.2. Stereotypical Holistic Images

To address research question 1 and find out what stereotypical mental images American pleasure travelers associate with Russia, responses to survey item Q1-3 (What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination?) were analyzed. By following the two-step procedure described in 3.2.2, a list of 72 most frequent meaningful words was obtained using CATPAC. The frequencies were 5 or higher. Some words, e.g., “history”, “historic”, “historical” or “large”, “big”, were grouped together under the most frequent name, in this case “history” and “large”, to reinforce concepts, and substitutions in the data were made by WORDER. This reduced the list to 45 stereotypical image variables. Second, the frequencies of every selected stereotypical image variable were counted in every response using WORDER, and the results were transferred into SPSS database. Table 4-3 contains overall frequencies of Russia’s stereotypical image variables.

Table 4-3 Russia’s Stereotypical Image Variables

Variable	Freq	Variable	Freq	Variable	Freq
cold	69	museums	19	Hermitage	9
beautiful	55	churches	19	music	9
people	54	cities	18	winter	9
history	45	large	15	dark	8
buildings	39	interesting	13	different	8
poor	38	onion	13	places	7
architecture	37	art	13	orthodox	7
Red Square	36	great	12	open	7
St. Petersburg	34	vast	12	vodka	6
Moscow	30	food	12	exotic	6
country	28	culture	12	sites	6
old	25	friendly	12	Volga	5
Kremlin	24	domes	10	river	5
palaces	23	countryside	10	spaces	5
weather	19	snow	9	ballet	5

The next step was to reduce the number of stereotypical image variables to a smaller number of image concepts by means of factor analysis. Clustering by

CATPAC revealed just a few meaningful concepts, since CATPAC does not handle files of substantial size very well: dendograms, which are supposed to show how the most frequent unique words cluster into meaningful concepts, look “like a mitten instead of a glove” (Woelfel, 1998:25).

The dataset, which was obtained by WORDER, had 45 variables and 317 cases, which gave a solid case to variable ratio of 7.04. The correlation matrix was found to be factorable with Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity at the $p < 0.0001$ significance level, and the KMO statistic of sampling adequacy of 0.529. Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation was used. Since textual responses were generally very short, e.g., “Cold. Beautiful churches”, it was decided to look for stable word combinations, which might include as few as 2 words, rather than for full 3-5 word factors. Therefore, the number of factors was not specified and the option “eigen values larger than 1” was chosen. Weak items with low coefficients in the diagonal of the anti-image matrix (<0.40), low communalities (<0.50) and those that did not load higher than 0.35 on any factor were eliminated. These “weak” items were “dark”, “interesting”, and “exotic.” The item “vodka” was also excluded, since its characteristics were bordersome and, as the scanning of the original data indicated, the word was used by itself rather than in connection with other variables. Without the weak items, the factorability of the matrix increased up to 0.537, and the remaining 41 variables produced 17 factors that explained 67% of the total variance. The results of the rotated solution are given in Table 4-4.

The produced factor solution was an intermediate step to identify the final Russia’s stereotypical holistic images. Guided by this solution, the factors were checked against the original data in order to ensure that word combinations containing descriptive items such as cold, beautiful, poor, old, large, great, vast, friendly, different, were not used in negative context, which would entirely change

interpretability of the factors entirely. Factor 16 “great food” was eliminated as the result of this check as well as low reliability alpha.

Table 4-4 Russia’s Stereotypical Images: Factor Analysis

#	Factor	Loadings	% Var	#	Factor	Loadings	% Var
F1	Alpha=.552		4.96	F10	Alpha=.415		3.69
	hermitage	0.785			people	0.825	
	palaces	0.687			friendly	0.692	
	museums	0.633					
F2	Alpha=.887		4.78	F11	Alpha=.418		3.63
	river	0.930			sites	0.830	
	volga	0.922			history	0.805	
F3	Alpha=.586		4.78	F12	Alpha=.468		3.54
	open	0.794			weather	0.788	
	spaces	0.742			cold	0.782	
	snow	0.535					
F4	Alpha=.814		4.60	F13	Alpha=.500		3.52
	onion	0.884			moscow	0.758	
	domes	0.873			petersburg	0.536	
F5	Alpha=.445		4.44	F14	Alpha=.424		3.48
	cities	0.680			country	0.801	
	large	0.663			vast	0.556	
	places	0.645					
	poor	0.416					
F6	Alpha=.590		3.94	F15	Alpha=.516		3.48
	ballet	0.804			culture	0.798	
	music	0.775			different	0.795	
F7	Alpha=.399		3.88	F16	Alpha=.239		3.40
	beautiful	0.714			food	0.727	
	countryside	0.639			great	0.576	
	architecture	0.565					
F8	Alpha=.512		3.80	F17	Alpha=.321		3.39
	churches	0.805			kremlin	0.706	
	orthodox	0.740			redsquare	0.596	
					art	0.334	
F9	Alpha=.494		3.76	F18			
	buildings	0.793			vodka		
	old	0.718					

Another concern was that the stable word combinations produced by factor analysis did not account for large differences in frequencies between words combined in some of the image factors. E.g., in Factor 9, the word “old” had frequency of 25, while the “buildings” word’s frequency was 39. It meant that at least 14 occurrences of the word “buildings” were used in other word combinations. Therefore, factors, which contained words with large differences in frequencies, were checked against the original data as well. As the result, some high frequency words, e.g., “poor”, was associated with such words as “lodgings/accommodations”, which were not originally included into the stereotypical image variables set.

Table 4-5 Russia’s Stereotypical Holistic Images

#	Stereotypical Holistic Images	#	Stereotypical Holistic Images
1	Cold weather, snow	9	Orthodox churches with onion-shaped domes
2	Beautiful architecture and old buildings	10	Big cities, interesting old cities
3	Poor people, country, lodgings, and food choices	11	Great culture, different culture
4	Historic sites and places	12	Beautiful music, ballet, art
5	Moscow, Red Square, and Kremlin	13	Friendly/unfriendly people
6	St. Petersburg, Hermitage, palaces, and museums	14	Vodka
7	Vast country and lots of open spaces	15	Volga river
8	Beautiful countryside		

Finally, some image factors from Table 4-4 were combined together, since they belonged to the same image concepts, e.g., Factors 4 and 8 made one holistic image of “orthodox churches with onion-shaped domes”, which was used in many responses. The final results of Russia’s stereotypical holistic images are given in Table 4-5. As can be seen from Table 4-4 and Table 4-5, the results produced by the means of factor analysis are very close to the final Russia’s stereotypical holistic images results.

4.3. Affective Images

To address research question 2 and find what affective images Russia as a travel destination evokes, the responses to survey item Q1-4 (How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia?) were analyzed using CATPAC software. About 240 evaluative descriptors provided by respondents in the textual data were identified and combined into 42 groups by synonymous meanings as suggested by the thesaurus, context, and expert opinion. One word for each group (usually the most frequent one) was selected as an affective image variable. The final set of image variables contained mostly descriptive words (e.g., awesome, friendly, somber) because they create an atmosphere (Echtner, 2002); however, a few nouns (e.g., hostility, contrasts) were also included. In the actual data, words belonging to the same synonymic group were replaced by the representative image variable using WORDER (Appendix D). Then, the frequencies of the affective image variables were counted in every response and entered into the SPSS program for further statistical analysis. Table 4-6 provides the total frequencies of Russia's affective image variables.

Table 4-6 Russia's Affective Image Variables

Variable	Freq	Variable	Freq	Variable	Freq
friendly	85	free	11	alcoholism	6
somber	47	open	11	hardworking	6
depressing	45	interesting	11	festive	5
unfriendly	28	austere	11	contrasts	5
cold	18	hostility	10	happy	5
poor	18	unhappy	10	uncomfortable	5
reserved	17	pleasant	10	serene	4
exciting	15	difficult	9	safe	4
tense	15	sad	8	hopeful	4
unsafe	15	cosmopolitan	8	ruthless	4
good	15	cordial	8	seedy	4
upbeat	14	cautious	7	historical	4
awesome	14	boring	7	unpleasant	3
undeveloped	13	fascinating	7	relaxing	2

4.4. Uniqueness Images

To address research question 3 and find what unique places and features American pleasure travelers associate with Russia, responses to question Q1-5 (Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Russia) were analyzed. The results are given in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7 Russia's Uniqueness Images

#	Unique Features	All respondents n=336		Visitors n1=54		Non-Visitors n2=283	
		Freq	Mean	Freq	Mean	Freq	Mean
1	St. Petersburg	113	0.34	25	0.46	88	0.31
2	Red Square	92	0.27	19	0.35	73	0.26
3	Kremlin	75	0.22	11	0.20	64	0.23
4	Moscow	73	0.22	23	0.43	50	0.18
5	Hermitage/Winter Palace	44	0.13	19	0.35	25	0.09
6	churches/cathedrals	38	0.11	10	0.19	28	0.10
7	museums	37	0.11	11	0.20	26	0.09
8	art	35	0.10	11	0.20	24	0.08
9	architecture	26	0.08	4	0.07	22	0.08
10	czars (Imperial Russia)	25	0.07	8	0.15	17	0.06
11	palaces	22	0.07	9	0.17	13	0.05
12	cruises	15	0.04	8	0.15	7	0.02
13	Summer Palace	12	0.04	10	0.19	2	0.01
14	Siberia	11	0.03	3	0.06	8	0.03
15	small towns	9	0.03	7	0.13	2	0.01
16	St. Basil's cathedral	8	0.02	4	0.07	4	0.01
17	Lenin's tomb	8	0.02	3	0.06	5	0.02
18	onion-shaped domes	8	0.02	1	0.02	7	0.02
19	Black Sea	8	0.02	1	0.02	7	0.02
20	Trans-Sib	8	0.02	1	0.02	7	0.02
21	Volga river	8	0.02	1	0.02	7	0.02
22	Leningrad	4	0.01	1	0.02	3	0.01
23	Chernobyl	3	0.01	0	0.00	3	0.01
24	Baikal	3	0.01	1	0.02	2	0.01

The CATPAC procedure on the pooled data was run, and 40 most frequent words indicating the unique Russian features were identified. Some words were grouped together (e.g., "architecture" and "buildings") to reinforce concepts. As a result of the grouping process, the final set of Russia's uniqueness variables was produced. Following the two-step procedure, a table of synonyms (Appendix E)

was constructed and used as input for WORDER program. Occurrences of every uniqueness variable were counted and entered into SPSS database. Responses like “do not know” were included into the frequency analyses as having “0” frequencies. As can be seen from Table 4-7, the list of unique Russian features is nearly exhaustive. The group of visitors displays a better knowledge of unique Russian features.

4.5. Hypothesis 1: Test Results

In order to test hypothesis 1 for the textual responses to question Q1-4, the “favorability” variable for these responses was operationalized as described in section 3.3.2. The selected affective image variables listed in alphabetical order were assessed on the “minus 2 to plus 2” positive-negative scale by the means of an online survey. Forty three evaluations were received. A priori screening criterion for valid responses was “there should be no positive response on the first “alcoholism” variable”, since positive response would indicate that a subject did not understand the task. Three responses were eliminated on this criterion. Two more were excluded because of four or more missing entries, which might indicate a careless attitude to the evaluation process. Thirty eight responses remained. Distances between responses were calculated and two outlier results were taken out. Cronbach’s alpha for the remaining 36 responses was 0.786. Averaged evaluation results are provided in Table 4-8. The value of the “favorability” variable was calculated as described in 3.3.2 for every one of 337 survey responses. Responses that did not provide answer to Q1-4 received “zero” favorability value. The descriptive statistics on the favorability variable are as this: minimum value -6.0832, maximum value 8.7222, mean 0.3267, std. deviation 2.2402. The average response is just above neutral, however, the standard deviation indicates that there is a large spread in opinions. Since the sample sizes to test hypothesis 1 were so different (54 versus 283), normality assumption for the “favorability” variable was checked on the smaller sample, and the distribution was found to be normal (Kolmogorov-Smirnov $p=0.200$,

Shapiro-Wilk $p=0.467$). Test results for hypothesis 1 are given in Table 4-9. They are significant at the 0.10 level.

Table 4-8 Affective Image Variables: Favorability Scores

Variable	Score	Variable	Score	Variable	Score
fascinating	1.97	serene	1.53	tense	-1.11
friendly	1.92	relaxing	1.47	boring	-1.19
happy	1.83	cosmopolitan	1.44	difficult	-1.19
exciting	1.81	upbeat	1.43	seedy	-1.28
festive	1.78	free	1.36	uncomfortable	-1.36
good	1.72	open	1.36	sad	-1.42
awesome	1.72	contrasts	1.06	hostility	-1.44
hardworking	1.69	reserved	0.08	ruthless	-1.53
historical	1.67	cold	-0.31	unhappy	-1.56
safe	1.64	cautious	-0.33	unfriendly	-1.64
interesting	1.61	somber	-0.39	depressing	-1.67
pleasant	1.58	austere	-0.41	unpleasant	-1.68
cordial	1.56	undeveloped	-0.58	alcoholism	-1.75
hopeful	1.53	poor	-1.00	unsafe	-1.78

Table 4-9 Hypothesis 1 Test Results

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
Visitation	N	Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	p-value
visitors	54	0.808	3.572	0.060	1.726	335	0.085
non-visitors	283	0.235					

It was decided that hypothesis 2 cannot be tested with reliable results due to the small number of responses from people who had friends or relatives in Russia ($n=31$). Moreover, the normality assumption for the “favorability” variable for this sample did not stand. Therefore, it was decided not to test hypothesis 2 neither for textual responses nor for attribute-based items. The internal consistency of the attribute-based responses was measured for different response groups. The measure of internal consistency, the Cronbach’s alpha, is given in Table 4-10.

Table 4-10 Internal Consistency for the Attribute-based Responses

Sample size	Valid responses	Cronbach's Alpha
Whole sample - 337	311	0.925
Non-visitors, no F/R in Russia - 260	239	0.929
Non-visitors, F/R in Russia - 22	21	0.929
Visitors & F/R in Russia - 9	9	0.873
Visitors, no F/R in Russia - 45	41	0.871
Visitors and/or F/R in Russia - 76	71	0.892

Prior to analyzing the attribute-based items, negatively formulated statements, eight in total (Q2-2, Q2-7, Q2-13, Q2-17, Q2-22, Q2-29, Q2-35, and Q2-39) were re-coded in positive for the consistency of measurement and ease of results interpretation. The initial attribute-based survey items were measured on 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) Likert scale. Smaller mean values on a particular destination attribute indicated more favorable assessment of this attribute for Russia. In Table 4-11 the attributes are arranged from most to least favorably assessed, based on the whole sample of responses. Attributes are considered positively or negatively assessed if their mean is below or above the neutral “3.00” value respectively.

Table 4-11 Common Attributes: Visitors' vs. Non-visitors' Perceptions

Destination Attributes	All respondents 336		Visitors 54		Non-visitors 283		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Sites/Museums	1.64	0.76	1.20	0.49	1.72	0.78	.000**
Architecture	1.65	0.71	1.43	0.79	1.70	0.69	.010*
Culture	1.77	0.63	1.67	0.67	1.79	0.62	
Opportunity to Learn	1.87	0.72	1.58	0.60	1.92	0.73	.002**
Arts	1.87	0.71	1.48	0.64	1.95	0.70	.000**
Scenery	2.01	0.83	1.83	0.84	2.05	0.82	
Family or Adult Oriented	2.17	0.65	2.19	0.74	2.16	0.63	
Non-capital Russia	2.18	0.76	1.91	0.73	2.23	0.75	.004**
Cities	2.22	0.89	2.00	0.97	2.27	0.86	.042*
Tourist Attractions	2.28	0.94	1.69	0.77	2.40	0.93	.000**
Cruises	2.32	0.75	1.98	0.76	2.38	0.73	.000**

Combined Trips	2.33	0.79	2.06	0.86	2.38	0.77	.006**
Unique Natural Resources	2.33	0.82	2.31	0.95	2.33	0.80	
Trans-Sib	2.38	0.68	2.41	0.71	2.37	0.68	
Different Cuisine	2.43	0.89	2.54	1.18	2.41	0.82	
Hospitality/Friendliness	2.45	0.85	2.06	0.92	2.52	0.81	.000**
Nightlife	2.47	0.79	2.26	0.83	2.52	0.78	.028*
Atmosphere	2.52	0.77	2.30	0.94	2.56	0.72	
Tours/Excursions	2.57	0.84	2.15	0.81	2.65	0.82	.000**
Fairs/Festivals	2.61	0.92	2.56	0.98	2.63	0.91	
Knowledge of R. History	2.64	0.97	2.09	0.52	2.75	1.00	
Costs/Price Levels	2.65	0.81	2.19	0.93	2.74	0.76	.000**
Fishing/Hunting	2.66	0.73	2.76	0.78	2.65	0.72	
Life of people	2.69	0.79	2.76	0.93	2.68	0.76	
Nature Preserves	2.77	0.86	2.57	0.87	2.81	0.86	
Fame/Reputation	2.90	1.02	2.28	0.91	3.02	1.00	.000**
Quality Food	2.93	0.85	2.70	1.11	2.98	0.78	
Safety	2.98	0.87	2.78	0.86	3.02	0.87	
Ease of Communication	3.04	0.84	2.93	1.04	3.06	0.80	
Quality of Service	3.05	0.68	3.11	0.84	3.04	0.64	
Opportunity for Adventure	3.05	0.79	3.13	0.70	3.04	0.80	
Sports Activities	3.06	0.68	2.98	0.76	3.08	0.67	
Restaurants	3.09	0.72	3.00	0.89	3.10	0.69	
Rest and Relaxation	3.15	0.73	3.09	0.93	3.16	0.69	
Climate	3.20	0.89	2.69	0.82	3.30	0.88	.000**
Transportation	3.21	0.73	3.02	0.92	3.25	0.69	.034*
Beaches	3.22	0.86	3.15	0.86	3.24	0.85	
Accommodations	3.23	0.82	3.17	0.84	3.25	0.81	
Cleanness	3.27	0.74	3.41	0.90	3.24	0.70	
Shopping Facilities	3.27	0.76	3.00	0.97	3.32	0.70	.023*
Accessibility	3.35	0.78	3.28	1.15	3.36	0.69	
Political Stability	3.44	0.89	3.21	0.93	3.48	0.88	.041*
Crowdedness	3.60	0.70	3.83	0.75	3.55	0.68	.007**
Economic Development	3.84	0.71	3.87	0.73	3.83	0.71	
Propensity to Visit	3.33	1.15	3.13	1.18	3.37	1.14	

*- significant at 0.05 level

** - significant at 0.01 level

Hypothesis 1 test results are given in the last column of Table 4-11. As can be seen from the table, visitors group gave a more favorable assessment of Russia's destination attributes with one exception – Crowdedness of the Russian cities. Visitors and non-visitors groups exhibited the same level of propensity to visit Russia in the next five years.

4.6. Hypothesis 3: Test Results

Hypothesis 3 (H3: Americans who give higher scores on Harris' and Crompton's attributes will exhibit a higher propensity to travel to Russia in the next five years) was tested for the "non-visitors" sample only, since people who have already been to Russia might not wish to go there again in the next five years, even if their perceptions of Harris' and Crompton's attributes are very favorable. It reduced the sample size to 273 responses. Two clusters within the non-visitors sample were identified by K-means clustering procedure. Assessments of Harris's and Crompton's attributes by these two clusters of respondents were significantly different for every attribute as indicated by Table 4-12.

Table 4-12 Harris' & Crompton's Attributes: Differences by Clusters

Attribute	Cluster Information			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	#	N	Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	p-value
Scenery/ Landscape	1	139	1.66	13.15	0.00	-9.22	241.05	.000**
	2	134	2.47					
Cities	1	139	1.76	5.21	0.02	-12.57	254.03	.000**
	2	134	2.81					
Costs/Price Levels	1	139	2.46	25.05	0.00	-6.65	268.48	.000**
	2	134	3.03					
Cleanness	1	139	2.93	7.95	0.01	-8.14	270.08	.000**
	2	134	3.54					
Climate	1	139	2.95	6.30	0.01	-7.22	259.51	.000**
	2	134	3.65					
Safety	1	139	2.55	2.14	0.14	-10.57	271.00	.000**
	2	134	3.49					
Hospitality/ Friendliness	1	139	2.02	4.38	0.04	-13.02	259.12	.000**
	2	134	3.04					
Good Quality Food	1	139	2.64	8.23	0.00	-7.93	263.31	.000**
	2	134	3.32					
Knowledge of Russian History	1	139	2.42	7.80	0.01	-5.91	255.51	.000**
	2	134	3.10					
Chance to See How People Really Live	1	139	2.43	0.03	0.87	-5.75	271.00	.000**
	2	134	2.93					

** - significant at 0.01 level

Cluster 1 was more positive, with smaller means. The clusters were comparable in size (139 versus 134), and chi-squares statistical tests on their demographic profiles registered significant differences between the clusters at 0.05 level only for the income variable (p-value 0.033), cluster 1 having higher income, as given by Table 4-13. The closer look into the differences revealed that low income cells had too few cases, which might have offset the comparisons. The test results for the “propensity” variable are given in Table 4-14.

Table 4-13 Harris' & Crompton's Attribute Clusters: Profile Comparisons

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square	df	p-value (2 sided)
Gender	0.346	1	0.625
Education	2.075	6	0.913
Job	18.114	10	0.053*
Age	6.342	6	0.386
Marital Status	2.19	4	0.701
Income	10.841	7	0.033**

* - significant at 0.1 level; ** - significant at 0.05 level

Table 4-14 Hypothesis 3 Test Results: Propensity Variable

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
Non-visitors	N	Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	p-value
Cluster 1	139	2.990	3.761	0.054	-5.663	271	.000**
Cluster 2	134	3.740					

** - significant at 0.01 level

4.7. Russia's Destination Image Factors

Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was employed to reduce the 44 destination attributes into nine factors. Ten attributes (Nature Preserves; Nightlife/Entertainment; Costs/Price Levels; Accessibility; Climate; Crowdedness; Rest/Relaxation; Chance to see how people really live; Atmosphere; and Arts)

The final Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.902; all communalities no less than 0.500; all factor loadings greater than 0.40. Total Variance explained was 60.05%. The results are given in Table 4-15. The factors were self-explanatory and were named as Traditional Tourism (Factor 1); Infrastructure (Factor 2); Niche Tourism (Factor 3); Safety (Factor 4); History (Factor 5); Food & Culture (Factor 6); Service (Factor 7); Adventure (Factor 8), and Family/Adult (Factor 9). Factor 9 consisted of a single attribute: however, taking it out reduced the characteristics and interpretability of solution. The percentage of variance explained as well as the high factor loading justified retaining it. Cronbach's alpha was adequate for all factors but Factor 8. All cross loadings make sense from the solution interpretability point of view. For example, item Scenery from Factor 1, Traditional Tourism, also loads on Factor 3, Niche Tourism, along with such items as Natural Resources, Fishing/Hunting, Cruises, Beaches, and Trans-Sib.

4.8. Factor-Cluster Analysis

The whole sample was divided into two clusters using a two-step cluster analysis procedure provided by the SPSS package. The number of clusters specified was based on the size of the sample, since it was desirable to have large, sustainable clusters. Factors scores were used as clustering variables. Two-step cluster analysis procedure was preferred over K-means procedure because the latter is very sensitive to the outlying cases (Johnson & Wichern, 2002) and produced very different results with and without the different sets of outlying observations. The two-step cluster analysis uses a hierarchical clustering technique at the second stage, which is more suitable for the smaller ($n < 250$) samples. However, the total sample size ($n = 316$ valid cases) was considered to be not too much larger than the recommended value.

The total sample was divided into Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 of sizes 187 and 129 respectively as indicated by Table 4-16.

Table 4-16 Clusters 1 and 2: By Factor Scores

		N	% of Combined	% of Total
Cluster	1	187	59.2%	55.5%
	2	129	40.8%	38.3%
	Combined	316	100.0%	93.8%
Excluded Cases		21		6.2%
Total		337		100.0%

Cluster 1 was named “Negatives”, since it gave less favorable factor scores than the mean values for the whole sample on all nine factors but two – Safety and Adventure. Cluster 2 was named “Positives”, since its members were more positive on seven out of nine factors than the whole sample on average. The graphical representation of how the two clusters scored on the nine factors is given in Figure 4-1, “zero” dividing line indicating the whole sample mean centered score. Significant differences between the clusters at 0.05 level were detected for Traditional Tourism, History, and Service factors, and at 0.1 level for Infrastructure factor.

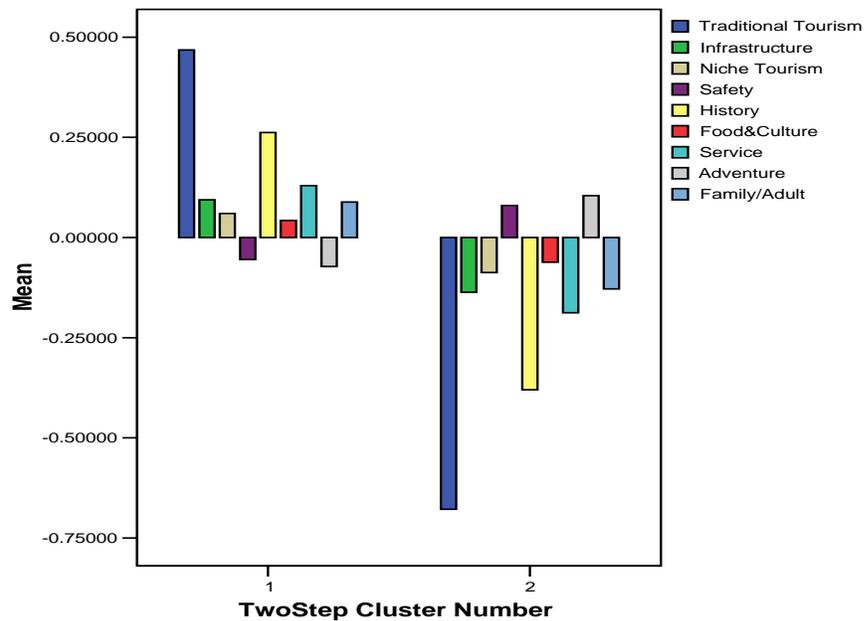


Figure 4-1 Clusters 1 and 2 Factor Scores

Demographically the two clusters were the same except for the “education” variable. The “Positives” cluster holds more people with postgraduate degrees than the “Negatives” cluster, as well as people who are in 25-45 age group. Chi-squares results are given in Table 4-17. The two clusters displayed significant differences both in propensity to visit Russia in the next 5 years and favorability variables as indicated by Table 4-18.

Table 4-17 Clusters 1 and 2: Demographic Profile Comparison

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square	df	p-value (2 sided)
Gender	0.925	1	0.356
Education	20.325	6	0.002***
Job	13.083	10	0.219
Age	10.702	6	0.098*
Marital Status	1.341	4	0.854
Income	2.971	7	0.888

* - significant at 0.1 level

*** - significant at 0.01 level

Table 4-18 Clusters 1 and 2: Propensity and Favorability Variables

Cluster				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
Variable	#	N	Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	p-value
Propensity	1	187	3.600	0.64398	0.423	5.288	313	.000***
	2	128	2.930					
Favorability	1	187	-0.045	4.67654	0.031	-3.645	247.509	.000***
	2	128	0.907					

***- significant at 0.01 level

Cluster 2, “Positives”, has a larger proportion of people who have visited Russia or have friends or relatives there (Ch-sq=14.670, df=1, p<0.001). To summarize, Cluster 2 has a more positive attitude toward Russia. It is more educated, has a larger share of visitors to Russia, and exhibits a greater propensity to travel there in the next five years.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The Federal Tourism Agency of the Russian Federation (FTA) is set to develop Brand Russia which would firmly position the country among the competitive destinations of Eastern Europe and Asia (Izvestia, issue 03.11.03). Thus, findings of this study are discussed from the branding perspective in the sections below.

5.1. Destination Tourism Development: Branding Perspective

“The more positive a consumer’s attitude, the more positive a perception and the more favorable an image of a product, the more likely it is that those perceptions and that image will influence subsequent behavior” (Ahmed, 1996:45). A number of scholars agree that perceptions are more important to positioning than attributes (Gartner, 1986; Ahmed, 1991; Hsu et al., 2004). This view is especially relevant to travel-related products such as destinations, which cannot be experienced before the actual visitation. The image that already exists becomes the starting point for the development of a branding concept to better position a country in the global tourist marketplace. Although place branding is a relatively new concept, there is a general agreement among scholars and practitioners that places can be branded in much the same way as consumer goods and services (Morgan & Pritchard, 2001; Olins, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The importance of branding has been ascertained to be a way to distinguish one place from another, to convey a positive and motivating message, and to add value to the place (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Murphy, 1987, 1990; D’Hautesserre, 2001; Cai, 2002). A range of countries, e.g., Spain (Gilmore, 2002; Hall, 2002) and New Zealand (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2002), regions, e.g., New South Wales in

Australia (Pritchard & Morgan, 1998), and cities, e.g., London and Manchester (Hankison, 2001) have already adopted the branding approach.

Branding is a promise to the customer, an expectation of performance and a mark of integrity and reputation (Travis, 2000). It builds up continuously in the minds of the destination's consumers, and it is affected by experiences, memories and other visitors' comments (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2003). A brand is more than just the sum of its functional components, it also includes intangible attributes, e.g., auras associated with a place or emotional attachments to particular locations. There is a tendency to see tourism destinations as 'fashionable accessories', in a sense that destinations become a way to define people's identity (Caldwell and Freire, 2004). People make destination choices based not only on such functional characteristics as climate, infrastructure, or price levels, but also taking into consideration the intangible factors, such as emotional attachment or social satisfaction (Coshall, 2000). Therefore, destination branding can be viewed as having two dimensions: functional and representational. Destination functional attributes, common and specific, are tangible, verifiable, and measurable characteristics of a destination, which can be expressed and measured by scale survey items. Representational dimension includes attributes that are linked to an individual's self-expression and connected with him on emotional, or psychological, level. They are expressed and measured by open-ended survey items and scale items, which are more psychological in nature. For example, psychological destination attributes such as rich history, cultural heritage, beautiful arts, and opportunities to learn, can provide strong emotional benefits to potential travelers.

The focus of all branding strategies is to create the brand personality that is not just "friendly" or "scenic", but complex, vibrant, alive, and at the same time has relevance to the modern era (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). Successful brands interact with consumers, react to the events of the modern world, and change

with them, while being true to its core. So, successful brands are very much like people, and, because of this complexity, are believable and persuading. Five branding steps, as formulated by Kotler & Gertner (2002:259), are crucial for the successful creation of a destination's brand and its promotion on the U.S.

pleasure travelers market:

1. SWOT analysis of the location as a travel destination to determine its major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
2. Choice of personalities, natural landmarks, historical events on which to brand and storytell;
3. Development of the country's umbrella concept, which would cover and be consistent with separate branding activities of regions and cities;
4. Allocation of sufficient national funds to each branding activity; and
5. Assurance of export control of the brand product and delivery on the promise.

In the subsequent sections, these factors will be discussed with regard to the results of the Russia's Destination Image study.

5.2. Russia's Destination Image: Implications for the FTA

Russia is a vast country with rich tourist resources of all kinds. They include unique natural features, beautiful landscapes, historical and cultural attractions, places of ethnographical interest, and good recreational opportunities. However, income from international tourism is a small share of Russia's overall economy. Russian tourism industry professionals state that while Russian outbound and internal tourism has been growing rapidly, inbound tourism is growing slowly, and that in the last two years it has suffered from political instability associated with terrorist activity in Russia (Shpilko, 04.11.2004). Since 1990s, Russia has been successfully developing its tourist offer, nevertheless, some problems still remain. Amongst factors that prevent dynamic growth of Russia's inbound tourism are lack of infrastructure, especially in country's eastern areas, complicated visa procedures, rising prices for tour packages (for the Russian

outbound tourist the price of average tourism package increased by 5%, while for an international inbound tourist it increased by 20% (Shpilko, 04.11.2004)), and lack of advertising.

The last factor is especially important in connection to this study. Currently, advertising and promotion of Russia to the international traveler is very small in terms of financial resources in comparison to the efforts of other major destinations. In 2003, the Russian promotional budget on the federal level was three million USA dollars (Izvestia, issue 01.21.05), which was two times less than what was spent by Paris or Singapore alone. Most of the budget was allocated to the development and publishing of advertising materials, which are distributed at international tourism exhibitions. Given these figures, it can be concluded that currently there is no special FTA program designed to promote Russia's tourism in the U.S. marketplace. In the U.S., the FTA is represented by the Russian National Tourist Office (RNTO), a private company which sells tours to Russia (<http://www.russia-travel.com>, 2005). The result of insufficient advertising is the lack of awareness about Russia's tourist features as was indicated by the study. The share of respondents who put "don't know" as the answer to the question Q1-5 about unique Russian features was 19%. The truly unique Russian natural resources that are included into the UNESCO World Heritage List, such as the Golden Mountains of Altai, Volcanoes of Kamchatka, Virgin Komi Forests and others, were not mentioned at all. Lake Baikal was mentioned by three people only. While a number of respondents mentioned Russia's countryside, small towns and villages, no concrete names emerged. Even the pearl of Russian architecture, the so called Golden Ring of cities, was mentioned by only one person.

With regard to other two open-ended questions, particularly about affective evaluations, the problem is not that American pleasure travelers know little about Russia. The survey respondents knew various things about the country, but their

perceptions are often unfavorable. Out of 42 affective image variables, 20 had negative favorability scores, and out of 337 responses, 129 and 59 had negative and zero favorability values respectively. The “Soviet era” image still lingers. Poor people, country, lodgings, and food choices, along with long lines and drab clothes, were often present in the responses to Q1-3 about the stereotypical image. “Poor”, “undeveloped”, “seedy”, “hostile towards Americans”, “ruthless”, “depressing”, and “unsafe” country emerged from about half of responses to Q1-4. The affective image variable “depressing” stood for 13 synonyms, as can be seen from Table 5-4, Appendix D. List of Affective Variables Synonyms. Such attributes of the Soviet era, as the Cold War, Lenin’s tomb, Stalin, Leningrad, were also mentioned.

Hospitality/friendliness of the local population is a very important attribute of the destination image (Harris, 1972, Crompton, 1979). The survey respondents did not agree whether Russian people are friendly or not, which was registered in their answers to both Q1-3 and Q1-4. Respondents who thought Russian people to be friendly often added such descriptors as “somber” and “reserved”. These attitudes, characteristic to the Soviet era period, can be partially explained by the age of the respondents, more of 70% of whom were above 55 years old. Another possible explanation can be connected to the complicated visa procedure. A country cannot be perceived as hospitable if getting a visa takes much effort on the part of a traveler. The lack of positive materials about Russia in the U.S. general media as was indicated by the study of organic image of Russia (Stepchenkova et al., 2005), also plays a role in American pleasure travelers’ negative perceptions of the country.

Attribute-based “hospitality/friendliness” item indicated that visitors thought Russian people to be friendlier (mean 2.06) than non-visitors (mean 2.52). However, the “hospitality/friendliness” perceptions of non-visitors are very important for the FTA, since they place limits on the potential U.S. tourist market

to Russia. No country, which wants to develop an economically strong tourism sector, can afford to be perceived as unfriendly and hostile to visitors. The branding approach might be the answer to this problem, since the visitor's satisfaction is in the large part a matter of expectations, as was shown by Chon (1990). Careful branding of the Russian nation as the reserved people who are cordial to guests and open and warm to friends might turn out to be successful. To reinforce the politeness/cordial perception, which has already been indicated in textual responses to Q1_4, extensive personnel training programs in the hospitality and tourism sector are also of primary importance and should be initiated by the FTA.

With regard to functional attributes, significant differences were registered for 19 items. Visitors to Russia ranked all but one of Russia's destination attributes, namely, "crowdedness," higher than non-visitors. The largest mean differences were found for sites/museums, arts, tourist attractions, cruises, hospitality/friendliness, tours/excursions, costs/price levels, fame/reputation, and even climate attributes. This is a very interesting finding for the FTA because it suggests that Russia's attributes and quality of its tourist offer are in fact better than the non-visitors think they are. Given that no significant differences were registered between visitors and non-visitors in terms of demographic characteristics, the differences in evaluations can be attributed to the differences in factual and perceived Russia's tourism offer. The results indicate that adequate promotional information is needed to correct the negative perceptions of non-visitors (Kale & Weir, 1986). The only attribute that was ranked lower by the visitors, was crowdedness of the Russian cities. It is very understandable, since non-visitors perceive Russia as a vast country with lots of open spaces, but when a tourist actually comes to Russia, the points of entry are most likely the mega cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Providing more points of entry for the international traveler, especially in the eastern part of the country, might improve the crowdedness perception.

Several of Russia's functional common attributes such as economic development, accessibility, shopping facilities, cleanness, accommodations, beaches, transportation, restaurants, sports activities, were ranked negatively (have mean score higher than 3.0) by the respondents. Four of these items – transportation, restaurants, shopping facilities, and sport activities – make up a separate Infrastructure factor, and two more items – economic development and accommodations – had loadings greater than 0.40 on this factor. Moreover, the identified clusters of Ambassador members significantly differed (at 0.1 level) on their assessment of Russia's infrastructure. It indicates that level of infrastructure is a consideration for American pleasure travelers in the process of destination selection. Therefore, promotion of tourism types that are less sensitive to the levels of infrastructure development is advisable, since they potentially have a higher probability of success (Arefyev & Mieczkowski, 1991; Ilyina & Mieczkowski, 1992). These tourism types are also less sensitive to the service levels, with service being another important consideration for potential travelers, as indicated by factor/cluster analysis.

Given the limited financial resources of the FTA, an area of promotional effort, on which informational materials and advertising for the U.S. market would be focused, has to be identified. Testing of hypothesis 3 confirmed that non-visitors, who significantly differ in assessing Russia on Harris' & Crompton's attributes, significantly differ (at 0.01 level) in their propensity to go to Russia as well. This important finding suggests that the FTA might consider the conveying of up to date information on these 10 attributes as the primary focus of their promotional effort. Special attention should be given to those of Harris' & Crompton's attributes where there is a significant difference in perceptions between visitors and non-visitors, i.e., scenery/landscape; cities, costs/price levels, climate, and hospitality/ friendliness. Two most important attributes, safety and cleanness, were evaluated similarly by visitors and non-visitors. This means that Russia needs factual improvement in these important areas, so that non-visitors would

not be disappointed with Russia as a destination upon arrival. It should be always remembered that an image induced by DMOs “must always be an amplification of what is already there and not a fabrication” (Gilmore, 2002:284), though it should not necessarily be purely factual. Storytelling around historical events, people, and natural landmarks is important and effective in destination brand building.

5.3. Marketing Communications

Destination branding should enhance and express a unique personality of the destination that would differentiate it from the competition. Here lies another challenge for the FTA – the competition for inbound Russian tourism has to be identified for the U.S. market. Is it Eastern Europe, or China, or some other country? There have been strong historical ties through the centuries between Russia and Eastern Europe, which might be of interest to those emotionally involved with European history. However, China might prove itself a strong competitor to Russia as well. It can be argued that, from the perspective of the U.S. pleasure travelers, China and Russia have much in common as travel destinations. They are large countries with distinctive cultures that have great heritage resources, scenery and art, and both have shared a communist history and planned economies. The tourist product that they offer also has much in common: cultural tourism to famous and architectural sites, luxury cruises along the Volga (Russia) and the Yangtze (China) Rivers, transcontinental train travel Moscow–Lake Baikal–Mongolia–Beijing, “Imperial Russia” and “China Splendors” tours exploring the countries’ imperial pasts, etc. Due to these similarities, Russia and China share, at least to some degree, the same potential target audiences and, therefore, can be regarded as competitors in the U.S. pleasure travel market.

Therefore, Russia should put forward a consistent message, a unique selling proposition that is clear and focused for specific target audiences. However, the

country is very diverse, and one focused message might not be enough for promoting different regions of Russia. Under Russia's umbrella, distinctive images for different regions should be developed which would combine the most favorable attributes associated with the country under one concept (Cai, 2002). Lake Baikal and Siberia is the focus of FTA's current initiative (Izvestia, issue 03.11.03) along with adventure travel and eco-tourism. However, as results indicated, the age of the respondents might be high for adventure travel in Siberia, and awareness of natural attractions in these areas is low, with one notable exception, the Trans-Siberian railroad, which might become an important promotional feature for the Lake Baikal-Siberia region.

A successful Brand Russia needs to be communicated to the selected travel audiences. Marketing communications influence consumers' destination perceptions. The amount of exposure to advertising creates greater interest in a destination and affects the likelihood of visiting (Bojanic, 1991; Baloglu, 2001). Communications tailored to particular audiences are more effective than general communications, and, as suggested by Fakeye and Crompton (1991), should be designed taking into account the consumer's past with a destination. Non-visitors need informational communications, first-timers persuasive communications and repeat visitors reminding communications. High education level of potential visitors to Russia should also be taken into consideration.

5.4. Implications for Ambasadair Travel Club

Ambasadair Travel Club is considering adding trips to Russia to their current travel product. In 2004, Ambasadair first offered a cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg and a Baltic cruise that visits St. Petersburg, in cooperation with Uniworld tour operator. The survey of Ambasadair members (Morrison et al., 2004) indicated that 15.5% of the respondents were seriously considering visiting Eastern Europe in the next five years. Although Russia was not specified separately as a destination, it would be natural to assume that Russia had to

have some share in this interest because of its rich history and distinctive culture. In this study, 21.0% of respondents were considering a trip to Russia in the next five years (Strongly Agree and Agree answers), and 6.9% of the respondents were strongly considering it. More than one third, 37.8%, were undecided, another indication that the image and benefits from visitation are currently unclear. The share of people who did not consider a trip to Russia in the next five years was 41.1% (21.0% - Disagree and 20.1% - Strongly Disagree). Therefore, inaccurate perceptions should be identified and ameliorated, one such perception being boring food and lack of places to eat quality food in Russia.

Among people who expressed the desire to visit Russia there were 55 non-visitors and 15 visitors, 13 had friends or relatives in Russia. However, people who have friends or relatives there might not need assistance from Ambassador in organizing their trips to Russia. The most promising target audience for the ATC promotional efforts seems to be older, educated, and relatively well-off married customers who are interested in Russian history and different cultures. Therefore, Traditional Tourism as described by Factor 1 should be offered. Historical sites and museums, capital and provincial cities rich in architecture and cultural heritage, beautiful scenery, and opportunities to interact with Russian people should be combined in an attractive package. Central and North-Western tourist regions are preferable. Up-to-date information on the safety and hygiene conditions, as well as infrastructure levels, needs to be effectively communicated. Another possibility is the Trans-Siberian journey with stopovers in unique nature preserves and cultural and historical locations. The levels of comfort, service, and infrastructures of such a trip are high for the first and second class ticket holders. Given the average age of the ATC members, they might not be the audience for adventure or eco-tourism travel offer.

The results of this research were consistent with what had been found in the previous studies on organic and induced images of Russia as a travel

destination. Stepchenkova and Morrison (2005) showed that Russia's unique natural features, adventure, and eco-travel have not been enough promoted by American tour operators. The same study also indicated that on Russia's side, there was lack of coordination between Russia's tour operators and official agencies. Marketing strategies of Russian tour operators also needed improvement in market segmentation and tailoring the promotional messages to specific target audiences. The study by Stepchenkova et al. (2005) about comparative organic images of Russia and China revealed that coverage of Russia as a destination for pleasure travel in the U.S. general media was virtually non-existent.

5.5. Generalizability of Results

The question of generalizability of the research results onto a whole population of U.S. pleasure travelers needs to be addressed. This issue is tri-fold and requires answers to the following three questions:

- How well does Ambassador Travel Club represent the entire population of the American long-haul tourists?
- How well does the study population represent whole Ambassador membership?
- How well does the obtained sample represent the population under study?

The ATC membership profile was taken from the study of Morrison et al. (2004), the most comprehensive study of Ambassador travelers to date. It was qualitatively compared to the profile of the typical American traveler to Europe, according to the European Travel Commission 2001 report (Appendix F). As indicated by the ETC report, American outbound pleasure travelers tend to be more highly educated than the U.S. adult population as a whole and wait until they are older to do the bulk of their international long-haul travel (ETC, 2001). Additionally, travelers to Europe are more affluent than the average American outbound traveler, and three-quarters of them are part of a couple. However, one

important consideration has to be borne in mind. Proportion of younger members of the ATC is twice as small as that of the ETC profile. The ATC has almost no college students. In addition, after 9/11, the patterns of travel have shifted: proportionally more college students travel now than before. Therefore, it was concluded that ATC members were representative of only one of the groups of the American pleasure traveler population, that of the older travelers. Nevertheless, studying this group is very valuable from a marketing standpoint because of the economic power of this segment.

The sample of Ambassadair members obtained in Russia's Destination Image online survey was compared to the ATC profile obtained by Morrison et al. (2004). Significant differences were found for the "education", "job", and "age" variables (Appendix G). The comparison suggests that the sample of respondents who participated in the Russia's Image Study is not representative of the entire ATC membership. This finding was expected, since the population of this study was limited to ATC members with Internet access. The profile of the respondents, however, does correspond to that of the long-haul pleasure traveler, as indicated by the ETC 2001 report. The extremely low response rate to Russia's online survey (~6%) did not allow the conclusion that the opinions of people who participated in the survey were representative of those of the entire study population. To check for non-response bias, two groups of the survey respondents, 1st and 2nd stage, were compared and were found to be the same for the "visitation" and "friends or relatives in Russia" variables, as well as all the demographic variables but income. While this is a positive finding, the question of how representative the Russia's Destination Image sample of the ATC membership with Internet access is still remains.

5.6. Contribution of the Study

Although Russia is, admittedly, one of the major world tourist destinations (WTO, 2004b), it has not received enough academic attention to date. Thus, this study

fills the gap by accessing the country's destination image among American pleasure travelers, one of the most affluent travel markets in the world. The discussed implications of the study have practical relevance to the current FTA initiative to build a successful Brand Russia.

In the modern era, large amounts of digital data are available for the researchers from the Internet and media data bases; however, the nature of textual data does not easily lend itself to statistical analysis. Prior to this study, the proposed two-step approach to facilitate the statistical analysis of digital textual data had been tried on files from American and Russian tour operators' Websites and general media articles about China and Russia from digital databases, when texts were of mostly medium to large length. Testing the procedure of combining CATPAC and WORDER programs on extremely short responses to open-ended survey questions is this study's contribution from the methodology standpoint. The proposed procedure of identifying the frequencies of the image variables in every single file of the textual sample allows the further use of factor analysis with the purpose to cluster variables into meaningful image themes of more holistic nature. Jenkins (1999:5) wrote, "There has been a strong preference for structured methods that concentrate on the attribute component of destination image. The holistic component has not received enough attention." This study addressed the issue by identifying the induced image themes of a more holistic nature. Operationalization of the "favorability" variable in order to test hypothesis 1 on textual responses to Q1_4 using statistical methods is also a contribution of the study.

The study has also addressed some theoretical questions regarding destination image. Measurement of image using Echtner's & Ritchie's parsimonious attribute set includes 35 statements, without counting open-ended questions. Given the typically low rates of online survey responses, even this reduced set might be too much for survey subjects. A much shorter list of 10 Harris' & Crompton's

attributes might be enough, if the purpose of a study is just to assess the conative, or behavioral component, of destination image – propensity to travel to a destination. Familiarity with a destination plays an important role in attitudes towards it and propensity to visit. The positive relationship between familiarity and attitude (favorability variable) was confirmed using not only the attribute-based statements, but also the responses to the open-ended questions, which has not been done before.

The conducted study confirmed that the set of scales on 35 common destination attributes proposed by Echtner & Ritchie (1993) can be successfully used for a very broad range of destinations, including such large and diverse countries as Russia. Factor analysis, conducted on a set of only Echtner's & Ritchie's attributes, resulted in 7 factors, the interpretation of which had much in common with the factors obtained in their seminal work (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Adding Russia-specific attributes made the factor solution less stable, and 10 attributes had to be taken out. The resulting factors were essentially the same with one notable exception – Russia-related attributes mostly fell into Niche Tourism factor. This implies that including new destination specific attributes into the proposed set should undergo a rigorous selection procedure, as that which was employed by Echtner & Ritchie (1993).

5.7. Limitations

The limited number of survey responses (337) did not allow for testing the results on a different sample to address the question of the reliability of the results with new data, as was recommended by Churchill (1979) as well as Echtner & Ritchie (1993). To keep the desirable case/variable ratio, more responses or fewer attributes were needed. The insufficient number of cases for the “friends or relatives in Russia” variable prevented the valid statistical tests of hypothesis 2. The visitors group within the whole sample (n=54), was also small to compare the Russia's image factors as perceived by visitors and non-visitors. Given the

number of attributes (44), much larger visitors group was needed to obtain a desirable case/variable ratio.

The administering procedure of Russia's Destination Image Survey had one notable limitation. The respondents were asked to submit all their evaluations, open-ended and scaled, at the same time. Although open-ended questions were placed into the first part of the online questionnaire, it was possible for the respondents to return to the open-ended questions and change the answers after they had had more information from the scaled items. Future studies could correct this problem by incorporating the control function into the questionnaire, so that responses to Part 1 are submitted separately from those of Parts 2 and 3, as suggested by Echtner (1991).

5.8. Suggestions for Future Research

Russia as a tourist destination does not equal Russia as a country. Kotler & Gertner (2002:251) pointed out that "a country's image results from its geography, history, proclamations, art and music, famous citizens and other features." Destination and country images are overlapping constructs (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2002), and Russia's destination image is undoubtedly influenced by the country's image, however, it is not clear to what degree. Therefore, it is important to assess how Russia's destination image is affected by the often negative coverage of Russia as a political entity in the U.S. general media. The question whether these two images can be separated in the minds of potential travelers to Russia has direct relevance to successful building of a positive image of Russia as a travel destination.

This study dealt with the image of Russia as a travel destination among American pleasure travelers. However, the U.S. is only one market for Russia's inbound tourism. The large distance between the two countries might have a negative effect on how Russia is perceived by U.S. travelers as suggested by

Reilly (1990). Other, geographically closer, markets might be better suited for focused promotional efforts of the FTA, because they might already possess a more favorable and accurate image of Russia that would require less effort and finance to enhance and positively induce. The conducted research was not designed to establish a cause-effect relationship of familiarity with Russia and American travelers' intent to go there in the next five years. Do people go to Russia because they already have a favorable opinion of it, or is their favorable opinion a result of previous visitation? The study just confirmed that there is a positive association between the familiarity level and propensity to go to Russia. However, the inability to establish a cause-effect relationship precludes us from making a number of important marketing recommendations based on this research. Thus, one of the venues of future research can be a study of how a trip to Russia affects the destination image held prior to visitation.

Evaluation of Russia's destination attributes, along with their importance for visitation intent, is another area for future research. An empirical study by Crompton (1979) shows that not all image attributes equally influence the tourist's decision-making process. Measuring the importance attached to every destination attribute might provide a more accurate evaluation as to the possibility of a positive decision to visit a destination for different groups of visitors.

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Appendix A. Russia's Destination Image Survey

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 1

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

AMBASSADAIR TRAVEL CLUB

RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE SURVEY

Dear Ambassador Member,

Hospitality and Tourism faculty and students at Purdue University with support of the Ambassador Travel Club are conducting a research on Russia's destination image among American travelers. As part of this project, we would like to know your perceptions of Russia as a travel destination. This project has been reviewed and approved by Purdue University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Please answer the survey only if you are 18 years old or older. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please try to answer all the questions. Be sure to click on the **Submit** button when you are finished. If you have any questions or technical problems while completing this survey, please send an e-mail to svetlana@purdue.edu for a prompt response. The survey is completely anonymous and your responses will be used for the research purposes only.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Svetlana Stepchenkova
Graduate Research Assistant Department
of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Purdue University
E-mail: svetlana@purdue.edu

Alastair M. Morrison, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Hospitality & Tourism
Management
Associate Dean for Learning and Director of
International Programs in College of Consumer
and Family Sciences
111A Stone Hall, Purdue University, West
Lafayette, IN 47907-2059

START SURVEY

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 2-1

E-Sat Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/RussiaSurvey.htm>



PURDUE
UNIVERSITY



AMBASSADAIR
TRAVEL CLUB

RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE SURVEY

Part 1 of 3

1. Have you personally visited Russia before? Yes No
2. Do you have friends or relatives in Russia? Yes No
3. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination?
4. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia?
5. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Russia.

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 2-2

E-Sat Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/RussiaSurvey.htm>

Part 2 of 3

We would like to know your perceptions on some aspects of Russia as a travel destination. For each of the following statements, please click the appropriate response: SA - Strongly Agree; A - Agree; N - Neither Agree nor Disagree; D - Disagree; SD - Strongly Disagree.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Numerous historical sites and museums exist in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Russia lacks nature preserves and wildlife areas.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Russia has a large variety of tourist attractions to visit.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Russia has nice beaches for swimming.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Russia has impressive scenery.	<input type="radio"/>				
<hr/>					
	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. Nightlife and entertainment are available in most cities.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. There are very few interesting festivals and celebrations to observe.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. Local transportation in Russia is convenient.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. There are many opportunities to engage in sports activities.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. Tours/excursions are readily available in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 2-3

E-Sat Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetiana/RussiaSurvey.htm>

	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. There are many attractive cities in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. Overall, vacations in Russia offer a good value for the dollar.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. Shopping facilities are poor in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. Entry formalities (visas, border crossings) are simple.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. There is interesting local cuisine to sample.	<input type="radio"/>				
<hr/>					
16. Local standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high.	<input type="radio"/>				
17. Russia has a disagreeable climate.	<input type="radio"/>				
18. In general, Russia is a safe place to visit.	<input type="radio"/>				
19. Many people speak English in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
20. Very distinctive customs and culture exist in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
<hr/>					
21. Russian people are friendly.	<input type="radio"/>				
22. Russian cities are crowded.	<input type="radio"/>				
23. There is a lot of interesting architecture in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
24. The standard of living in Russia is high.	<input type="radio"/>				
25. Russia is a good place for adventure tourism (skiing, kayaking, mountaineering, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
<hr/>					
26. Russia is a restful and relaxing place to visit.	<input type="radio"/>				
27. Russia's tourist attractions are well-known and famous.	<input type="radio"/>				
28. Russia appeals more to adults than children.	<input type="radio"/>				
29. There is a lot of political instability and turmoil in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
30. Russia is a good destination for an educational or learning experience.	<input type="radio"/>				
<hr/>					
31. Quality food is readily available in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
32. I have some knowledge of the Russian history.	<input type="radio"/>				
33. In Russia there are numerous opportunities to see how people really live.	<input type="radio"/>				
34. Boat rides and cruises are available in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				
35. There are few good quality hotels in Russia.	<input type="radio"/>				

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 2-4

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print Mail

Address <http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/RussiaSurvey.htm> Go

36. Trips to Russia can be easily combined with trips to other countries (e.g., Finland, China, and Ukraine).

37. Russia has unique natural attractions of global importance (e.g., lakes, mountains, etc.)

38. There are ample opportunities for fishing and hunting in Russia.

39. There is a shortage of well-trained staff in hotels and restaurants.

40. In Russia everything is different and fascinating.

41. There are many historical attractions in Russia besides Moscow and St. Petersburg. SA A N D SD

42. Russia offers opportunities to see world-class performances (opera, ballet, etc.)

43. First class restaurants are easy to find in Russia.

44. Travel by trans-Siberian train provides opportunities to see authentic Russia.

45. I will visit Russia in the next 5 years.

Part 3 of 3

So we can classify your responses, please tell us about yourself. Your answers are completely confidential and will not be connected to you.

1. What is your gender? Male Female

2. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

3. Which of the following best describes the type of job you hold?

4. Which of the following best describes your age range?

5. Which one of the following best describes your marital status?

6. Which one of the following best describes your total amount household income before taxes?

Thank you very much for your help!

Russia's Destination Image Survey. Page 3

thank you - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print Mail

Address http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/_vti_bin/shtml.dll/RussiaSurvey.htm Go

Thank you!



[St. Basil Cathedral, Moscow, Russia](#)

Your answers have been submitted successfully. To receive a copy of the survey report, please contact Svetlana Stepchenkova at svetlana@purdue.edu. We will have sent out the report by December 31st, 2005.

Appendix B. Invitation and Follow-up Letters

Invitation Letter to Ambassadair Members



AMBASSADAIR

T R A V E L C L U B

July 21, 2005

WWW.AMBASSADAIR.COM

Dear Member,

Ambassadair Travel Club invites you to participate in RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE study, in a form of the online survey, conducted by Hospitality and Tourism faculty and students at Purdue University.

The study is developed to find out how American pleasure travelers feel about Russia as a travel destination and is not intended to test your knowledge of the country. To participate, you have to be 18 years or older. This project has been reviewed and approved by Purdue University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

You can access the survey via the link below:

[HTTP://WEB.ICS.PURDUE.EDU/~SSTEPTCH/RUSSIAIMAGESTUDY.HTM](http://WEB.ICS.PURDUE.EDU/~SSTEPTCH/RUSSIAIMAGESTUDY.HTM)

If the link does not automatically open, simply open your Internet browser (preferably Internet Explorer) and copy-and-paste the link.

Please be assured that your responses are anonymous, will not be connected to you, and will be used for the research purposes only. You can also request the results of the survey or ask any questions related to this study by writing to SVETLANA@PURDUE.EDU. The results will be sent out by December 31, 2005.

Your willingness to participate in the survey is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sally Brown
President
Ambassadair Travel Club

Follow-up Letter to Ambassadair Members



AMBASSADAIR

T R A V E L C L U B

July 30, 2005

WWW.AMBASSADAIR.COM

Dear Member,

A week ago you were invited to participate in RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE study, in the form of an online survey, conducted by Hospitality and Tourism faculty and students at Purdue University.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, IF YOU HAVE ALREADY TAKEN THE SURVEY!

If not, please consider participating in the survey. Your opinion is important for this study. The results will be used to create better Russian travel products for Ambassadair members.

You can access the survey via the link below:

[HTTP://WEB.ICS.PURDUE.EDU/~SSTEPTCH/RUSSIAIMAGESTUDY.HTM](http://WEB.ICS.PURDUE.EDU/~SSTEPTCH/RUSSIAIMAGESTUDY.HTM)

If the link does not automatically open, simply open your Internet browser (preferably Internet Explorer) and copy-and-paste the link.

Reminder: To participate, you have to be 18 years or older. Your responses are anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. You can address any question regarding this survey to SVETLANA@PURDUE.EDU for a prompt answer.

Sincerely,

Sally Brown

President

Ambassadair Travel Club

Appendix C. WORDER Interface

To use the two-step approach described in the thesis, data should be prepared for the analysis in the following way:

- Responses to a Web-based survey should be stored preferably in comma separated value format in a file, which for the ease of further reference will be named “SurveyResults.csv”. Important note: This file should NOT be formatted using MS Excel prior to the procedure described below!
- All textual responses to a particular question should be pooled together by copying them from the Excel file and converting into a plain text document for CATPAC analysis. For further convenience we will refer to this file as “SurveyResultsQ1-3Pooled.txt”.
- To obtain separate textual files for every response, the special function of WORDER software called Snip should be used.

Running Snip function of WORDER 2.0 program. Sub-program of WORDER, Snip, was created to quickly transfer textual responses from “SurveyResults.csv” file separate textual files. Graphic interface of Snip function is shown in Figure C-1 Snip Function Interface.

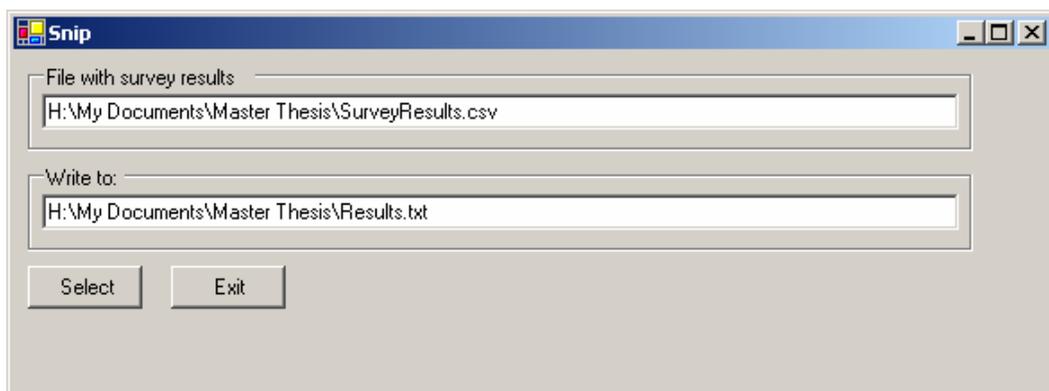


Figure C-1 Snip Function Interface

After activating the Snip function of WORDER 2.0 software:

- File "SurveyResults.csv" with survey results can be drag-and-dropped into the upper field.
- Then in the bottom "Write to" field the researcher has to place the directory and the name of file where to write the results to.
- To choose which of the three open-ended questions to prepare for the analysis, click "Select" button. "Give the column index" window will appear. The column number of "SurveyResults.csv" where the textual responses are stored, e.g., 3, 4, or 5, should be typed into the index field. Then click "OK" button.
- In the specified directory Snip will create as many separate files as there were rows with responses in "SurveyResults.csv" file. If column 3 was chosen, new files will be named Results_C3_resp1.txt, Results_C3_resp2.txt, etc.

Running WORDER 2.0 program. The new graphic interface of WORDER program is given in Figure C-2 WORDER 2.0 Interface.

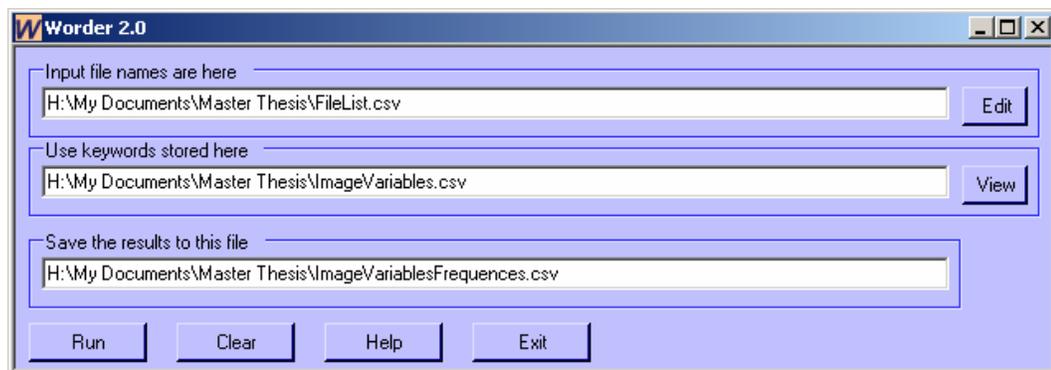


Figure C-2 WORDER 2.0 Interface

To run WORDER 2.0 program, the following input files should be indicated as described below:

- “FileList.csv”. This file can be comprised using the “Edit” button of WORDER interface as illustrated by Figure C-3 WORDER Edit Function Window. “Edit” button opens a new window with 2 fields. Into the larger field all separate response files created by Snip can be drag-and-dropped. In the “Save list as:” field the researcher can indicate into what file put the names of all the response files they want to analyze, e.g., “FileList.csv”.
- “Use keywords stored here” field should point out the name and location of the file which contains image variables identified by CATPAC. An example of how this file might look is given in Table 3-3.
- “Save the results to this file” should contain the name and location of the WORDER output.

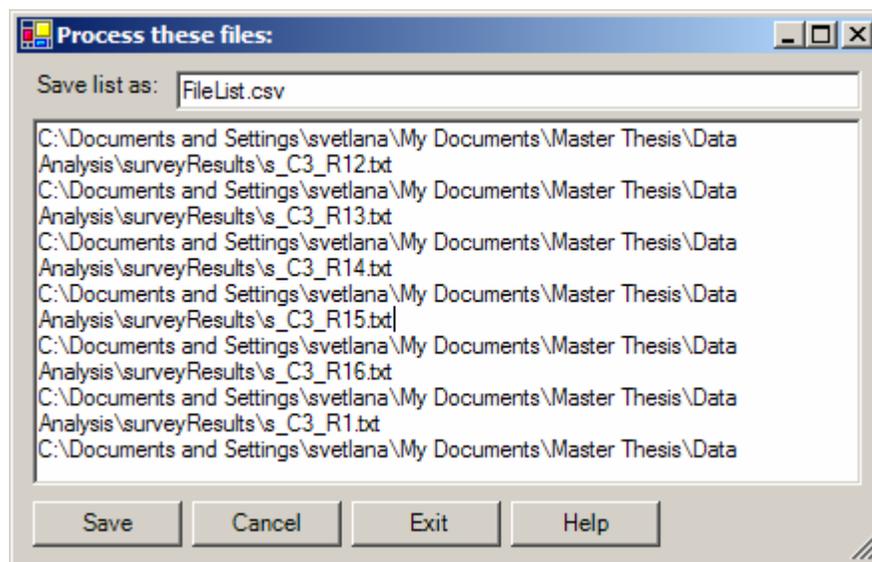


Figure C-3 WORDER Edit Function Window

Appendix D. Favorability Survey

E-Sat Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/Q4_Favorability.htm




RUSSIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE STUDY: FAVORABILITY ANALYSIS

**DATA COLLECTION PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THIS STUDY!**

If you would like to know the results of this study, please write to svetlana@purdue.edu

Svetlana Stepchenkova
Master's student,
Hospitality and Tourism Management, Purdue University

1. alcoholism	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
2. austere	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
3. awesome	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
4. boring	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
5. cautious	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
6. cold (refers to weather)	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
7. contrasts	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
8. cordial	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
9. cosmopolitan	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
10. depressing	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
11. difficult	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
12. exciting	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
13. fascinating	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
14. festive	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
15. free	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
16. friendly	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
17. good	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
18. happy	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
19. hardworking	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
20. historical	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N

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E-Sat Survey - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.htmresearch.atfreeweb.com/svetlana/Q4_Favorability.htm

14. festive	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
15. free	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
16. friendly	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
17. good	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
18. happy	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
19. hardworking	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
20. historical	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
21. hopeful	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
22. hostility	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
23. interesting	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
24. open	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
25. pleasant	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
26. poor	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
27. relaxing	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
28. reserved	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
29. ruthless	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
30. sad	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
31. safe	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
32. seedy	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
33. serene	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
34. somber	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
35. tense	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
36. uncomfortable	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
37. undeveloped	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
38. unfriendly	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
39. unhappy	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
40. unpleasant	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
41. unsafe	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N
42. upbeat	<input type="radio"/> P	<input type="radio"/> SP	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> SN	<input type="radio"/> N

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Appendix E. Affective Descriptors

Table E-1 Affective Variables: WORDER Input Table

#	Affective variable	Synonyms				
1	alcoholism	alcohol	vodka	drugs	drink too much	
2	austere	stark	spartan	primitive	stoic	lack
		minimal				
3	awesome	awe	beautiful	great	glorious	grandeur
		incredible	wonderful	wondrous		
4	boring	dull	bland	indifference	lack of enthusiasm	
5	cautious	suspicious	distrustful	secretive	cynical	
6	cold	cool				
7	contrasts	mixture	mixed			
8	cordial	polite	courteous	gentle	well-mannered	respectful
9	cosmopolitan	european	cultural	old world		
10	depressing	depressed	depression	despair	hopeless	dreary
		drab	dark	darker	gloomy	glum
		bleak	gray	grey		
11	difficult	difficulty		beleaguered	tough	trouble
12	exciting	excited	fun	love	joy	loved
		excitement				
13	fascinating	fascinated	amazed	emotionally bonded	emotional	elation
		wonder				
14	festive	rich	extravagant	flourishing		
15	free	w/o restrictions	freely	freedom	not be monitored	popular
16	friendly	warm	receptive	accommodating	welcome	welcoming
		welcomed	caring	congenial	gregarious	comfortable
		friendlier	comfortable			
17	good	normal	average	no problems	fine	positive
18	happy	happier				
19	hardworking	focused	hard-working	business	less extravagant	
20	historical	historic	historically			
21	hopeful	optimism	forgetting	denying		
22	hostility	hostile	disapproving	anti-american	resentment	resentful
		wary	jealousy			
23	interesting	different	unique			
24	open	tolerant	inquisitive	interested	thrilled	
25	pleasant	nice	heartening			
26	poor	poverty	poorer			
27	relaxing	laid back				
28	reserved	not curious	emotionally controlled	guarded	private	restraint
		shy	stern	stilted	unemotional	reserve
29	ruthless	strong-minded	police state	oppressed	restrictive	intrigue
		restrictions				
30	sad	sadness	nostalgic			
31	safe	safer	clean			

# Affective variable	Synonyms				
32 seedy	dirty	polluted			
33 serene	quiet	romantic			
34 somber	solemn withdrawn	sober grim	serious	subdued	dour
35 tense	anxious not as relaxed	apprehensive stressful	anxiety worrisome	foreboding	watchful
36 uncomfortable	not be comfortable	reservations	uneasiness	not comfortable	
37 undeveloped	developing monetary dollar-hungry	third world needing low	expensive unemployed	surviving downtrodden	struggling desperate
38 unfriendly	not welcome not very friendly not particularly friendly	stand-offish not friendly	not warm natured not service oriented	uninviting not too friendly	rude not overly friendly
39 unhappy	not happy laugh more	not many happy not smiling	not too much fun	unsmiling	not smiling
40 unpleasant	less than pleasant	not very attractive	ugly questionable safety	worse	mafia's
41 unsafe	not feel safe are people trustworthy?	afraid watch out	gangsterism	dangerous	risky criminals
42 upbeat	bustling boom more business than pleasure	bustle booming	busy crowded	lively growing rapidly	hurried turbulent

Appendix F. Uniqueness Descriptors

Table F-1 Uniqueness Variables: WORDER Input Table

#	Unique Features	Synonyms				
1	architecture	architectures	architectural	building	buildings	
2	art	arts	ballet	bolshoi	kirov	music
3	baikal	baykal				
4	blacksea	black sea				
5	caspianseas	caspians sea				
6	chernobyl					
7	churches	church	monastery	cathedrals	cathedral	
8	cruises	cruise	cruising	boat	riverboat	
9	czars	czar	czar's	czarist	catherine	peter
		tsarist	tsars	tsar	tsar's	
10	hermitage	winter palace	czar's residence			
11	kremlin	kreml				
12	leningrad					
13	leninstomb	lenin's	lenin			
14	moscow	moskaw	mosco	moskow		
15	museums	museum				
16	oniondomes	onion				
17	palaces	palace				
18	petersburg	st.petersburg	peterburg			
19	redsquare	red square				
20	siberia	siberian				
21	smalltowns	towns	village	countryside	golden ring	
22	stbasil	basil	saint-basil	st.basil	basil's	basils
		st.basil's	saint-basil's	saint-basils	st.basils	
23	summerpalace	summer palace	peterhoff	peterhof		
25	transsib	Trans-Siberian Railroad across	transcontinental orient express	trans Siberia	Trans-Siberia	
25	volgariver	volga				

Appendix G. American Travelers to Europe Profile

Table G-1 American Pleasure Travelers to Europe Profile by ETC, 2001

Demographic Variables	%
Education	
High school or less	9.9
1-3 years of college	21.5
College graduate (4 years)	29.8
Attended graduate school	9.5
Completed master's degree	21.6
Completed doctorate	7.7
Age	
18 to 24	1.1
25 to 34	12.6
35 to 44	18.3
45 to 54	22.9
55 to 64	21.1
65 to 74	17.1
74 and older	6.8
Retired	29.2
Household income	
Less than \$25,000	4.2
\$25,000 to \$49,999	16.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	19.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	23.6
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.6
\$200,000 or more	7.0
Marital status	
Married	66.9
Living together, not married	7.2
Single, never married	13.1
Divorced or separated	8.1
Widowed	4.6
Have children under 18	17.6
Gender	
Male	53.7
Female	46.3
(Number of respondents = 1,348-1,470)	

Appendix H. Ambassador Membership Profile

Table H-1 Profile Comparisons

Variable <i>Chi-sq., df, p</i>	Levels	Ambassador <i>n1=2,223</i>		Russia's Survey <i>n2=337</i>	
		<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender Chi-sq=1.688, df=1, p<0.20	Male	887	40.3	147	43.6
	Female	1316	59.7	187	55.5
Education*** Chi-sq=15.861 df=4, p=0.01	High school	201	9.1	19	5.6
	Some college	455	20.7	53	15.7
	Associate	169	7.7	24	7.1
	Bachelor	708	32.1	105	31.2
	Post graduate	670	30.4	133	39.5
Job*** Chi-sq=89.460 df=8, p<0.001	Administrative	215	9.8	20	5.9
	Educator	169	7.7	21	6.2
	Executive	113	5.1	21	6.2
	Managerial	256	11.6	20	5.9
	Professional	445	20.2	87	25.8
	Sales/Marketing	139	6.3	14	4.2
	Self-employed	317	14.4	24	7.1
	Retired	344	15.6	111	32.9
Age*** Chi-sq=77.940 df=6, p=0.001	Other	205	9.3	16	4.7
	18-24	7	0.3	1	0.3
	25-34	130	5.9	8	2.4
	35-44	356	16.2	29	8.6
	45-54	781	35.5	74	22.0
	55-64	649	29.5	130	38.6
Marital Status Chi-sq=1.098, df=1 p<1.0	65 and older	274	12.4	86	25.5
	Single	432	19.6	74	22.0
Income Chi-sq=9.210 df=7, p<1.0	Married	1735	78.8	256	76.0
	Less than \$30,000	48	2.2	6	1.8
	\$30,000 - \$49,999	220	10.0	24	7.1
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	380	17.2	48	14.2
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	318	14.4	58	17.2
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	491	22.3	81	24.0
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	167	7.6	31	9.2
	\$200,000 and above	221	10.0	41	12.2
	Prefer not to answer	358	16.3	48	14.2

***significant at 0.01 level

LIST OF REFERENCES

APPENDICES

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PUBLICATION(S)