The complexity of the Region Branding Process - A new model
Kompleksiteten af regionen Branding Processen - En ny model

Branding the region of Moldova (Romania) on the UK market
Branding af området i Moldova (Rumænien) på det britiske marked

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Abstract

Tourism has become a very important sector for a destination’s economic health. Nowadays, not only products compete against each other, but regions, cities and countries do too. Having an appealing brand, with an interesting value proposition has become a very important aspect for a destination, if it aims to attract visitors. However, building a strong brand is a complex process, which has to be tailored to every specific target market.

The paper focuses on region branding, putting under the loop Moldova, a region situated in the North-East part of Romania. The potential that this region has, as well as what are the main pillars on which the destination brand should be built on, was studied in relation to the British market.

An online survey was conducted to test the level of knowledge, perception and interest that the tourists in the UK might have about Moldova region. In addition, insights were obtained in respect to the requirements, expectations and needs of the modern British tourist.

Proving the complexity of the region branding process, the thesis puts forward a new pyramid, formed from the compilation of several models from the country, city and region branding literature. The point of departure in this process was the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” proposed by Morgan, Pritchard and Pride which constituted the backbone model, to which other models were added. Moreover, the assimilated models were challenged and additional elements were adhered. As a result, the complexity of the backbone model was increased both vertically, as well as horizontally.

The new proposed pyramid intends to constitute the basis for a complex region branding analysis, leading to the creation of a competitive brand.

Combining theory and practice, the thesis concludes with a set of recommendations meant to support the process of building the region brand of Moldova in relation to the British market.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. An overview on tourism

1.1.1. Tourism – definitions and importance

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which enables the circulation of people to destinations other than their typical environment. Considering these movements imply some expenditure, UNWTO also recognizes the impact of tourism on the economy. In addition, it is acknowledged that tourism also has implications on the natural and built environment, as well as on the indigenous population at the destination and even on the tourist him/herself (UNWTO, 2014\textsuperscript{1}).

1.1.2. Tourism – from general to particular

The next section offers a funnel version of the state of tourism starting form a worldwide perspective and finalizing with Moldova, the region on focus in the present thesis

![Figure 1: Overview of the state of Tourism](source: Own compilation)

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1. \textsuperscript{1} http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary, accessed November 2014
1.1.2.1. Tourism Worldwide

A report from UNWTO shows that over the last years tourism has grown significantly, becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. More specifically, international tourist arrivals have grown from 528 million in 1995 to 1087 million in 2013 (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition\(^2\)). The numbers are predicted to reach 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO’s long term forecast *Tourism Towards 2030*, taken from UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 21014 Edition\(^3\)).

Figure 2: Why tourism matters

![Figure 2: Why tourism matters](image)

Source: (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition, p 10)

As Figure 2 shows, tourism has become a very important sector – it generates revenue, jobs and reputation. Thus, in order for a destination (country, region, city) to benefit from these, it has to stay competitive by developing a strong brand and an appealing value proposition, capable of attracting a high number of tourists.

Morgan et al. (2004) add a new dimension to the definition of tourism, being of the opinion that travelling to a new place is not just about how it makes a person feel but also about how it makes an individual look in front of its friends and relatives. They argue that the destination where a person chooses to spend their holidays is a vivid indicator of that individual’s lifestyle, social status and economic situation (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004). That being said, this is an aspect that the marketers should take into account when developing a destination’s brand (McIntosh, 1984).

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\(^2\) [http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_highlights14_en_hr_0.pdf](http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_highlights14_en_hr_0.pdf), accessed November 2014

\(^3\) Idem2
1.1.2.2. Tourism in Europe

According to UNWTO, Europe had in 2013 a market share of 51.8 %, a high percentage compared to Asia and the Pacific (22.8%), Americas (15.5%), Africa (5.1%) or Middle East (4.7%).

In terms of international arrivals, Southern and Mediterranean Europe had 38.3 % market share, followed by Western Europe with 34.3%, Northern Europe with 14.3 % and on the last place is Central and Eastern Europe, with 12.2% market share (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition).

However, despite the low market share, the numbers are optimistic for the Central and Eastern part which seems to be the most successful in terms of growth – with 7% more arrivals in 2013, compared to 6% growth for Southern and Mediterranean Europe and 4% growth for Western Europe (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition).

1.1.2.3. Tourism in Romania

An analysis of the realities of Romanian tourism show that the country only has 0.3% (UNWTO, 2014) market share in terms of international tourist arrivals, which is a very small percentage compared to the other countries in Eastern Europe (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition).

In spite of an impressive touristic potential – high mountains, seaside, very well preserved nature, rich traditions, Romania is scoring very low in terms of international arrivals, according to the Romanian National Statistics Institute. Romania had 61.100 more foreign tourists in 2013 compared to 2012 and 179.700 more overnight stays in 2013 compared to 2012.

Although an increase in observed, when comparing the number of overnight stays in Romania with the ones of other European countries, the situation is not as optimistic. In top 5, we have the countries with the highest number of overnight stays – Spain (251.9 mil), Italy (179,6 mil), France (132,2 mil), the UK (116,7 mil) and Austria (78,1 mil). Analyzing the countries with the smallest numbers of overnight stays, we have Latvia (2.7 mil), Lithuania (2.8 mil), Romania (3,5 mil) and Estonia (3,9 mil). The only two countries with a lower number of overnight stays (from international tourists) than Romania are Latvia and Lithuania, but these two countries have a much smaller surface and have therefore less accommodation facilities (INS, 2014 [Romanian] National Statistics Institute – data synthesized by “Cotidianul” and translated by the author).

When visiting Romania, most foreigners prefer to go to the capital, as Bucharest attracted in 2013, 600.000 tourists.

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4 idem2
5 idem2
6 idem2
Most foreigners who visited Romania in 2013 came from Germany (228,000), Italy (180,000), France (91,000), Israel (96,000), Great Britain (92,000), SUA (91,000) and Spain (66,000). From Poland 64,000 tourists came, 58,000 from Austria, 47,000 from The Netherlands, 43,000 from Bulgaria, 39,000 from Greece and 38,000 from Turkey (data synthesized by Mediafax from the Romanian National Authority for Tourism and translated by the author⁹).

1.1.2.4. Tourism in the Moldova region

The country brand of Romania is beyond the scope of the thesis. Instead, the aim here is to focus on a specific region of Romania – namely Moldova (see Appendix 1).

The region of Moldova is situated in the Nord East part of Romania and it is composed from 8 counties: Bacau, Botosani, Galati, Iasi, Neamt, Suceava, Vaslui and Vrancea.

In 2011, when the last census was performed, 4,284,062 people lived in Moldova, this being the most populated region in Romania.

Moldova has a surface of 35,806 square kilometers.

From a touristic perspective, the North East has a lot to offer:

- An impressive cultural heritage in Iasi and Botosani;
- An interesting religious heritage which consists of many churches and monasteries;
- Vineyards in Husi and Cotnari;
- Resorts that offer numerous possibilities for fun and relaxation: Vatra Dornei, Campulung Moldovenesc, Gura Humorului, Slanic Moldova;
- Mountain areas: Ceahlau, Calimani, Rarau.
- Moldavian cuisine and gastronomy and many others.

The thesis also attempts to advance the understanding of how complex the region branding process is by providing a new perspective of how certain theoretical models from the country, city and region branding literature can be combined in order to obtain a more insightful analysis. As a result, a new model is proposed.

Chapter 2: Practical and theoretical contributions

2.1. Problem formulation

Despite the interesting touristic offer, Moldova region is not among the most popular places tourists travel to in Romania, one of the main reasons being the fact that the region is now well branded and promoted. A list of the touristic attractions that the Moldova region has to offer is presented in Appendix 2.

However, before blaming anyone for the lack of promotional actions in Moldova, one word of warning should be mentioned: building a destination brand is a complex process, in which many factors have to be taken into account (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004). Among these factors are the destination’s touristic facilities, the demands and expectations of the target market as well as the resources (financial and otherwise) which marketers have at their disposal for the promotional endeavors.

Although in the past decades, the destination branding literature was enriched with many models and theories, many of these models enable the analysis of only a part of the touristic reality of a destination, leaving out many other factors that could have an impact on the quality of the results. Thus, the present thesis aims to advance the understanding of this topic by synchronizing several destination branding models, emphasizing on the complexity of the region branding process and offering a new perspective on how a more in depth analysis can be reached.

The point of departure in this process should be the analysis of the potential customers (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004), in order to understand their wants and expectations. Without that, the construction of a strong, appealing brand becomes a very challenging task and the results might not be the desired ones.

Therefore, research is needed to assess the particular benefits that consumers associate with the destination (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2002). Aaker and Myers (1996) also emphasize on the importance of an in depth research which focus on only one target market, considering that a broader approach could lead to an ambiguous value proposition.

In accordance to this, it is essential to realize that markets are different from one another; therefore the promotional activities should be tailored to the requirements of every specific market if they aim to be successful.

In the case of Moldova, the starting point of the branding and promotion efforts should be channeled towards tourists who are directly connected to the region’s airports. One of the cities which are directly connected to the
region is London, is Iasi. Two low-cost airlines - Wizz Air and Blue Air have weekly flight between Iasi (the largest city in Moldova) and London. Most flights take 2 -3 hours and have very competitive prices. In addition, the British seem to be interested in visiting Romania, judging by the numbers offered by www.homeway.co.uk\textsuperscript{10}, which stated that in January 2014 the number of information searched about holidays in Romania increased by 300%, no other destinations registering the same numbers.

In addition, the local administration is happy to welcome more foreign tourists and some efforts have been made to attract them. For instance, a website about what the region of Moldova has to offer has been launched - http://www.infoturism-moldova.ro/, benefiting also from an English version.

The increased interest in the country, the presence of direct flights from London to Iasi and Bacau (cities in the Moldova region) at very competitive prices and most of all the high touristic potential of the area could bring a considerable higher number of tourists to this region.

2.2. Thesis contribution to the scholar world – A new model for region branding process

The present master thesis aims not only to bring a contribution to the practical world by providing an analysis of the perception of the Moldova region on the British market, but also intends to contribute to the scholar world by challenging and synchronizing several models used in the destination branding literature, which are combined as presented in Figure 3.

Thus, five models are combined in an innovative way, in order to problematize the complexity of region branding:

1. Brand personality and the benefit pyramid, Morgan et al. (2004) – the backbone model
5. The destination celebrity matrix, Morgan et al. (2002)

As previously mentioned, the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” proposed by Morgan et al. (2004) will constitute the backbone model, which will support the use of other four complementary models.

\textsuperscript{10} www.homeaway.co.uk is part of the HomeAway family, the world’s most comprehensive, trusted source for holiday homes.
2.2.1. The application of the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” in previous studies

Previous studies (Kalplanidou & Vogt, 2003; Bundle, 2011; Westwood, 2011) have also used the pyramid with the general purpose of finding a destination’s core essence and build its brand on that foundation. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003) conducted an analysis of different models in the destination branding literature, including the analysis of the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid”. About the pyramid, they concluded that answering its questions can only “help identify a destination’s brand identity elements” (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2003, p 2), specifically - the its brand essence.

Another study, done by Bundle (2011) used the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” to explore the touristic brand of Namibia and its potential to become an attractive holiday destination. The analysis started with the tangible assets of the destination and continued with the physical and emotional benefits that consumers consider they got or would get by visiting this place. The investigation of the core essence of Namibia’s destination brand was based on the emotional and physical association that consumers exemplified in the research process such as “natural beauty”, “vast” (physical benefits), as well as “intimate” or “liberating” (emotional benefits) (Bundle, 2011, published in Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011, p 263). Based on these associations, the author concluded what could be the brand essence of Namibia and how the value proposition should be marketed to attract a higher number of tourists.

A third study which used the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” was conducted by Westwood (2011), who used the model to research a “new” destination – Abu Dhabi. Just like Bundle (2011) who researched Namibia’s destination brand, Westwood outlined Abu Dhabi’s brand essence using tangible and intangible association that recurring or potential visitors have with the destination. The combination of physical and emotional associations that the travelers have with Abu Dhabi discovered during the analysis included: culture, tradition, being warm and welcoming, oil wealth, high tech (Westwood, 2011, published in Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011, p 202). In Abu Dhabi’s case, the research ended with a word that the author considered it described the destination best, this being “respect”. Westwood proposed that the analysis should be the foundation for the future development of the touristic brand of Abu Dhabi.

Although the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” was a very useful tool in previous research, “merely establishing a brand essence or values is insufficient” (Bundle, 2011, published in Morgan Pritchard & Pride, 2011, p 265), suggesting that additional insights and analysis are needed. Furthermore, given the physical and emotional associations that the travelers are asked to make in the research process it is obvious that the model has a more extensive use in analyzing a well-known destination, which the
tourist has previously visited or has information about. It is important to notice that it can be very hard for a tourist that has never been to or heard of a destination to express any emotional or physical associations. Thus, previous research has showed that using the pyramid in its simple form leads a limited analysis and is only able to disclose the core essence of a destination brand.

Given the complexity of destination branding process, the present thesis recognizes the value of the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid”, but suggests that a more in depth analysis and more insightful results could be reached by adding several models from the destination branding literature at different levels of the pyramid. Thus, a new “Destination branding model” is proposed:

Figure 3: New model for Destination Brand Management proposed in this thesis

![Diagram of the new model for Destination Brand Management proposed in this thesis](source)

Source: Own compilation based on Morgan et al. (2004, page 71)

### 2.2.2. Explanation of the new proposed model

To better understand the rationale and usefulness of the new proposed model, a more detailed examination of every level is proposed.
First level
Left alone, the first level of the pyramid is concerned with defining the tangible, verifiable characteristics of a destination. Therefore, an attempt to answer the first question would lead to a description list of what the place has to offer. However, adding the two new models - “The Hexagon of Competitive Identity” proposed by Simon Anholt (2003) and the “Country - city – region matrix positioning model” developed by Herstein (2012) - help raise extra questions, challenges the researcher to examine the reality from new angles and leads to a more in-depth and insightful analysis of what a destination has to offer.

One word of warning should be mentioned about the first model: Anholt’s “Hexagon of Competitive Identity” is primarily used in the literature for a country’s brand development. Considering that there are significant differences between country and region branding an adaptation was required in order to apply the model to region branding analysis. Thus, two of the factors were left out of the analysis, more specifically the “people” and the “policy”.

Second level
The second level investigates the functional benefits that the tourist gains from visiting the destination. Nonetheless, the second question also leads to a descriptive list. Previous studies (Kalplanidou & Vogt, 2003; Bundle, 2011; Westwood, 2011) have used the pyramid in order to gain insights into what are the physical benefits that a tourist expects to enjoy at a destination, which as a result lead to a descriptive list. In the case of Abu Dhabi’s brand, some of the associations were “sand” and “hi-teach” (Westwood, 2011).

However, by adding “The place brand center” model, proposed by Zenker and Braunn (2010) new ideas are put under the loop. The model raises a new important question: does a destination offer the same functional benefits for all travelers or is it that different segments are interested in different functional advantages? Furthermore, should marketers create one umbrella brand under which develop sub-brands? Clearly, the insertion of a new model at this level adds a new perspective to the analysis.

Third level
The third level in the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” takes into consideration the emotional benefits that the tourist gains when visiting a place. The new model introduced at this level - the “Destination celebrity matrix” proposed by Morgan et al. (2004), is built on two pillars: celebrity value and emotional pull. The supplementary model takes the analysis a step further and offers a new perspective: the desire to visit a destination is created not only by the emotional aspects but also by the level of knowledge a consumer has about the place in discussion.

Fourth level
Unfortunately, the 4th level could not be analyzed in this case due to the low number of repeat visitors to the Moldova region from the UK market (was proved in the analysis).
Fifth level
The analysis performed at the previous mentioned levels will constitute the foundation for the 5th level, where a set of recommendations for building the region brand of Moldova will be proposed, based on the performed analysis. Therefore, the introduction of a new model at this stage was not considered necessary.
In conclusion, the compilation of these models creates a more solid foundation for the analysis or a region brand by raising new questions and challenging the researcher to explore the reality from new angles.

2.3. Research question

The thesis is motivated by the following research question:

*How can the region of Moldova brand itself as an attractive tourist destination for the British market and increase the number of tourists coming from the UK?*

In order to answer the research question, some sub-questions have been formulated:

- What are the definitions of brand, branding and place branding?
- What are the definitions of country brand, city brand and region brand and what are the similarities and differences amongst them?
- What are the main tourist assets that the region of Moldova has?
- What are the requirements of the British traveler when travelling in Europe?
- What is the level of knowledge about the Moldavian region on the British market?
- What type of tourism (agro tourism, health and spa tourism, sports tourism, vineyards tourism, city breaks) would apply to different segments on the British market?
- How can the tourism in the Moldavian region be improved?
- What type of tourism would generate the highest interest on the British market?

The main motivation behind the choice of the topic is the important touristic potential the area has to offer, which is, unfortunately under branded and not very well known. Additionally, the author was born and raised in this area and has traveled extensively in Moldova and experienced the touristic potential. The analysis will only focus on Moldova region and the analysis of other Romanian regions is beyond the scope of this paper.
2.4. Problem owners

The thesis offers insights about the target market and will conclude with a set of recommendations that the local administration can use in order to brand the region of Moldova and increase the number of tourists coming from the UK.

As shown in figure 1, a successful branding strategy could ultimately lead to increased revenue from tourism, the creation of new jobs and a higher number of exported products, all this being in the interest of a local municipality.

In addition, there are other stakeholders who could benefit from the present research’s results, such as branding agencies hired by the local municipality to brand Moldova for which the findings could constitute the basis for their decisions or further research.

Furthermore, offering an insight into the British market and a set of recommendations for how to attract a higher number of tourists from the UK could be helpful for other actors in the tourism industry - tour operators, travel agencies – as well as for other actors in the hospitality industry – hotels and restaurants. The above mentioned actors could create their own promotional and marketing endeavors based on the insights from this thesis.

2.5. Structure

The current paper is divided into 9 chapters.

The first chapter offers an introduction into the subject by looking into how the concept of “tourism” can be defined and what is its importance for a country’s development.

The second chapter illustrates the contribution that the present thesis aims to make to the scholar world – by putting forward a new, complex model, as well as to the practical world, but offering insights about the British traveler in relation to the region of Moldova.

The literature review is the topic of the third chapter, concerned with presenting the models used in the analysis.

The fourth chapter sheds light on the methodology, presenting the author's stand in relation to the philosophy of science. Also, in this chapter the hypotheses, as well as the process deployed in order to collect the data are presented.

The results of the research are illustrated in the firth chapter and are confronted with the theory and the models in chapter 6.

The conclusions of the research are presented in chapter 7, while in chapter 8 the limitations of the study are described.
The final chapter – 9, contains recommendations concerning future research.

2.6. Delimitations

Due to the scope of this thesis certain subjects of relevance for the research question are omitted and are shortly explained below.

The focus here is on attracting tourists rather than potential inhabitants. It is assumed that the region constitutes an interesting destination for the British travelers (assumptions which will be tested in the analysis), but because of the high difference in the standard of living between the two countries, it is expected that creating a strong region brand would not be enough to convince a British person to actually live in the region of Moldova, Romania. Therefore, the current thesis will not touch upon the attractiveness of the region in discussion as a relocation destination.

In addition to this, the image that Romania has as a country in the UK will not be investigated. It is acknowledged that the country image in general could have a significant impact on choosing or avoiding that specific market as a touristic destination, but although it is an interesting discussion, it exceeds the purpose of this thesis. The subject will be touched upon in the analysis, but not developed in details.

The proposed recommendations will require resources (investments and people), but a calculation of the costs of these initiatives is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In terms of geographical delimitations, the analysis will only concern the region of Moldova in Romania and the touristic potential of this specific region. Although it is acknowledged that the market insights obtained could be used for the branding of other regions in Romania, the extent of applicability to other destinations is left at the appreciation of future users. Furthermore, the analysis will only be applied on the British market as it is assumed that markets are different and an appealing destination for one market could generate no interest on another market.
Chapter 3: Literature review

The destination branding literature offers a series of models and theories which can be used by researchers and practitioners alike to explore a place’s challenges and potential. However, many of these models focus on the observation of just certain parts of the touristic environment. Considering the complexity of the destination branding process it is assumed that a combination of the already developed and tested models is able to provide a more accurate description of the reality. Thus, 5 models from the destination branding literature are combined in an innovative manner, which will constitute the foundation for the analysis leading to an answer to the research question presented above. Therefore, the literature review will focus on two main parts:

- The first part will underline the differences between the concepts of brand and branding. In addition, it will present a series of contradictory opinions from scholars, some of which agree with the idea of place branding, while others consider it to be wrong.

- The second part focus on the 5 models used in the analysis: the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid”, “The hexagon of Competitive Identity”, the “Country- city – region matrix positioning model”, the “Place Brand Management” model and the “Destination Celebrity matrix”

3.1. Brand and Branding

3.1.1 Definitions of brand

“The earliest sign of branding in Europe was the medieval guilds’ requirement that craft people put trademarks on their products to protect themselves and the consumers against inferior quality” (Kotler, 2006, p 20). According to Kotler, in the past, it was very important to know a product’s provenience so one can estimate its qualities and flows. Thus, the brand protected not only the consumer but also the producer, who could rely on a strong brand to fight competition.

With such a long history, the concept of “brand” has been defined by a large number of researchers and specialists, who each gave its own interpretation of the word that “so many definitions make it difficult to compare, synthesize and accumulate findings” (Kollat, Engel & Blackwell, 1970, p 329). As a consequence,
“inconclusive, ambiguous or contradictory findings are the rule rather than the exception” (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973), emphasizing on the fact that so many different opinions could hardly lead to one reliable conclusion.

To outline the vastness of definitions regarding the concept of brand, Chernatony and Dall’Olmo analyzed over 100 articles about the brand and identified “twelve main themes in the literature i.e. as: i) legal instrument; ii) logo; iii) company; iv) shorthand; v) risk reducer; vi) identity system; vii) image in consumers' minds; viii) value system; ix) personality; x) relationship; xi) adding value; and xii) evolving entity” (Chernatony & Dall’Olmo, 1998). Offering an exhaustive image about the definition of the brand is beyond the purpose of the present thesis and the focus will only be on a simple, very important aspect of a brand – distinctiveness.

The American Marketing Association defines the concept of “brand” as a “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Keller, Aperia and Georgson, 2008, p 2) thus emphasizing on how important distinctiveness between products is.

Therefore, in the classical meaning of the concept, the main purpose of a brand was to show the source of a certain product or service (e.g. what is the producing company) so that consumers could distinguish it on the market. However, in the current market conditions, where competition is fierce, creating a strong brand has become an important preoccupation for many companies. It does no longer suffice to be different, a brand has to be different in a smart way; it has to appeal to the target market, or, in other words, “a brand should not try to be all things to all people” (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2003, p 5). Furthermore, a brand is not only a concept that distinguishes a product from another one the market; it is what the consumer thinks and feels about the brand when he/she sees it. “A brand is a promise of something” (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p 56), highlighting the importance of the image a brand projects on the consumer.

Creating a strong brand sounds easier said than done since a brand is an abstract concept, being the image created in the mind of the consumer from the tangible and intangible elements of the product, service or place that he/she is evaluating (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009).

According to Anholt (2007), when discussing the concept of brand, one has to distinguish between four different aspects: Brand identity; Brand image; Brand purpose; Brand equity (Anholt, 2007).

**Brand identity**

Brand identity refers to the tangible aspects of a brand – logo, slogan, package, promotional materials. This is a controllable aspect of a brand and many companies, products and destinations spend a considerable amount of money and resources to develop a distinctive and memorable brand identity.

Brand identity is created by a company, local administration, etc. in relation to how it wants its brands to be perceived (Kapferer, 2008).

**Brand image**
If the first concept – brand identity is tangible and therefore easily observable, when it comes to brand image, the analysis becomes harder, if not impossible at times. That is because the brand image cannot be controlled by the parties who broadcast the message, it is created in the mind of the consumer and it is therefore hard to observe and analyze (Riezebos, 2003). Furthermore, “the brand image may or may not match the brand identity and it is an important driver of people’s behavior” (Anholt, 2007, p 78), pointing out the idea that people are driven by what they think about the brands rather than by what the marketers deliver on the market. This concept is a critical one in the country/region/city branding discussion, considering that “how a place is represented can inspire people to visit and revisit it” (Coshall, 2002; Topachai and Waryszak, 2000, p 105), therefore having the right image is highly important.

**Brand purpose**

The third concept, “brand purpose” is similar to corporate culture (Anholt, 2007). Just like the aim of having a corporate culture is to make the employees act in the same way and refer to the same values, the brand purpose intends to make many customers react similarly towards the branding endeavors (Anholt, 2007, p 79).

**Brand equity**

Finally, the forth concept – “brand equity” is defined as the total accumulated worth of the brand (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998) and it refers to the value a company can acquire from a positive brand image, which can actually be higher than its tangible assets (Lassar et al., 1995).

Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003) define the intersection between brand identity (tangible) and brand image (intangible) as brand positioning. When restraining the area of discussion to tourism, they argue that “branding a destination is not just about creating a logo or a slogan – it’s about capturing the distinct elements of the destination in the brand and communicating these elements through the brand’s components in order to create a unique position of the destination in the customer’s mind” (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2003, p 7). Thus, they point out that the destination branding process should start with an analysis of what the destination has to offer and based on that, an appealing brand should be build focusing on what is relevant for the target market. Therefore, securing a solid position in the minds of the travelers means using a destination’s appealing aspects and building upon them (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2003).

### 3.1.2. Definitions of branding

One more aspect has to be discussed in this chapter: the distinction between “brand” and “branding”. Anholt (2007) argues that the “brand is a product, service or an organization, considered in combination with its name, its identity and its reputation” and branding as being “the process of designing, planning and communicating the
name and the identity in order to build or manage the reputation” (Anholt, 2007, p 4). What Anholt puts forward through its definitions is the distinction between the brand as a combination between tangible and intangible assets and branding as being a process. This difference is very important when discussing about destination branding because although nations, regions and cities have brand images, it is very hard to communicate them (Anholt, 2007).

Kotler builds his definitions of brand and branding on the same idea of distinctiveness. He considers the brand as “an entity that is rooted in reality but reflects the perceptions of the consumers” (Kotler & Keller, 2006), point out the fact that the same tangible elements of a brand could create different images in consumers’ minds. Referring to branding, just like Anholt, Kotler and Keller define it as a process, which teaches the consumers “who” the product is – by giving it a name and an identity, helping the consumers understand what it does and why one should buy and use it (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

3.2. Destination branding - clarification of terminology

In the tourism literature there are many concepts like country branding, nation brand, city brand, region brand, place branding, destination branding, etc., which could create confusion. In order to understand the theory behind them, a clarification of the similarities and differences between these terms is important. According to Anholt (2007), many of them are the same thing, under different hats.

- Destination marketing, destination branding and tourism promotion are considered the same concepts, with the same major purposes.

- Place, just like destination is a general term used for countries, cities or regions and its borders are in the eye of the traveler. For example, if a person lives in Zaragoza (Spain) and travels to Barcelona, the latter city would be his destination; for someone living in e.g. Turkey, Spain would be a destination; whereas for a Korean person, Europe could constitute the destination or the place. Within the same lines is the definition offered by the World Tourism Organization which considers a destination “a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight [...] it has its physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness” (WTO, 2002 – information taken from Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). Thus, following the definition offered by WTO, the borders of a place or destination are very relative. In this thesis, the terms place or destination will be used, like in the literature, in their general meaning, referring to a country, region or city, depending on the context.

- Country branding is considered by Anholt to be similar to nation branding (Anholt, 2007).
3.3. Can a place be branded?

3.3.1. Supporters of destination branding

Clearly, branding a company is different than branding a destination since “there are more distinctions than similarities between companies and countries (Anholt, 2007), but certainly there are tools and concepts used in corporate business which can be applied to destinations in order to build strong, appealing brands. In the destination branding literature, there are academics, such as Ollins W., Gilmore F., Anholt S., Kotler, Moilanen, Rainisto, who believe that a destination (country, region, city) can indeed be branded in order to raise interest among travelers.

Ollins advocates that similar to branding a product, branding a nation creates a sense of identity for the local population and for the actors in the tourism industry (Ollins, 2002).

Anholt argues that just like the brand of a product speaks about its source and quality, the brand of a destination will provide information about its value, what it has to offer and what can a tourist expect if he/she travels there. In addition, a strong place brand will have a positive effect of the exported goods (Anholt, 2003a).

Herstein (2011) agrees with the importance of place branding, considering that if in the past, the most important assets that a country, city or region had were the products created there, nowadays the assets are the city, the region or the country itself (Herstein, 2011).

In Kotler’s opinion, destination branding is highly important because, just like Anholt, he argues that tourists are invaded everyday with information about where they could spend their next vacation. Having a strong brand would make the tourist’s choice easier, as they would be able to decide upon the most essential information from a huge amount of data (Kotler et al., 1993).

Moilanen and Rainisto also support the idea of place branding and in their opinion, “destination brand management is a collective phenomenon” (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009), where several actors should live up to the same brand and work together to deliver a coherent image.

3.3.2. Opponents of destination branding

Nonetheless, there are also opponents of place branding, such as Michel Girard (1999), who strongly disagrees with the idea of branding a nations, since, according to him, a nation is very different from a corporation, as it
has a certain “substance and dignity”. Thus, he is of the opinion that a destination should be promoted by what it is and not by the image a certain agency/tour operator/local administration wants to create.

3.4. Destination Branding

This thesis starts from the assumptions that a destination – in this case the region of Moldova in Romania, can and should be branded and furthermore, it is important to understand the market on which the destination wants to be branded on, in order to develop an appealing value proposition.

“In the era of globalization, every country, every city and every region must compete with every other for its share of the world’s consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events”. (Anholt, 2007, p 1). Through this statement, Anholt suggests that that just like products are sold internationally, destinations are too. It has become very easy to find information online and it is not a problem anymore to travel from one part of the world to another. Jacoby et al. (1971) synthesize the importance of having a strong brand, both for the brand marketers as well as for consumers, suggesting that “as consumers’ lives become more complicated, rushed and time – starved, the ability of a brand to simplify decision making and reduce risk is invaluable” (Jacoby, Olson & Haddock, 1971, p 5).

The concept of place branding is gaining more and more attention and there are both similarities as well as differences between product branding and place branding.

If in the case of a product, a company would normally start with an analysis of the target market and then develop the features of the product. But in branding a destination, things are somehow different. A destination has its own natural features, which can be developed and added on, but the fundamental aspects cannot be easily changed. In the process of branding a place, the analysis has to start with the destination’s assets, continue with the target market and identify what are the main points of interest and build the brand in such a way that it appeals to the chosen market.

3.4.1. The three principal objectives of a brand

According to Vela (2013), place brands are defined by the influence they exercise over the perceptions of individuals.

If a place has a strong, positive brand, it will create a solid image in the minds of the consumers which will help the destination stay ahead of competition (Aaker, 1991; Baker & Cameron, 2008). Just like in case of products and services, knowing what a destination has to offer reduces the risk perceived by the consumer (Keller, 2012).
Vela argues that there are three main objectives of a place brand:

a) Positioning – a place brand has to create a clear image in the minds of the consumers in terms of why they should be interested in choosing that specific destination;

b) “A sense of ownership of the brand on the part of local communities” (Vela, 2013, p 7) – the brand has to be understood and applied by all the actors involved in order to maintain a consistent image;

c) Generate a positive perception of the place it represents (Vela, 2013).

In addition, when a place is branded, the marketers have to analyze what makes the destination in question different from others, be it “culture, human and intellectual capital or heritage and history” (Vela, 2013, p 9) and capitalize on that.

However, building a place brand will impose its challenges, some of which are exemplified below.

3.4.2. Challenges of place branding

Branding a destination is different than branding a product. Nonetheless, similarities exist between the two concepts which mean that the knowledge gained in product branding can be transferred to some extend to the place branding process.

But branding a destination does impose some extra challenges, as follows:

- **First and foremost, a destination cannot be easily changed.** When marketers deal with products and services, the analysis starts with what the consumers want and based on that products and services are created or changed. But when dealing with a destination, its core features are extremely difficult and many times impossible to modify.

- **The collective nature of place marketing** (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2002; Dinnie, 2011) - meaning that a higher number of actors are involved. In the case of product or service branding, there is usually the Marketing department of a certain company behind the branding endeavors. But for a destination to be able to receive tourists, several actors have to work together: transportation companies, accommodation facilities, restaurants, entertainment opportunities providers, etc. It becomes hard to insure the same level of quality and service among all these actors (Rainisto, 2003). Furthermore, another challenge appears from the difficulty to control (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009) all the actors involved, which ideally would have to live up to the same brand and promote the same image, but which have often competing interests (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005).

- **The political factor** could constitute either an opportunity or a challenge for a place branding activity because the branding budgets are decided by politicians, who each have their own agenda.
Tourism Product’s Experience Centricity (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009) is another important challenge because the consumption of a touristic product is strongly connected to the experience which is being lived, but no touristic provider can guarantee that the intended experience is actually the one being lived.

Resources. Szondi (2006) is of the opinion that another challenge comes from the budget allocated to the destination branding process, which is a particularly difficult task especially for the developing countries. Kotler & Keller (1996) agree and consider that a destination’s marketers should choose very wisely the attributes they want to build the brand on in order to make the best use of the limited resources, financial or other.

Short term orientation of many destination marketers (Baker, 2007). Focusing on the immediate results could lead to fewer investments in the area which on the long term could conduct to the incapacity to deliver what has been promised to the consumers.

Changing seasons. The fact that the seasons are changing raises a new question mark for a place brand: can a specific destination have the same brand on every season or a differentiation should be made.

3.5. Theoretical models used in the analysis

3.5.1. The Process Model of Destination Brand Development (DEBRA)

Figure 4: The Process Model of Destination Brand Development

FIGURE 3.1 DEBRA – The process model of destination brand development

Source: Moilanen 2008, p 105
The presented model in Figure 4 has its origins in organizational branding, where the process starts with defining the corporate culture and core values that the company in question lives by.

Looking at the first element in the model, the presence of several layers can be observed. This is due to the fact that in branding a destination, several actors and companies are involved, which increases the number of possible values and brand directions.

The first step in the process is the analysis of the current state – which is exactly what that present thesis is aiming for – to create an overview of the current perception and level of knowledge of the Moldova region on the British market and create a set of recommendations for the region branding development process. Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) argue that at this step it is important to analyze not only the perception that the potential tourists have on the destination, but it should be supplemented with the investigation of the perception that the staff and management of the companies operating within the destination have (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009).

However, one of the limitations of the present thesis is that it will only focus on potential tourists’ perception. The performed analysis should naturally lead to the next step – defining the brand promise.

The next three processes deriving from the “Definition of brand promise” are meant to insure that the “brand contacts that the consumer received before, during or after his travel, will support the sought after brand identity” (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p 107). That means that what companies and marketers have to deliver what they have promise to the customers.

If a destination aims to build a strong and coherent brand, the internal communication has to be aligned with the brand values. It is highly important that all the actors involved have to be informed and trained according to the brand values.

Finally, a continuing monitoring is needed to find potential problems or opportunity sources.

The Process Model of Destination Brand Development defines in a very visual manner the purpose of the present thesis - which is to look into the current state of the region of Moldova on the British market and offer a set of guidelines that can be applied in order to increase the touristic success of the region. However, the author is not involved in the next steps after the analysis which will be left to the competent actors.

3.5.2 Brand personality and the benefit pyramid

Morgan et al. argue that just like a person, a brand’s personality has to be “complex and rich” (Morgan et al., 2004, p 70) on one hand, and it has to have a “heart and a head” (Morgan et al., 2004, p 70) on the other hand, which refer to the emotional and logical benefits of a brand.
For a destination to be successful there has to be a bridge between what that destination has to offer (logically and emotionally) and what the travelers are looking for. The most important selling points have to be identified and the promotional activities have to be built upon them, considering that the better the connection between the destination’s personality and the target market, the higher the changes to attract the potential travelers (Morgan et al., 2004).

In this sense, the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” developed by Morgan et al. (2004) and presented in Figure 5 is a very useful tool in defining the core values of a brand while serving as the research basis in building the brand architecture and developing “a proposition that makes the brand relevant, contemporary and appealing” (Morgan et al., 2004, p 71).

In accordance with this, the purpose of applying the pyramid is to define and understand the relationship between the destination and the consumers and the final outcome is the identification of the specific benefits that the potential or repeat visitors associate with that specific destination.

![Figure 5: Brand personality and the benefit pyramid](source: Morgan et al. (2004), p 71)

Just like in building a house, building a brand has to follow a blueprint, which should reflect its position, rational and emotional features
How did other researchers used the pyramid?

Other researchers and practitioners have used the pyramid in its simple form, without adding other models to it. Although insights about the researched destinations were obtained, the analysis only led to an overview of the place.

One example of a study in which the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” was used was the article “Branding a ‘new’ destination: Abu Dhabi”, by Westwood (2011).

Westwood used the pyramid to define the brand of Abu Dhabi. He added an element of novelty to the model, by adding a 6th level, which concluded the analysis. Thus, he added a new level to the 5 levels that the pyramid has, which consisted of a single word, that would best describe the destination, that being “respect” in the case of Abu Dhabi.

However, this thesis aims to gain more insights about the destination than just the main features, which is why more models have been added.

The steps proposed by “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” start with an analysis of what a specific destination has to offer to its guests. Then the focus changes from the place to the traveler. So the second level is concerned with defining the rational benefits that the consumer could enjoy at the destination, this being the “head of the brand”, emphasizing on the functional aspects.

The third level of the analysis focuses on “the heart” of the destination – on how the previously analyzed features could make the guests feel. In accordance with previous research a good reputation is often build on emotional appeal (Fombrun, 1996).

The fourth level focuses on analyzing what is valuable for the potential or returning visitor, while the last level is concerned with looks into the main selling points of the destination.

The “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” becomes an even more useful instrument when building sub-brands – as it defines the core value of the umbrella brand. Just like in a corporation, when the strategies of different business units have to be aligned with the overall strategy of the company, the architecture of a sub-brand should be aligned with the strategy of the umbrella brand. An example in this sense could be Britain – which is a touristic umbrella brand for London, Scotland or Welsh, which are sub-brands, and although different, fallow the same patterns (Morgan and Pritchard and Pride, 2002).

Building a brand is a long-term commitment and the brand’s vision and value proposition has to be known, respected and applied by all the actors on the touristic scene. In effect, the model offers the opportunity to discover a destination’s appealing features.

In the present thesis, the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” will be used as the foundation on which other models will be applied.
3.5.3. The hexagon of Competitive Identity – Simon Anholt

Simon Anholt is a supporter of the destination branding concept and argues that the world is one market, where countries, regions and cities compete against each other in order to attract visitors, investments and reputation (Anholt, 2007).

Anholt brings an interesting idea into the discussion, suggesting that “places with good, powerful and positive reputations find that almost everything they undertake on the international stage is easier, and the places with poor reputations find that almost everything is difficult, and some things seem virtually impossible” (Anholt, 2007). Therefore, a destination with a strong brand will not only attract tourists, but all the activities performed in relation to the brand (selling products from that destination, creating sub-brands) have higher chances to be successful.

With his model, Anholt argues that countries build their brand based on 6 natural pillars: tourism, brands, policy, investment, culture and people.

![Image of the Hexagon of Competitive Identity](source: Simon Anholt, 2007, p 28)

Tourism is one of the most important communication channels, as most people get the first contact with a foreign country when they travel to a new state, either for business or pleasure.

Exported brands also play an important role in building a country’s brand abroad, as long as the provenience of the products is strongly promoted (e.g. German car brands, Japanese technological gadgets, etc.) (Anholt, 2007). The decisions made in the political word will also have an impact on the country’s brand, be it a policy that affect the abroad population or an internal policy.
The fourth natural pillar speaks to the business world and refers to the manner in which the country attracts inward investments or foreign talent.

Culture is highly important in defining a country’s image, through cultural activities or exports (Anholt, 2007). Finally, the last element - the people-, refers to two aspects: the famous people (sports starts, singers who promote the countries through their activates) and the population, the regular people who create a positive or a negative image depending on their behavior abroad and how they treat visitors when others come to their country.

In this thesis, the focus is on region branding, therefore the model has to be adapted. Considering that the local or regional policies do not usually speak loudly at an international level, this factor was not used in the region branding analysis. Furthermore, the people factor was also left out because there are not major cultural differences between Romanians living in the Moldova region and others living in a different region of the country, therefore a separate regional analysis of the Moldova inhabitants would not make sense.

Just like the “Competitive Identity hexagon” model had to be adapted from its main use in country branding to region branding, a discussion about the distinction between country, region and city branding is necessary.

3.5.4. Country branding, region branding and city branding – differences and similarities

Vela (2013) offers an interesting perspective on the fine line between branding a country, a city or a region.

Country as a brand

In terms of country branding, Vela (2013) argues that one of the main differences is the collateral impact that a country brand could generate as opposed to a region or a city brand (which are narrower in scope). According to Vela (2013), a strong country brand, besides generating money from tourism, has the capacity to fight stereotypes, influence the level of exports, the exchange rate and how much the investors are willing to invest in that country. Therefore, the country brand has a global interest, as opposed to a region or a city brand, which usually have a more limited perspective.

City as a brand

A city, in Vela’s vision should be branded as a “cultural consumption product” (Vela, 2013), emphasizing on the idea of modernism. He is of opinion that a city should function as a “territorial vanguard for everything linked to innovation and creativity” (Vela, 2013).

Region as a brand
A region brand will fall under the country brand it belongs to and it will interact with the brands of the cities in that region.

Figure 7: Country – region – city branding connections

Source: Own Compilation

3.5.4.1. Country – city – region matrix positioning model

Herstein (2012) argues that there will be many points of interaction in the process of building a country, region or city brand and two important aspects have to be considered: the geography of a country and the population – nationality, aspects which are important to both tourists and marketers. Despite the fact that all three processes (country branding, region branding and city branding) are based mostly on how people perceive them (Herstein, 2012), it appears that city branding is a much more difficult process because a city usually lacks some of the triggers that a country uses. In addition, branding a city becomes an even harder task if the marketers are dealing with a small, not very well known entity.

The same challenges are faced in region branding – lack of a certain “set of tools”. However, there are countries, where the regions within that specific country are quite different (from administrative or cultural points of view) that branding them separately would make more sense than branding the country as a whole, uniform space (Herstein, 2012).

Figure 8: Country – city – region matrix positioning model

Source: Herstein, 2012, p 150
With the purpose of emphasizing on country branding, Herstein (2012) created the “Country – city - region matrix positioning model” (Figure 8), which “leverages the interconnection between these three concepts and enables marketers to understand when these three concepts affect each other and which of these three concepts is more meaningful, and accordingly should be stressed” (Herstein, 2012, p 149), therefore putting country, region and city branding in relation to one another.

The model offers a different perspective on the connection between country, region and city branding. Herstein (2012) argues that although specialist and academics usually make a distinction between the three concepts of place branding (country, region and city branding), they are actually interdependent and impact each other.

The model puts the tourist in the middle of the analysis and it is developed on the idea that when deciding on a new destination, there are two main factors tourists take into account: “a country’s geography and the population – nationality mix”, rather than “other strategy models [which] contain too many factors to be considered in practice – and which tourists do not necessarily weight up when deciding to visit a country”. (Herstein, 2012, p 151). What Herstein suggests is that the consumers base their choice on fewer and more obvious factors and their decision making process is not as complex as most specialists think. In the plethora of place brands, people need only two or three strong association in order to remember the brand, what goes beyond that, could be too overwhelming (Krishnan, 1996).

As previously mentioned, the “country – city – region matrix positioning model” is developed on two dimensions –

1. the geography of a country (which refers to both physical aspects, as well as climates and which can help marketers in their efforts to define the potential of the country” (Herstein, 2012)
2. the range of ethnic groups or nationalities who live in a certain country (Herstein, 2012).

Herstein argues that people in general are interested in travelling to countries with rich topographies and rich cultures and particularly these countries are the ones with the highest branding potential.

The first positioning strategy, in the upper right quadrille is the “heterogeneous geography – multinationality culture approach” and it is best used when it is applied to a country that offers a high diversity in terms of landscape and in terms of the number of nationalities who live in the country. A good example is the United States which has successfully applied the strategy and enjoys a high number of tourists travelling across the whole country rather than a specific city or region. Such a country has so much to offer to tourists that visiting just one city or one region would mean missing out on many experiences (Herstein, 2012). Therefore, as presented in figure 6, the country brand is larger than the region brand and city brands together and such a strategy should be applied in the manner to make the tourist want to visit the whole country.
At the opposite pole is the “heterogeneous – geography – uniform – nationality culture”, represented in the upper left quadrille, which would better fit a country with a more heterogeneous geography, and a small number of nationalities living within the borders of that country – thus a low cultural diversity, such as Australia or Japan. Travelling across these countries would not significantly enrich the traveler’s experience and therefore the marketers should not promote them as one package country deal (Herstein, 2012). Instead, the strategy should be focused on promoting the most important cities and “build a small number of powerful city brands (Herstein, 2012, p 153).

The third positioning strategy is the “homogeneous – geography multinationality culture approach” represented in the lower right quadrille, appropriate for countries which don’t offer a high geographical diversity, but hosts a high number of nationalities. Examples of such countries are Nigeria or Jordan. For this type of countries, the “idea behind this branding strategy is to create a region brand that is more powerful than the country brand” (Herstein, 2012, p 153) because the traveler’s experience will be enriched only by travelling to certain culturally different regions rather than visiting the whole country.

Finally, the last strategy – the “homogeneous geography – uniform nationality culture”, represented in the lower left quadrille, is best suited for countries which lack of diversity on both geography as well as nationalities. Examples of such countries are Lithuania, Denmark or Portugal and “marketers who deal with the branding process of these kinds of countries should focus on the main capital rather than on the country itself” (Herstein, 2012). What Herstein suggests this types of countries have some cities which are very interesting to visit, but the rest of the country may not be worthwhile. Therefore, the brand and promotion activities should be adapted to this reality

However, a gap was identified in the model. The “Country-region-city positioning model” does not include the case of creating a region brand in a country that is diverse geographically, but not culturally.

### 3.5.5. Umbrella brand vs sub-brands – The place brand center model

Beckmann and Zenker (2012) added a new interesting dimension to the discussion of place branding. They argue that place branding should not only be based on the destinations’ assets and the target market’s perceptions, but it should also take other stakeholders into account: such as residents or investors. Furthermore, a destination’s brand should be built on a vision which is known and accepted by all the stakeholders (Fabricius, 2006). They propose creating an umbrella brand, under which sub-brands could be created for every specific segment, suggesting that “brand managers should develop strategies for how to build target group-specific place brand architecture”. (Beckmann and Zenker, 2012). Thus, Beckmann and Zenker argue that only focusing on tourists
leads to a “narrow brand communication” which doesn’t take into account other stakeholder who could constitute an interesting audience (Beckmann and Zenker, 2012).

In a simple categorization, the main stakeholders in destination branding are:

1. Visitors
2. Residents

When analyzed in depth, these categories can be further developed. For example, visitors can chose a destination for business or leisure, residents can be people who already live at the place in question or they could be potential residents – who could be attracted to live there. The business category can also be divided into sub-categories: public, private, NGOs, etc. (Beckmann and Zenker, 2012).

The important idea to remember from these categories is the high number of stakeholders, who each can have a different image about a destination and who could influence each other.

Beckmann and Zenker build their arguments of the place brand center model, developed by Zenker and Braunn (2010) (Figure 9).

As the model shows, a destination should benefit from an umbrella brand, under which, several sub-brands adapted to different stakeholders segments should be developed. In addition, just like the two models presented above, the place characteristics will play an important role in developing the brand.

Figure 9: The place brand center

Source: Beckmann and Zenker (2012), but created by Zenker and Braunn, 2010
The model will be used in the present thesis to analyze if Moldova should benefit from having sub brands developed for different segments tourists segment. As previously mentioned, the focus in the current paper will be on travelers (business or leisure) and no other types of stakeholders (residents or investors).

3.5.6. The Destination Celebrity Matrix

Another interesting model is the one defined by Morgan et al. as the “Destination celebrity matrix” (2004). As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the main aspects of the brand is brand image – which has a pivotal role in promoting a destination. As opposed to buying a product in a supermarket, where the customer can see and feel the features, when choosing a destination for the first time, the customer cannot evaluate all its aspects and he/she has to rely on the available information and on the image they have about that destination. Consequently, even if a place has an interesting offer, if it lacks a strong brand, it will fail to compete in the “vacation supermarket”. Thus, destination branding helps creating a bridge between a destination’s strengths and the image potential visitors have (Morgan et al., 2004).

However, when developing a destination’s brand, besides the place’s features and the travelers’ opinions, one more aspect has to be considered: competition.

The destination celebrity matrix (Figure 10) presents 4 quadrilles where a destination can be placed, taking into consideration features, travelers’ perceptions and competitor destinations.

![The Destination Celebrity Matrix](image)

**Figure 10: The destination celebrity matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional pull</th>
<th>Celebrity value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential stars: High celebrity value

Celebrities: Low celebrity value

Losers: Low celebrity value

Problem Places: High celebrity value

Source: Morgan et al., 2004, p 66
The model is developed on two dimensions: emotional pull and celebrity value. Emotional pull refers to a destination’s capacity to attract a tourist by what it has to offer. Celebrity value refers to how famous a specific destination is, judging by whether or not the destination is on the tourist’s “shopping list”. Morgan et al. (2004) define this concept in terms of “emotional meaning”, “conversational value” and “anticipation”. They argue that a “celebrity destination” is one that scores high in terms of creating the traveler’s desire to visit it and creates a high anticipation (being a famous place).

On the other hand, a “loser” destination has nothing to offer in the eyes of the consumer since it has “little meaning, even less status, virtually no conversation value and zero anticipation for the tourist” (Morgan et al. Pritchard, 2014, p 66). An example in this sense is Antarctica – very few people actually want to go there and not a lot is known about this destination.

The “problem places” are the ones people do talk about, but for the wrong reasons. They do create expectations for travelers but very few actually want to visit these places. One example is Afghanistan (Morgan et al. Pritchard, 2014).

The fourth quadrille represents the destinations that have an interesting potential of attracting tourists, they have a lot to offer, but marketers of these places have to focus on branding them and increasing the amount of information and therefore the level of anticipation among tourists.

The model constitutes an interesting tool in finding a destination’s flows and in identifying a place’s source of touristic problems, which could be in connection with the destination’s features or with the destination’s lack of branding and promotional endeavors.

The analysis and placement of a destination on the celebrity matrix map has to be realized in correlation to people’s perception about the place in question, because the way travelers relate to any destination depends on their own interests, opinions and experiences. Furthermore, such an analysis cannot and should not be made from a general point of view, as it should be applied to specific markets and segments.

For the purpose of this thesis, the model is useful in placing the region of Moldova on the celebrity matrix map in relation to the British market in order to identify the flows in branding the region and the opportunities for development and growth. The model will be further placed in level 2 in the brand personality and the benefit pyramid.
Chapter 4: Methodology

Given the touristic realities of the Moldova region, the present thesis aims to gain insights about the British traveler, its preferences and level of knowledge in relation to the region in discussion. In addition, a new complex model for a region branding process is put forward. In order to reach these objectives and find an answer to the research question, a clear methodological plan had to be developed. The “Methodology” chapter aims to shed light on what is the author’s position in relation to the ontological and epistemological paradigms, which deductive methods have been used, what type of data have been collected and what specific steps have been taken in the research process.

4.1. Philosophy of science

At large, the philosophy of science comprises three main dimensions: ontology – concerned with defining what is real, epistemology – seeking to define how knowledge is created and methodology – describing how research should be conducted (Mason, 2014). The three concepts are interrelated and influence each other. It is paramount to shed light on the author’s stand in relation to ontology and epistemology because the way researchers perceive the world around them will impact the way they create knowledge and act within it. Moreover, the first two paradigms will influence the methodology – the steps taken in the research process. In order to find an answer to the research question and correctly interpret the results of the research, two essential questions have to be answered:

1. What is real? - ontology
2. How is knowledge created? – epistemology

4.1.1. Ontology

Ontology is one of the three main dimensions of social science, concerned with finding an answer to the question: “Is there a single, objective truth/a reality affected by a consistent set of laws?” (Mason, 2014, p 51), asking if the world can be described by a series of universal, scientifically proved laws which should be accepted by all.
There are two opposite answers to the above question, which divide the researchers into two categories: “positivists” vs. “constructivists” and “interpretivists” (Mason, 2014, p 51).

The first type, the “positivist” researchers would answer “yes” to this question, considering that the world is independent of its observers and that there is a reality which should be accepted by all as being true. In addition, through the lens of “positivism”, social research should be based on scientific methods and hypothesis testing and it should use quantitative measurements (Atkinson & Hammersly, 1994).

On the opposite pole, the latter type of researchers, the “constructivists” and “interpretativists” would answer “no”, considering that we all have different realities, thus the world can only be described through a series of individual truths.

The author considers herself a positivist, and perceives the reality as independent of its observer. Furthermore, the author is of the opinion that phenomena can be explained by “cause - effect” laws, which are universally valid and that in order to obtain a genuine image of the world, scientific research is needed. Consequently, the thesis uses empirical research, primary data and hypotheses testing to examine the implication of the theoretical models and find an answer to the research question.

Although relying on the ontological paradigm of positivism, the drawbacks of this paradigm are acknowledged. Positivism claims that a researcher does not interfere in the research process (Mason, 2014), but it is accepted that the chosen research technique and the manner in which the questions are formulated in the questionnaire will have an effect on the outcome. Furthermore, it is recognized that the value system of the researcher does play a role in how the research is conducted and how the data are analyzed (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994).

Another critique brought to positivism is the fact that a research based on this paradigm usually shows the reality in a specific moment but the respondents’ opinions and context could change in time, impacting the validity of the results when applied in another time (Manson, 2014). A solution to this problem is the application of longitudinal studies (Hedeker & Gibbons, 2006); however, this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

It is also admitted that the use of closed ended questions in the questionnaire does not offer respondents a chance for further explanations but this shortcoming is accepted in the favor of obtaining statistically verifiably data.

4.1.2. Epistemology

It should be noted that the ontological stand of the researcher will have an impact on epistemology – which seeks to find an answer to the question “How do we know anything about the world” (Mason, 2014, p 51), reflecting upon how knowledge is created.

That being said, how a researcher perceives the world (as defined by a single, universal truth or by a series of individual truths) will influence the manner in which he/she creates knowledge.
In the present thesis knowledge will be acquired through the use of objective research and the author will not interfere in the sense that she will not interact with the respondents to the survey, which will be conducted online.

4.1.3. Methodology

Methodology refers to the specific steps taken in the research process and it is obviously influenced by the ontological and epistemological stands, considering that quantitative researchers, who believe in a universal truth of the world and in the generation of knowledge through objective methods, tend to prefer deductive approaches. On the contrary, qualitative researchers tend to use inductive approaches. In order to obtain insights on the British travelers and challenge the chosen models, a deductive research approach was applied.

4.2. Deductive approach

The deductive research has its point of departure at the intersection between theory and empirics, arguing from the general to the particular (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and it is a common approach in quantitative studies. The data were collected in accordance to the chosen method and analyzed based on the theoretical models. Based on this, the plan of action followed the specific steps of a deductive research approach:

1. Identification of the research problem;
2. Review of the relevant literature and choice of the theoretical framework;
3. Development of the hypothesis to be tested;
4. Decision upon the design of the research – questionnaire applied online;
5. Data collection;
6. Data analysis;
7. Data interpretation;
8. Reflection upon how the data confirm or modifies the theory (Mason, 2014).

The research problem and the review of the literature were presented in details in the previous chapters and they will not be covered here.
4.3. Hypothesis

This thesis aims to identify what is the level of knowledge that the British travelers have about the Moldova region, what is their perception of it, what are the requirements of the modern traveler on the UK market and to what extent the touristic potential in Moldova can respond to them.

In order to find answers to the market related questions, as well as to test the theoretical models, a set of hypothesis was developed.

H1: The British travelers are interested in visiting less popular destination if they have an interesting touristic offer.

H2: Both geographical and cultural diversity are equally important in a traveler’s choice to visit different regions within the same country.

H3: The level of knowledge about the Moldova region as a touristic destination on the British market is very low.

H4: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one emotional benefit that they would associate with the destination.

H5: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one physical benefit that they would associate with the destination.

H6: The region of Moldova represents an attractive destination for the British market.

H7: Different travelers segments on the British market are interested in different types of tourism in the region of Moldova.

H8: When promoting a new destination, the emotional pull is more important than the celebrity value.

H9: The complexity of region brand analysis required a more complete model for the analysis.

H10: The combination of the 5 used models offers a more insightful analysis of a region brand as well as on the perception/potential-risks/opportunities to approach.

4.4. Research design – online questionnaire

In the research process, both secondary and primary data were used. The secondary data, in the form of destination branding literature, previous studies and statistical data were used as the foundation for the data collection process.
The primary data were collected with the aid of a questionnaire, employed online. The platform on which the questionnaire was developed was www.survey-xact.dk, offered on a free of charge basis for CBS students. Being applied on the British market, the questionnaire used the English language.

The survey was created based on the literature review, using the 5 models as the foundation for the development of the questions, thus its main attributes being derived from the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” by Morgan et al. (2004), “The Hexagon of Competitive Identity” by Simon Anholt (2003a), “Country – city – region matrix positioning model”, Herstein (2012), “Place Brand Management” by Zenker and Braun, (2010) and “The destination celebrity matrix” by Morgan et al, (2002). In addition, literature about the specifics of the online questionnaire survey research was used in order to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of this specific research tool.

In order to measure the perception, level of knowledge and expectations that the British travelers have in relation to the region of Moldova, as well as to test the applicability of the models on the British market, a 6 points Likert scale was applied, which is generally used in determining the particular aspects of attitude that conduct behavior and choice in a certain market (Brace, 2013).

Although it is common practice to use a 7 point Likert scale (McDougal and Munro, 1994), using a 6 point Likert scale was a considered decision, in order to make the respondent to have an stand.

Considering that the validity of the responses depends to a large extent on the quality of the questions (Mason, 2014) a pre-test session was run before applying the questionnaire. The questionnaire was shared with 10 people who were asked to fill out the survey and also to provide feedback if they had any. The pre-test process helps the author decide if any adjustments should be made in terms of content or wording (Beri, 2002), thus, based on the respondents’ feedback, changes were made to some of the questions.

After the pre-test phase, the questionnaire was lunched.

**Questionnaire structure:**

The header of the questionnaire revealed the topic and purpose of the research and assured the respondents regarding the confidentiality of the data, “enhancing the credibility of the survey” (Wright, 2005). Additionally, the respondents were assured that the collected data will only be used for academic purposes.

**Section 1:**

The first section contained the filter question, meant to check if the respondent lives in the UK or not. In order to continue the questionnaire, the respondent had to answer “yes”. If one answered “no” to this question, it was considered not interesting for not being part of the target market.

**Section 2:**

The second section contained a set of 4 closed ended questions with a single choice option, designed to gather demographic and personal information about the respondents.
Section 3:
In the third section, a number of 12 questions were meant to collect general information about the respondent’s preferences when travelling in Europe. This section was meant to get insights into the particularities of the British market and helped the author understand what are the requirements and habits of the modern tourist coming from the UK.

This section included questions with a single and multiple choice option. Some of the questions included an “other” option at the end, which allowed the respondent to add his/her own input. The reasoning behind this approach lies in the fact that closed ended questions are easy to answer and analyze and help introduce the respondent into the topic of the research. At the same time, closed ended questions limit the respondent’s freedom by forcing him/her to choose one of the given options. This being said, where it was necessary, some of the questions gave the respondent the option to add to the available answer variants. The questions included in this section meant to answer one of the research questions: What are the requirements of the British tourist when travelling in Europe?

The respondents were asked about the frequency, scope and average duration of their holidays in Europe as well as what they think that an attractive destination should offer to its visitors.

Considering that Moldova is not a popular holiday destination at the moment, a question about the respondent’s willingness to visit less popular destinations was included in this section.

The “Country-city-region branding positioning model” developed by Hernstein (2012) stated that geographical and cultural diversity are equally important in a tourist’s choice to visit different regions inside the same country. However, considering that the region of Moldova is diverse geographically from other regions in Romania, but not culturally, the author wanted to see if the model applies to the British market as well, testing the hypothesis H2: Both geographical and cultural diversity are equally important in a traveler’s choice to visit different regions within the same country.

Section 4:
The fourth section comprised 15 questions specifically related to the region of Moldova in Romania. The level of knowledge, perception, and interest that the respondents have in relation to the region of Moldova were questioned in this section. Through these questions, hypothesis H3: The level of knowledge about the Moldova region as a touristic destination on the British market is very low and hypothesis H4: The region of Moldova represents an attractive destination for the British market were tested.

“The brand place center” model, proposed by Zenker and Braunn (2010) constituted the basis for one of the questions in this section, in which the author wanted to investigate what is type of tourism that different tourists segments are interested in. The information gathered here was correlated with the demographic information
collected in Section 2 for a more insightful analysis, aiming to test \textit{H6: Different travelers segments on the British market are interested in different types of tourism in the region of Moldova.} 

“The destination celebrity matrix” proposed by Morgan et al. (2004) was also tested in this section and the validity of \textit{H11: Emotional pull and celebrity value weight equally in a tourist’s decision to visit a destination} was tested.

Finally, the main purpose of the present thesis was to emphasize on the complexity of the destination branding process and to prove that an insightful analysis needs a more developed and complex model.

In order to demonstrate this, the two models: the pyramid in its simple form, as proposed by Morgan et al. (2004) and the new complex pyramid had to be put in comparison.

Thus, in this section, the pyramid was tested in its simple form, the respondents being asked two open ended questions “What are the \textbf{physical benefits} you would associate with a vacation in Moldova?” and “What are the \textbf{emotional benefits} that you would associate with a vacation in Moldova”. These two questions were designed to test two of the hypothesis, namely: \textit{H3: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one physical benefit that they would associate with the destination} and \textit{H4: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one emotional benefit that they would associate with the destination.}

Furthermore, by comparing the answers from these two questions with the information gathered from the rest of the questionnaire, two other hypothesis can be tested \textit{H1: The complexity of region brand analysis required a more complete model for the analysis} and \textit{H2: The combination of the 5 used models offers a more insightful analysis of a region brand as well as on the perception/potential risks/opportunities to approach.}

\textbf{4.4.1. Advantages and disadvantaged of the online questionnaire}

Over the past years, the use of the online methods for market research has increased tremendously. The online environment offers the possibility to reach people everywhere with considerable lower costs.

Conducting an online questionnaire definitely offers its advantages, but there are also challenges which have to be addressed.

Considering that the author does not live in the target country (UK), the use of the traditional data collection methods (telephone, personal interviews, mail) would have added significant costs. That being said, the online questionnaire had the potential to reach people that would have been hard to access otherwise (Wellman, 1997) on a cost free basis. Time saving is another important advantage of the online questionnaires (Taylor, 2000; Yun & Trumbo, 2005) and definitely a factor taken into account when choosing this research tool, as a large amount of data had to be collected in a relatively short time period.
This technique offers advantages not only for the researcher, but also for the respondents, who can fill it out at their convenience, in the comfort of their own homes. However, there are also some important issues regarding online questionnaires, one of them being the responses only create an image of the reality in the moment, leading to results which only offer “snapshot in time and place” (Mason, 2014, p 77).

The risk of not obtaining a representative sample is another drawback of the online questionnaire, considering that in the online environment, a proper prior segmentation of the researched population is difficult to achieve (Howard, Rainie & Jones, 2001; Sue & Ritter, 2007). This is however not considered an important issue in the present thesis because the research targets the whole population on the UK market and not a specific segment. Also, the approach of the research was to not make any assumptions in regards to the specifics of different segments nor make use of special online communities with similar characteristics, but rather to draw conclusions about the particularities of different niches during the data analysis. In addition, the non-representative sample is not a key issue considering the descriptive nature of this thesis.

Another major concern of the online questionnaires is the self-selection bias (Stanton, 1998) which means that some individuals are more likely to participate to the survey than others, for example young people spend more time online, they are more internet savvy, have more free time, etc. than a person in their 30s with a full time job and little children at home. Therefore the latter could be less represented in the sample than the firsts.

Although the absence of an interviewer is considered an advantage because respondents feel more comfortable disclosing personal information when an interviewer is not present, it is in the same time a drawback, considering that in case they have questions in regards to the questionnaire, it will be very difficult for them to receive an answer. However, the author’s email address was included in the heather in case the respondents wanted additional clarification, but the option was not use by any of the participants.

### 4.5. Data collection

Following the creation of the questionnaire, the primary data were collected using the social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn) as well as the snowball technique. The author had a list of contacts who live in the UK and who were asked to share the link with their friends, relatives and acquaintances. Some of them also posted the link on their Facebook news feed and on other social media groups they were a part of, which significantly increased the number of responses. Email was another tool used in the data collection process. Due to the author not being located in the UK, handing out physical questionnaire was not done.
The data were collected in March – April 2015.

4.6.1. Snowball method – advantages and disadvantages

The snowball method is a non-probability sampling technique where one respondent gives the contact to another one, who gives the contact to a third and so on (Vogt, 1999) and it is mostly used to reach hidden populations (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Although the UK population is not a hidden one, this technique was chosen as a supplement to the other methods, based on the fact that the author has a list of contacts on the target market. Therefore, they can start rolling the snowball by passing on the questionnaire link to their acquaintances (Berg, 1988).

Considering that more and more companies, public institutions or students use the online environment to gather primary data, individuals become reluctant to complete the survey requests they get almost on a daily basis. This is a problem that the snowball method overcomes to some extent, as one is more willing to fill a request coming from someone he/she knows (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

It is also acknowledged that Romania does not benefit from a very positive country image in the UK, which is why some individuals may refuse to fill out a questionnaire about a region in this country, coming from an unknown source, case in which the snowball method would be of considerable help.

However, previous research (Meter, 1990) indicates that this advantage has also a downside because the fact that the respondents are not randomly chosen, but rather depend on the choice of the participants previously drawn could affect the validity of the sample. In addition, it is admitted that this technique poses problems in terms of assessing if the sample is an accurate reading of the target population.

That being said, the present thesis has a descriptive purpose, therefore a non-representative sample is accepted. Furthermore, efforts have been made to insure that the first line of respondents is as diverse as possible (different backgrounds, living standards or nationalities). In addition, the collection of the data will not be based solely on the snowball method, but this was rather a technique used to insure a higher number of respondents.
Chapter 5: Results

This chapter intends to present the main results and findings of the research.

The present thesis wishes to reach three main objectives:

- Prove the complexity of region branding process by putting forward a new model for region branding process.
- Obtain insights about the level of knowledge, perception and degree of interest that the British tourists have in relation to Moldova region in Romania.
- Obtain insights about the British tourist in terms of their requirements, expectations and desires when travelling to a new region.

This being said, the “Results chapter” is divided into three main parts.
The analysis commences with an overview of the respondents’ demographics, age, gender, social status in order to understand who participated in the research.
Following, an analysis of the preferences, requirements and travel habits of the respondents is presented.
The third part of this chapter will focus on combining theory with practice. Consequently, this part included an analysis of the models proposed by the literature as well as of the new model put forward in the present thesis.
The theory was tested in relation to the region of Moldova and as a result insights about the region of interest were obtained and are presented below.

5.1. Sample overview

5.1.1. Response rate

Based on the literature review, a number of at least 30 complete questionnaires would insure statistical validity of the data (Brotherton, 2008). With a number of 139 fully completed questionnaires, a sufficient number of responses were gathered.
The questionnaire was distributed to 361 respondents, out of which 177 opened the questionnaire, but closed it immediately, without answering any question. This could be caused by, for example, the respondent’s lack of interest in filling out the questionnaire, lack of interest in the topic or technical problems that caused the interruption of the survey.
From the remaining 184 respondents, 152 passed the filter question, but only 145 completed the questionnaire 100%. Afterwards, the data were cleaned from outliers, 139 questionnaires were valid and used in the analysis. Based on this, it can be concluded that the survey had a response rate of 38% valid questionnaires.

Figure 12: Questionnaires completion overview

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

5.1.2. Demographics information about the samples

Nationality

The research concerns the whole UK’s population, regardless of the respondents’ nationality. Thus, the only requirement was that the participants to the survey reside in Great Britain but do not necessarily have to be British citizens. This resulted in having other nationalities represented in the dataset, although the great majority of the respondents were British – 90 answers, accounting for 65% of the valid questionnaires. The rest of 35% of the answers came from other nationalities that live in the UK, such as: French, Polish, Indian, Bulgarian, Germans, Danish, Russian, Belgian, Dutch, Japanese, Latvian and Scottish.

Figure 13: Respondents’ nationality overview

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis
Gender

In terms of gender distribution, females were represented in a slightly higher number in the dataset. 64 responses came from men, accounting for 46 %, while 75 questionnaires were filled out by women, accounting for 54 %.

Figure 14: Gender distribution

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

Age distribution

As seen in Figure 15, most respondents belong to the age group 26 – 35 years - 46,8 %, followed by the 19 – 25 years segment, which accounts for 24,5 % of the questionnaires in the data set. The third most significant category is represented by the 36-45 years, with 18 % of the responses. The older generations are not significantly represented, the 46 – 55 years segments accounting for only 7,9 % of the responses, while the 56 - 65 years category was portrayed by 1,4 % of the participants.

Figure 15: Age distribution of the sample

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

The sample analyzed in the present thesis is not demographically representative, being predominantly formed by people with ages between 26 and 35 years (46,8 %).
Thus, a convenience sample was analyzed for the present research. A convenience sample is defined as a non-probability sample and consists of respondents who are available for the research during the data collection process (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). In addition, no restrictions in terms of who can fill out the questionnaire are established (Sue and Ritter, 2007), which is accordance with the purpose of the thesis.

The link to the questionnaire was posted on social media and shared by email. Considering that the users who spend the most time online belong to this age category, the higher representation of respondents from this age segments is not surprising.

In addition, the snowball method was used in the data collection process, asking the respondents to share it with friends and relatives who live in the UK. The snowball is also a non-probability sampling technique where one respondent gives the contact to another one, who gives the contact to a third and so on (Vogt, 1999).

As expected, the outliers laid in the 0 - 18 years category, as well as in the “over 65” age range. According to the literature, the young participants, aged 0-18 have access and are high users of Internet, but when it comes to deciding upon a holiday destinations, they usually don’t have the financial resources and they are not the ones making the final decision (Chon, Pizam & Mansfeld, 2000). One of the reasons why the “over 65 years” category is not significantly represented in the data set is connected with the data gathering technique used in the present thesis, relying mostly on social media platforms for the distribution of the questionnaire. It is known that these platforms are not extensively used by the above mentioned segment (Kahle & Florence, 2012).

Social status

Figure 16 shows the distribution of the sample in relation to the respondent’s social status. As seen in the graph, the majority of the respondents are professionals without children – 49%, followed by professionals with children, who account for 30% of the responses. The students segment is represented by 20% of the complete questionnaires, while the retired category is only portrayed by 1% of the responses, thus insignificantly represented.

![Figure 16: Social status of the respondents](source: Own compilation based on data analysis)
5.2. Insights about the respondents’ preferences when they travel in Europe

**Frequency and duration of vacations in Europe per year**
As seen in Figure 17, the highest number of respondents – 42%, travels on average between 1 and 2 times per year in Europe. The second most significant category of travelers are the ones who choose to go on vacation between 3 and 5 times per year in Europe, portrayed by 40,3% of the responses in the data set. Only 16,5% of the participants to the survey travel more than 5 times per year on “the old continent”.

![Figure 17: Frequency of vacations in Europe per year](Image)

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

The frequency of vacations in Europe per year has to be correlated with their duration. The results (Figure 18) show that the highest percentage of the respondents, 37% prefers to take medium duration holidays, of 6 to 10 days. The second most significant percentage of the participants to the study, accounting for 28% goes on vacations with duration of 11 to 15 days. Short term holidays, of only 2 to 5 days are preferred by a percentage of 19%, while only 9% go on long term vacations, of 16 to 20 days. Even less participants - 7%, travel for more than 20 days in a row, when they leave the UK.

![Figure 18: Duration of vacations in Europe](Image)

Source: Own compilation based on the analysis of the data
Purpose of travelling to Europe
Analyzing the sample, it can be observed that the main reason for travelling is leisure, chosen by 91% of the respondents. A smaller percentage, of only 38% or the participants to the research travel in Europe to see their friends and families, while 33% travel for business reasons. Only 7% of the respondents travel in Europe to fulfill their studies.

Figure 19: Reasons for travelling in Europe

Source: Own compilation based on the analysis of the data

Considering that a significant percentage of people have multiple reasons for travelling (not just leisure), the participants were permitted to choose several options, the question about the reasons to travel being designed with a multiple choice option. Thus, the percentages in Figure 19 will add up to more than 100%.

What are the respondents interested in when they travel.
According to the results (Figure 20), the most important aspect of an interesting holiday destination is a high number of tourist attractions, aspect chosen by 73% of the respondents. Although this does not constitute a surprise and it is an obvious choice, a high number of participants to the study - 68% are also drawn to destinations with an interesting gastronomic offer.

Figure 20: What are the respondents interested in when they travel

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis
Although the UK is a developed country, where the majority of the inhabitants have a high living standard, paying the right price for the products and services they buy is an important aspect for many of them. Thus, “good prices” was a significant requirement for 61% of the respondents.

The discovery of interesting traditions (chosen by a percentage 53%) and the presence of nice people (aspect selected by 55%) are other important features that a destination has to offer if it aims to attract people from the British market.

The organization of cultural events is an influential factor in the decision to visit a certain destination, for 37% of the respondents. Immediately after, chosen by 38% is the “culture” factor. Thus, approximately one third of the participants to the study find the interesting opportunity of getting in contact with an appealing culture.

The respondents seem to be less interested in the shopping facilities, only 30% of the participants considering this aspect important and even less interested in history, selected by only 26%.

A small percentage, 5% chose other aspects as being relevant and included suggestions such as concerts or sports competitions.

**Budget for a week of vacation spent in Europe**

In terms of the budget that the respondents would allocate for a week holiday in Europe, evidence (Figure 21) show that the majority, consisting of 55% would spend between 1001 and 1500 pounds.

A smaller percentage, of 31% chooses to spend less than 1000 pounds, while 13% would allocate between 1501 and 2000 pounds for such a trip.

Only a small percentage, 1%, of the respondents can afford a budget that exceeds 2000 pounds for one week holiday in Europe.

![Figure 21: Budget for a week of vacation in Europe](Source: Own compilation based on analysis of the sample)
Type of accommodation the respondents prefers
In terms of the types of accommodation that the respondents prefer when they travel in Europe, the results (Figure 22) show that the first place is occupied by 3 star hotels, chosen by 37 %, followed by 4 star hotels, facility chosen by 20 % of the participants to the study.
The option to stay at someone’s place (like AirBnB) is almost just as popular as the 4 stars hotels, alternative selected by a percentage of 19%. One word of warning should be mentioned: this option does not necessarily represent a cheaper facility compared to hotel prices, as some of the accommodations are quite expensive. Nonetheless, it usually offers a better price/quality ratio and the traveler has many times the option to know locals form the destinations they travel to and have a more personal experience compared to hotels11.
Only 13% of the respondents would choose to stay at a 1-2 starts hotel when travelling in Europe, while 6 % would prefer a hostel or motel.
Very few respondents are interested in camping, option selected by only 3 %.

![Figure 22: Accommodation facilities preferred by the respondents](image)

Source: own compilation based on data analysis

Means of transportation the British respondents prefer
In terms of the means of transportation the respondents use to travel in Europe, evidence (Figure 23) show that 84 % of the respondents would choose to travel by plane as their first choice option. Only a very small percentage would choose to travel in Europe by car 12 % and even less would select the train 4 % as top preference.

When flying, the majority of respondents - 75% prefers to use a low cost airline when they travel to destinations in Europe, followed by only 25% who would choose a full service flight carrier.

5.3. Moldova as a touristic destination in relation to the tested models

The next sections contain an overview of the results obtained by asking the respondents questions specifically related to the region of Moldova as a touristic destination in relation to the tested models and to the complex pyramid proposed by the present thesis.

**Popularity of Moldova region on the British market**

According to the results (Figure 25 and Figure 26), Moldova is not a well-known destination on the British market as only 8% of the respondents have heard of it and even less, only 4%– have ever visited this region. Therefore, the assumption made at the beginning of the analysis, that Moldova is not a region of which many foreigners have heard of proved to be true.
The questionnaire included at this stage an open ended question, asking the participants who stated that they have heard of Moldova before what exactly they know about this region.

When respondents were asked to give examples of what exactly they know about the region of Moldova, a confusion between Moldova region and the Moldavian republic as a country was observed, based on the analysis of some of the comments, such as: “It has been contested recently and in the past by Russia”. Nonetheless, the comments provided at this question also revealed the fact that some of the respondents do have more specific knowledge of the region: “Only that is located on the east part of Romania”, “High level of poverty, some interesting architecture, <<Palas>> shopping mall”

In order to understand if the respondents don’t know anything about the touristic opportunities in Romania or they just don’t have any knowledge about the Moldova region in particular, the participants to the survey were asked to provide examples of other regions they know in Romania.

The most popular destination is by far Transylvania, chosen by 63% of the respondents. 34% of the participants to the survey have heard of “The Black Sea”, while 32% of them know about the “Danube Delta” as a touristic destination in Romania. Bucovina, situated in the North of the country is not very popular, being known by just 9% of the respondents. Other destinations the participants to the survey have heard of are cities like Timisoara, Sibiu or Cluj.
Taking into account that Moldova is not a very popular touristic destination (based on the results of this study), a question about the respondents’ willingness to travel to less popular destination, but which have an interesting touristic offer was included in the questionnaire.

The results show that although the respondents present a high interest in travelling to a country’s capital or main cities (Figure 29 and Figure 30), evidence (Figure 28) shows that they also presented high interest in visiting less popular destinations, 45% agreeing with the statement: “I am also interested in visiting less popular destinations, if they have an interesting touristic offer”. 31% of the participant to the study would agree, followed by 16% who tend to agree.

Only 7% tend to disagree and just 1% would disagree with the above mentioned statement.

Thus, in terms of the respondents’ openness, Moldova has high potential to raise interest.
5.4. Models used in the analysis

In order to prove that the new proposed model offers a more insightful analysis, it had to be put in comparison with the backbone model – “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” proposed by Morgan and Pritchard (2001).

Other studies, Bundle (2011) and Westwood (2011), used the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” in order to analyze and define the brand’s essence of the destination being researched, Namibia and Abu Dhabi respectively. The brand essence of these destinations was build based on the associations (emotional and physical) that the respondents to the study gave in relation to the both Namibia and Abu Dhabi.

The same technique was used in this thesis to discover what the respondents living in the UK expect to find in Moldova.

Results obtained by applying the pyramid in its simple form, as proposed by Morgan et al. (2004).

When asked about what physical benefits they would expect to find in this region, results (Figure 31) show that 77 participants to the study (55 %) did not give an answer or answered “I don’t know”.

The rest of 62 respondents who did answer this question presented both positive and negative associations (to a lesser extend).

Among the positive physical benefits that the respondents would expect to find in Moldova are the following: “Castles”, “Clubs and city breaks”, “Country side”, “Culture”, “Mountains”, “Interesting, old buildings”, “Good traditional food”, “Traditions”, “Seaside”, “Unspoiled nature”. 
Some of the participants to the study also expect to find negative physical “benefits” in Moldova, like “gypsies” and “poverty”.

Figure 31: Physical benefits that the respondents would expect to find in Moldova

Analyzing the examples of emotional benefits (Figure 32) that the respondents would imagine experiencing in Moldova, the majority - 101 participants answered “I don’t know”.
From the remaining of 38 answers, few of them are specific to this region, while many others are general answers, which could be applicable to any destination, such as: “Relaxation”, “Recharge my batteries”, “Fun”, “Peace and quiet”.

Therefore, it can be remarked that the respondents found it difficult to provide emotional association that they have with a destination they don’t have extensive insights about.

Figure 32: Emotional benefits that the respondents would associate with Moldova region

Source: Own compilation
5.4.1. Testing the models used in the new proposed pyramid

In addition to adding to the pyramid proposed by Morgan et al. and create a more complex model, able to lead to a more insightful analysis, the models used in this compilation are also challenged.

5.4.1.1. Models added at the first level of the pyramid

The Hexagon of Competitive Identity

According to Simon Anholt’s (2007) “Hexagon of Competitive Identity” a country brand should be developed based on 6 pillars: tourism, brands, policy, investments, culture, people and tourism. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the “policy” and “people” factor was taken out of the analysis in the case of region branding.

Although Moldova has an interesting offer for all these 6 pillars (See Appendix 2), the results have the study prove that respondents don’t have in depth information about any of these. Respondents were asked to give examples of:

1. Tourism opportunities in the area
2. Specifics about the culture in the region
3. Projects and investments in the area
4. Brands from this region

Unfortunately, the participants to the study were not able to provide answers about any of these 4 pillars.

The “Country –City-Region matrix positioning model”

“The Country-City-Region matrix positioning model” proposed by Hernstein (2012) states that when tourists decide to travel to different regions within the same country, they base their choice on two pillars: geographical diversity and cultural diversity.

Evidence (Figure 33) shows that when respondents are given the opportunity to enjoy both geographical, as well as cultural diversity, they would obviously prefer this option, considering that 54% strongly agree and 22% agree with the statement “I would only consider travelling to different regions within the same country if the country is diverse both geographically, as well as culturally”. Only 9% of the respondents answered that they would “tend to agree”, 8 % tend to disagree and only 7 % disagree with the statement.
Figure 33: Respondents’ agreement with the statement “I would only travel to different regions within the same country if they are divers both geographically as well as culturally”

![Bar chart showing respondents' agreement with the statement](image)

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

Yet, when asked separately, results (Figure 34) show that geographical diversity seems to be more important than cultural distinctiveness. 10% of the respondents strongly agree and 43% agree that geographical diversity is a decisive factor in the choice to visit several regions within the same country, compared to only 5% who strongly agree and 27% who agree that cultural diversity is highly important.

Figure 34: Importance of Geographical vs. Cultural diversity

![Bar chart showing importance of geographical vs cultural diversity](image)

Source: Own compilation
5.4.1.2. Models added at the second level of the pyramid

Place brand management model

The “Place brand management” model proposed by Zenker and Braunn (2010) suggests that a destination should benefit from one umbrella brand, under which sub brands should be created for every specific stakeholders segment, such as travelers, residents or investors.

The thesis aims to take this model a step further and analyze if within the same stakeholders segment, further “sub-brands” should be developed. The thesis only focuses on the traveler stakeholders type.

Therefore, the respondents were presented with a list of potential tourism opportunities that they can enjoy in Moldova region. The level of interest they expressed for each was analyzed in relation to the demographical data gathered.

Interest for different touristic opportunities in relation to the respondents’ age group

As presented in the “Sample overview” part, at the beginning of this chapter, the first age category of the respondents -0 to 18 years- was represented by just one person in the data set. The age group between 46 and 55 years had 11 representatives, while 3 respondents were over 56 years. Considering the low number of responses from these age categories, the results are not considered statistically reliable, as literature states that the sample has to be formed by at least 30 cases in order for the results to be statistically valid (Meeker and Escobar, 1998).

Nevertheless, in order to get some insights into the types of tourism these age groups are interested in, an analysis was still deployed and the results can be found in the appendix 4.

Thus, in the following section, the results are focused on just three age categories who were represented by a sufficient number of respondents, as presented below.

The evidence (Figure 35) shows that the top 3 types of tourism that the respondents with ages between 19 and 25 years are interested in are City Breaks (mean = 4.97), Sports tourism (mean =4.97) and Experiencing local traditions and customs (mean = 4.56).
Figure 35: Types of tourism the respondents between 19-25 years are interested in

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis

Regarding the respondents with ages between 26 and 35 years, the results (Figure 36) the top three types of tourism they are interested in are City Breaks (mean = 4,93), Experiencing local traditions and customs (mean = 4,72) and visiting Salt mines and caves (4,61).

Figure 36: Types of tourism the respondents between 26-35 years are interested in

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis
The segment formed by respondents with ages between 36 and 45 years old are mostly interested in the following type of tourism: wine tourism (first choice with a mean of 5.19), city breaks (second preferred option with a mean of 5.10) followed by the opportunity of experiencing local traditions and customs (third preferred option with a mean of 4.71).

Figure 37: Types of tourism the respondents between 36 and 45 years are interested in

![Chart showing types of tourism]  
Source: Own compilation

Up until this point, the results (Figures 35, 36 and 37) showed that the respondents belonging to different age categories presented different levels of interest in the various types of tourism. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis was deployed in order to verify if these differences are statistically significant and an Independent t-test analysis was deployed in SPSS 2.0 for this scope.

Herein, the analysis only involved two age groups: the respondents between 19 and 26 years (which will be referred to as group 1) vs. the respondents between 26 and 35 years (which will be referred to as group 2), because in order to statistically compare the means from two groups, both samples have to be above 30 (Meeker & Escobar, 1998).

When reading the output for the Independent t-test generated by SPSS 2.0, the first element which has to be analyzed is the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. When the sig value for the Leven’s test is above 0.05 it means that the variability in the two conditions is about the same, thus it is not significantly different. In this case, when analyzing the Independents t-test, the sig value that has to be analyzed is on the first raw (Field & Babbie, 2013).
However, if the sig value is below 0.05 it means that the variability in the two conditions is not the same, thus it is significantly different. This is not a positive aspect, but SPSS takes that into account by giving slightly different results, therefore the sig value which has to be analyzed for the Independent t-test in this case is located on the second raw (Field & Bibbie, 2013).

After identifying the raw, the Sig (two tailed) has to be interpreted, as this is the value which indicates if the difference between two means is statistically significant or not. For this indicator, a value below 0.05 reveals the fact that the difference is indeed statistically significant.

When an Independent t-Test analysis is deployed, SPSS will generate two tables, the first one (Table 1) contains the means of the two groups, while the second table (Table 2) indicates if the differences are statistically significant.

Table 1: Output for means offered by group 19 – 25 years vs. group 26 vs 35 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th>What is your age?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Rural tourism/ agro tourism</td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.125</td>
<td>.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.952</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.433</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Unspoiled nature</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>1.263</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Spa tourism (relaxation, wellness and bathing in thermal waters)</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1.577</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>1.243</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Sport tourism/ activities and adventures (ski, hiking, kayaking, etc.)</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.354</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>years</td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SIG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - City breaks (architecture, night life)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>years</td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SIG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Wine tourism - visiting vineyards and participating to wine tasting</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.074</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Visiting salt mines and caves</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1.178</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Visiting old fortresses</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.103</td>
<td>.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Bio tourism (bio food)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.353</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Experiencing local traditions and customs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.097</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS 2.0.

Table 2: Output for the Independent t-Test

**Independent Samples Test**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene's t-test for Equality of Means</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: Rural tourism/ agro tourism</td>
<td>1,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspoiled nature</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spa tourism (relaxation, wellness and bathing in thermal waters)</td>
<td>1,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
following tourist opportunities: - Sport tourism/ activities and adventures (ski, hiking, kayaking, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,483</td>
<td>71.07</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,666</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - City breaks (architecture, assumed night life)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,74</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>-.374</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Wine tourism - visiting vineyards and participating to wine tasting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,49</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>-.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>-.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>-.665</td>
<td>.386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Equal variances not assumed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.843</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.285</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.728</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visiting salt mines and assumed caves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.951</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>-.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>-.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.259</td>
<td>-.764</td>
<td>.262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visiting old fortresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appealings</th>
<th>Equal variances</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.920</td>
<td>57.46</td>
<td>.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>-.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.295</td>
<td>.295</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.291</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
following tourist opportunities: - Bio tourism (bio food)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean for group 1</th>
<th>Mean for group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.232</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean for group 1</th>
<th>Mean for group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,87</td>
<td>0,93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.667</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.506</td>
<td>-.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.249</td>
<td>-.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equal variances not assumed

Correlating the information offered by the two tables, the evidence shows that the respondents between 26 and 35 years are significantly more interested in rural tourism than the respondents with ages between 19 and 25 years (sig Levene’s test = .0,235; sig 2 tailed = 0,00; Mean for group 1=2,65; Mean for group 2=3,65).

In relation to enjoying unspoiled nature when going on vacation, the participants to the study with ages between 26 and 35 years are significantly more interested in this opportunity than the respondents with ages between 19 and 26 years (.sig Levene’s test = .0,006; sig 2 tailed = 0,001; Mean for group 1=3,35; Mean for group 2=4,23).

Another statistical difference can be observed with regard to the preference for sports tourism (Kayaking skiing, hiking). The results show that the group 1 formed by respondents with ages between 19 and 25 and significantly more interested in sports tourism than group 2, formed by participants to the study who are between 26 and 35 of age sig Levene’s test = .0,650; sig 2 tailed = 0,018; Mean for group 1=4,97; Mean for group 2=4,3).

For the other touristic opportunities (spa tourism, city breaks, Wine tourism, Visiting salt mines and caves, Visiting old fortresses, Bio food or experiencing local traditions and customs, no statistical significant differences were observed between the means of scores for the two analyzed groups.

In order to verify if there are any significant differences in terms the preferred type of tourism between men and women, an Independent t-Test was run dividing the data on the gender variable. No statistically significant differences were observed between the means of scores offered by women compared to men as seen in Appendix 5.

Source: SPSS 2.0.

Interpreting the outputs generated by SPSS, it can be observed that there are statistically significant differences between the means offered by the two groups in terms of preference for rural tourism, unspoiled nature and sports tourism (highlighted in yellow).
5.4.1.3. Models added at the third level of the pyramid – The “Destination celebrity matrix”

The final model tested in the analysis was the “Destination celebrity matrix” proposed by Morgan et al. (2004), which states that a destination’s brand is based on two main pillars: emotional pull and celebrity value. However, when branding a new destination, which not many travelers have heard of, the weight of the celebrity value decreases in the traveler’s decision.

Therefore, in this case, can the emotional pull weight more?

In order to verify this, the questionnaire included pictures from Moldova meant to trigger respondents’ emotional pull.

In the analysis, the emotional pull was put in relation with the level of knowledge that the participants to the study have about the Moldova region. The participants were asked to express the level of agreement they have with the following statement, by looking at the pictures (Appendix3): “I don’t know a lot about this region, but I would expect to have a nice vacation”.

Evidence (Figure 38) shows that although respondents don’t have extensive knowledge about the Moldova region, the emotional pull is a strong enough trigger to convince them that they could enjoy a very pleasant vacation at this destination. 12% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement, while more than half, 51% agree. 27% of the respondents tend to agree and a small percentage of 7% tend to agree while only 3% disagree.

Figure 38: Emotional pull vs popularity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own compilation based on data analysis
Chapter 6: Discussion

The chapter focuses on presenting the most important insights obtained through the research. First, a profile of the British traveler, level of knowledge and perception he has in relation to the region of Moldova is presented. Subsequently, additions to the models are proposed, based on the results of the research. Finally, the information obtained from applying the pyramid in its simple form is put in comparison with the insights obtained on the bases of the new proposed model in order to prove on the complexity of the region branding process.

6.1. The British tourist profile

Based on the statistical data obtained from the sample, the majority of the results came from both men and women with ages between 19 and 35 years, who are professionals without children. Most of them are British citizens. The time they spent on holiday in Europe is on average between 6 and 10 days and the number of vacations per year is between 1 and 5. The main reason for travelling is leisure.

When travelling in Europe, the British tourist is interested first and foremost in destinations with a high number of tourist attractions. Immediately after, the gastronomical offer of a place will constitute another point of interest. Although coming from a wealthy country, the British traveler is interested in destinations with good prices, while the presence of nice, welcoming people was assessed as another significant attribute that an attractive destination should benefit of.

The average traveler is willing to spend between 1001 and 1500 £ for a week of vacation in Europe. In terms of the preferred type of accommodation, the first place is occupied by 3 star hotels, followed by 4 star hotels, which is almost at the same level of preference as staying at someone’s place (e.g. AirBnB). The British tourist prefers to travel by plane to different destinations in Europe and in most cases chooses a low-cost airline.

Although interested in visiting capitals and the main cities when travelling to a new country, the British visitor is open to travel to lesser known destinations, if they have an interesting touristic offer. Therefore, the first hypothesis formulated in Chapter four H1: The British travelers are also interested in visiting less popular destination with an interesting tourist offer is admitted as being true.
6.2. The British tourist in relation to the region of Moldova

The great majority of the respondents have never heard of the Moldova region, therefore the level of knowledge they have in relation to this destination is extremely low, which proves that H2: The level of knowledge about the Moldova region as a touristic destination on the British market is very low is true.

6.3. Insights generated by the application of the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” in its simple form, on the case of a lesser known region

The application of the pyramid in its simple form, in which the respondents were asked to provide the physical and emotional associations they make in relation to the region of Moldova resulted in very few valid answers, proving H3: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one physical benefit that they would associate with the destination and H4: Not all the participant to the study can exemplify at least one emotional benefit that they would associate with the destination are correct.

Thus, a first gap was notices: when applied to a lesser known destination, like is the case of Moldova, the pyramid is not able to provide an insightful image because the participants to the study are not able to exemplify a significant and reliable number of physical and emotional associations.

In addition, it was observed during the analysis, that when respondents have a low level knowledge about a region, they will expand the information and image they have about the whole country or other nearby destinations on the region being researched.

Therefore, it can be remarked that some of the physical and emotional benefits illustrated by the respondents are not necessarily focused on Moldova, but rather expended from the country image.

In terms of physical benefits many respondents would expect to enjoy beautiful nature in Moldova, although a very small percentage of the participant- only 8% has ever heard of this region. Considering that Romania is being promoted as a “authentic, natural and cultural – a dynamic country reach in history, arts and scenic beauty” (http://romaniatourism.com/, accessed May 2015) it can be concluded that the image tourists have about the country impacts the physical benefits they expect to enjoy in a specific region.

Referring to the emotional benefits, many associations were made based on the feelings respondents have in relation to the whole country, one example being “I think Romania is a poor country” (Figure 33), rather than the feeling they have in relation to Moldova in particular.
Hence, a second gap was observed in the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid”: basing the analysis of a destination brand on the emotional and physical association that the respondents provide can lead to a distorted image of the reality, as respondents will expend the adjacent knowledge they have about the country or other regions to the destination being researched.

As a result, when applied to an unknown region, the pyramid fails to live up to the complexity of the destination branding process. Consequently, additional models should complete the pyramid in order to obtain an insightful and dependable analysis, on which a future brand can be built on.

6.4. Insights generated by the application of the new complex pyramid

As previously described, new models were added to three out of the five levels in the “Destination branding pyramid model” in order to obtain a complex analysis, able to generate additional insights.

It is paramount to mention that the complexity of the destination branding process was proved in the present thesis not only by proposing a new, complex pyramid, but also by challenging the models used in the compilation.

Therefore, additions were brought to the models before they were assimilated to the new proposed pyramid.

As a result, the complexity was raised both vertically, as well as horizontally.

Figure 39: Explanation of how complexity was increased in the present thesis
**First level**

**Hexagon of Competitive Identity**

Using this model at the first stage of the analysis helps the researcher have a more comprehensive image of what a destination has to offer by structuring the investigation process. In addition, the model sheds light on some opportunities that a destination might have and which could be forgotten if a less structured approach is adopted.

In the case of Moldova, the introduction of the “Hexagon of Competitive Identity” at the first level of the pyramid constituted the foundation on which a list of the most important assets that Moldova has to offer was build, constructed on 4 out of the 6 pillars proposed by the model (as presented in Appendix 1).

In addition, based on the results, it was observed that the average British tourist is not aware of any of the 4 pillars, thus sustained efforts should be made to promote them, if Moldova aims to attract visitors from this market.

**The Country Region Matrix**

In addition to knowing what a destination has to offer, the “Country-region-matrix” model added at the first level of the pyramid helps the researcher understand how to position the region’s brand in relation to the country brand or other nearby region brands.

The model states that when deciding to travel to different regions within the same country, the tourists bases his decision on two pillars: geographical and cultural diversity. In addition, Herstein (2012) suggests that travelling across a country that is only diverse geographical would not enrich the traveler’s experience so the focus should be put on certain cities, rather than on the country as a whole.

However, the case of the region brand in a country that is diverse geographically but not culturally is not taken into account, this being a gap observed in the model.

The results showed that the average British tourist is more interested in geographical diversity than cultural distinctiveness, thus, *H5: Both geographical and cultural diversity are equally important in a traveler’s choice to visit different regions within the same country is rejected.*

As a result, it can be concluded that the promotion of the Moldova region can be built on this premises of geographical diversity and be promoted as a standalone destination, rather than as a region inside Romania.

A completion to the model is therefore carried by adding the “region brand” in the up left quadrille, on the same level with country brand and region brand, as seen in Figure 40.
Second level

The second level in the “Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” is concerned with the benefits that the destinations’ features discovered at the first level will bring to the visitors.

However, the added model at this stage – “The Place brand management model” challenges the pyramid by asserting that various features will raise a different level of interest depending on the stakeholder type – tourists, business or resident.

Taking the “Place brand management model” a step further it was proven during the analysis that inside the same stakeholder type (herein tourists type), a further segmentation should be deployed. This is necessary because depending on the age, social status, income, etc. travelers might be interested in different touristic opportunities. Therefore, in order to attract a higher number of visitors, the branding and promotional endeavors of a region should be tailored to the requirements of every segment.

In relation to what Moldova has to offer, an emphasis should be put on the opportunities for city breaks in the region, sports tourism and on creating the occasions to experience local traditions and customs, if it wants to attract visitors with ages between 19 and 25 years. For this segment, unspoiled nature and rural tourism (two selling propositions on which Romania’s country brand is based on) are the least important touristic opportunities they would consider enjoying in the region.

If an older segment is targeting, specifically visitors aged between 26 and 35 years, the opportunities for city breaks, experiencing local traditions and customs and visiting salt mines and caves are the unique selling points which should be emphasized in the promotional endeavors. The occasion to visit old fortresses or enjoy rural tourism would not raise interest on behalf of this age segment.
Furthermore, significant differences were detected in the level of interest for enjoying unspoiled nature and sports tourism between the two groups. Thus, *H7: Different travelers segments on the British market are interested in different types of tourism in the region of Moldova* was proved a correct assumption.

In conclusion, the “The Place brand management model” was challenged and its complexity was increased by proving that a region should not only benefit from sub-brand for every stakeholder type, but inside every category, a further segmentation should be deployed.

**Third level**

**The destination celebrity matrix**

The third level in the backbone model investigates the emotional and physical associations that the travelers expect to get by visiting a destination. However, it was proven during the analysis that when a lesser known region is being researched, the associations are very few and many times too general.

Therefore, the model added at this stage – “The destination celebrity matrix” fills in the gap of the pyramid and emphasizes on the fact that the average tourist decides on a destination based on what they know about it (celebrity value) and how they feel about the place in question (emotional pull).

Taking the “Destination celebrity matrix” a step further, the results showed that when presenting a new, lesser known destination, the emotional pull can be a strong enough trigger, although the celebrity value of the place is low. This claim is supported by the results showing that although the most of the British tourists included in the research have never heard of Moldova, they declared they would be interested to visit it and expect to have a nice vacation there; based on the pictures of the region they saw in the questionnaire. The results obtained here prove *H6: The region of Moldova represents an attractive destination for the British market* and *H8: When promoting a new destination, the emotional pull is more important than the celebrity value* as being true.

This is an insight for the region of Moldova – despite the fact that it has a low celebrity value; it can still attract a significant number of tourists from the UK market by emphasizing on the emotional pull in the future promotional endeavors.

**Fourth level**

Another gap in the backbone model was observed in the 4th level where the pyramid focuses on what does value mean for the returning visitor.

But when the pyramid is applied in the analysis of a lesser known destination, the probability of having enough respondents in the sample who are returning visitors is very low.

In the case of Moldova, only 4% (5 people) of the participants to the study have visited this region, therefore not enough information was obtained in terms of what value means for the returning visitors in the Moldova region.
Fifth level

The last level in the backbone model defines what is essential and character to the brand based on the results obtained at the previous 4 levels.

In other studies (Bundle, 2011 Westwood, 2011) and “The destination celebrity matrix”, the usage of the pyramid in its simple form lead to key words which would best define the destination being researched. However, the analysis in the present thesis lead to many more insights than just the key words on which the future branding of Moldova region should be based on. This obtained results and insights constituted the foundation for the insights and recommendations presented below:

- Although the British tourists are not aware of what this region has to offer, they showed interest in visiting Moldova, so there is potential, but it has to be developed by building a strong region brand.
- Moldova region can be promoted as a standalone destination and the value proposition should be built on geographical diversity;
- Moldova should benefit from sub-brands adapted to different tourists segments, depending on their age and social status. Different promotional endeavors should be also be adjusted to various tourists types as results showed that they are not equally interested in the touristic opportunities in the area.
- If Moldova wants to attract visitors aged between 19 and 36 years, the promotional emphasis should be put on the opportunities for city breaks, sports tourism, visiting salt mines and caves and wine tourism.
- It is also very important to create the occasions for travelers to experience local traditions and customs as both groups showed high interest in these. Therefore, events and workshops should be developed to offer the visitors the occasion to artwork, habits and traditions specific to this region.
- Although rural tourism is an important opportunity in the area, the British visitors are not interested in this, therefore it is not something that should be emphasize in the region brand building process.
- Despite of the fact that Moldova does not benefit from a high celebrity value, being almost an unknown destination on the British market, it can still attract visitors if the promotion is built on emotional pull.

In conclusion, based on the number of insights obtained through the application if the new, complex pyramid, it can stated that $H9$: The complexity of region brand analysis required a more complete model for the analysis and $H10$: The combination of the 5 used models offers a more insightful analysis of a region brand as well as on the perception/potential-risks/opportunities to approach are indeed correct.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

The present thesis aimed to prove on the complexity of the region branding process by putting forward a new pyramid, build through the combination of various models from the destination branding literature. In addition to this, the models assimilated in the new, complex pyramid were challenged and augmented based on the results of the study. Thus, the complexity of the backbone model – the “D Brand personality and the benefit pyramid” was increased vertically, by inserting models at 3 out of its 5 levels, as well as horizontally, by completing the used models with insights from the analysis.

Therefore, the present thesis contributes to the literature by proposing a new model, presented in Figure 41, with all the additional elements supplemented through the analysis.

Also, the thesis contributed to the practical world by offering insights into the requirements, preferences and desires of the modern British traveler.
In relation to the region being researched, it was proved that although Moldova is an unknown destination on the British market, it has potential to raise interest.
In order to target visitors between 19 and 36 years of age, the region brand of Moldova should be focused on what the cities around have to offer, as well as on the opportunities for sports tourism. Experiencing local traditions and customs, visiting salt mines and caves and enjoying wine testing trips are other valuable pillars on which the region brand can be built on.
Figure 41: Complex pyramid developed through the research of the present thesis

- Strategic recommendations (providing future directions rather than just the essence of a region brand)
- No model – the pyramid cannot be applied on an unknown destination – Gap in the model
- Emotional pull should be emphasized in promoting a lesser known region
- Inside the same target group, sub-brands should be

Source: Own compilation
Chapter 8: Limitations and Future Research

The results of the present thesis are restrained by a series of limitations, which if avoided in future research; a more reliable image of the explored subject will be obtained.

The sample size is not demographically representative for the population in the UK market. Due to limited resources, the questionnaire was distributed using social media channels, which are free of charge. Consequently, respondents who use these channels extensively were represented in a higher number in the sample, 72% being aged between 19 and 36 years. As a result, limited insights were obtained about the other age categories.

No incentives (financial or otherwise) were offered to the respondents in order to participate to the study. This was one of the reasons for which the response rate was rather low, of only 38%, as literature states that “incentives encourage participation to the research” (Monsen and Horn, 2008, p 108).

In terms of the time spent for the data gathering process, only 6 weeks were allocated, while literature recommends the application of longitudinal studies, in order to better understand the phenomenon being researched (Hedeker & Gibbons, 2006).

Due to the fact that a very low percentage of the participants to the study have ever heard of the region of Moldova and even less have ever been there, information about what is the perception of the returning visitor were not obtained.

The present thesis focused specifically on Moldova region, therefore the extension of the results to other regions in Romania has be done carefully.

Considering that the findings in the present thesis were mainly focused on the age group 19 -36 years, it can be argued that future research can concentrated on the other age categories, in order to understand their requirements, desires, level of knowledge and expectations in relation to Moldova.

Taking into account that the new model put forward in the present thesis was developed in relation to Moldova – an almost unknown destination on the British market, future research could be motivated by the application of the complex pyramid in relation to better known destinations in Romania (e.g. Transylvania) or in other countries.
Appendices

Appendix 1- Map of Romania, pointing where the region of Moldova is situated
Appendix 2- List with the touristic opportunities in Moldova, based on the “Hexagon of Competitive Identity, (Aanholt, 2004).
Appendix 3- Pictures from the Moldova region which were presented to the respondents in the questionnaire
Appendix 4 – Types of tourism which are of interest for age group 45 -56
Appendix 5 – Independent t-test analysis based on gender
Appendix 1- Map of Romania, pointing where the region of Moldova is situated
Appendix 2: List with the touristic opportunities in Moldova, based on the “Hexagon of Competitive Identity”, Anholt, (2004)

The list of the branding opportunities which Moldova has to offer was built on The “Hexagon of Competitive Identity” proposed by Anholt (2004).

First pillar: Touristic offer
The different types of tourism on which the region brand can be built on are presented below.

Wine tourism
One type of tourism which can be developed in Moldova is wine tourism, in the “Cotnari” vineyards, situated in the N-E of Iasi, the main city in the region. The wines produced here have been awarded internationally along the years.
“Cotnari” vineyards offer touristic packages to visitors, in which they can visit the production capacity, the vineyards and taste the high quality wines.
Tourism can also taste local dishes and enjoy the peaceful, beautiful nature of the place12.

Sports tourism
The geographical diversity of Moldova is enhanced by the presence in the region of “Ceahlau” Massif, which creates the perfect opportunity for sports tourism.
At the foot of the mountain, “Durau” ski resort can be encountered and which functions all the year round.
The climate and the fresh air make the area perfect for experimenting different sports, like skiing, hiking, Kayaking, etc. but also for leisure.
In addition, “Ceahlau” is not a very difficult mountain to climb, so this is another activity that can be offered to visitors.
The beauty of the place is reinforced by the presence of the “Duruitoarea” Waterfall13.

Salt mines and caves
In Moldavia region, two natural salt mines – “Tragu Ocna” and “Cacica” - open their doors every day to tourists who want to get enjoy the mountains of salt and breathe that special air.

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Tragu Ocna salt mine is located at the rate of 240 meters underground. Here, tourists can enjoy the opportunity to inhale the salt air and perform a range of leisure activities.

Inhaling salt air has been proved to be very healthy.

As a matter of fact, between 1974-2005, Targu Ocna salt mine benefited from a so-called sanatorium, “which treated asthmatic diseases, diseases caused by pollution, overloading syndrome and neuroses”\textsuperscript{14}.

“Cacica” is a real "town" underground, where after 280 wooden steps down, a beautiful salt mountain can be discovered. The salt mine has 4 galleries, in which a salt mine, a former ballroom an old cheese warehouse can be enjoyed. In addition, several sports activities can be performed in the salt mine\textsuperscript{15}.

**Rural tourism**

Besides the main cities, Moldova has a considerable surface of rural zones, where tourists can enjoy fresh air, in a quiet environment. There are many guesthouses in the region, run by locals, who are also happy to cook local dishes with bio ingredients, from their own courtyard.

**Spa tourism**

One of the unique selling propositions which should be emphasized in relation to Moldova is the “Slanic Moldova” spa resort, which is unique in Romania and in Europe.

The area has important resources in terms of “composition, concentration, complexity of the chemical and therapeutic effects”\textsuperscript{16}.

The potential of the resort spa is a defining criterion, but tourist can enjoy here beautiful nature as well\textsuperscript{17}.

**City breaks**

Moldova region comprises 6 cities in total (Vaslui, Bacau, Vrancea, Galati, Iasi and Neamt), the most important one being Iasi.

Iasi has traditionally been one of the main centers of Romania academic and artistic life and it is a cosmopolitan city, with many interesting places to visit, such as museum, historical monuments, the philharmonic, theaters, etc.

\textsuperscript{16} \texttt{http://www.slanic-moldova.info/slanic-moldova/Prezentare-generala/}, accessed May 2015
\textsuperscript{17} \texttt{http://www.slanic-moldova.info/slanic-moldova/Prezentare-generala/}, accessed May 2015
Being a city with several large universities, Iasi has an interesting night life, with many clubs and bars open until break of down.
The “Palace” project, built inaugurated in 2012 is a large complex in the city center, with office buildings, hotels, shops, parks and many cafes and restaurants.
Iasi also benefits from a new, improved airport so it a city with a high potential to attract visitors.

Second pillar: Investments
Among the most important investments in the region in the last year, the “Palas” project and the modernization of Iasi airport are highlighted.
“Palas” is names “a city in the heart of a city” (http://www.palasiasi.ro/, accessed May 2015), because it is located in the historical area of Iasi, next to the “Palace of Culture”, the most important tourist attraction in Iasi.
“Palas” has a built area of 270,000 square meters and if formed by office buildings, hotels, a large shopping mall, parks and many restaurants and cafes.
It was inaugurated in 2012 and its total value was of 265 million euros\textsuperscript{18}.
Iasi International airport will benefit from a new terminal and a new runway, the project being due at the end of 2015. The final investment was planned to rise to 100 million euros\textsuperscript{19}. The new runway will allow the airport to attract more companies and handle more international flights which is the first step in assuring a higher number of foreign tourists travelling to this city and the Moldova region.

Third pillar: Brands
At the moment, Moldova benefits from one important brand, which if capitalized wisely, can bring a better image and help the region of Moldova become better known abroad.
This brand belongs to “Cotnari” wines, which have gained an impressive amount of international awards along the years. Some of these awards are mentioned below:

- “CHISINAU 2013, Grasa 1989 - gold, Grasa 2000 - gold, Francusa Clasic 2011 - silver,

\textsuperscript{18} http://www.palasiasi.ro/, accessed May 2015
- BERLIN 2013, Grasa 1982 - gold, Tamaioasa Dulce 2011 - silver
- BRUXELLES 2013, Grasa 1982 - silver, Grasa 2005 - silver
- BRUXELLES 2012, 4 gold medals
- BUCURESTII 2012, 5 gold medals
- CHISINAU 2012, 5 gold medals
- BERLIN 2012, 4 gold medals, 1 silver medal
- MENDOZA 2011, 3 silver medals
- QUEBEC 2011, 2 silver medals
- BRUXELLES 2011, 3 gold medals, 1 silver medal
- BERLIN 2011, 3 gold medals
- BRUXELLES 2011, 3 gold medals, 1 silver medal
- CHISINAU, 3 GREAT GOLD MEDALS, 3 gold medals, 3 silver medals
- BERLIN 2010, THE GREAT GOLD MEDAL, 2 gold medal
- CHISINAU 2010, 7 gold medals, 3 silver medals
Fourth pillar: Culture

“Moldavia is one of the fewest regions in Romania which, in the 21st century can be proud of having conserved and having perpetuating the traditional values\(^{20}\).

The tourists can experience here different local traditions, like manufacturing pottery from clay or participating to other workshops where they can learn creates different objects for their household from wood or metal.

For Easter or Christmas, visitors can enjoy different local customs specific for that time of the year and which are unique in the world and they can experience very tasty dishes.

Moldova also benefits from a very tasty cuisine, which includes dishes such as “Sarmale” (cabbage leaves stuffed with minced meat), “Tochitura” (main course, prepared of pork meat, with porridge and egg, livers, sheep cheese and sausage), “Moldovian meatballs” and many more\(^{21}\).

Fifth pillar: People

One famous person who was born in Moldova and who is known at an international level is Nadia Comaneci. She won three Olympic gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Montreal in 1976 and she was the first female gymnast in the world to receive a score of 10 from all the members of the jury in an Olympic Gymnastic event. Nadia Comaneci is also one of the best-known gymnasts in the world\(^{22}\).


Appendix 3- Pictures from the Moldova region which were presented to the respondents in the questionnaire
Appendix 4 – Types of tourism which are of interest for age group 46 -55

The results show that the top three types of tourism in which the respondents aged between 46 and 55 are interested are: wine tourism, visiting salt mines and caves and enjoying unspoiled nature.

For the last age segment (respondents aged between 56 and 65 years) an insufficient number of respondents was registered, therefore the analysis was not performed.
## Appendix 5 – Independent t-test analysis based on gender

### Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your gender?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Rural tourism/ agro tourism</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.182</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Male Unspoiled nature</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Male Spa tourism (relaxation, wellness and bathing in thermal waters)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.482</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.419</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities: - Male Sport tourism/ activities Male and adventures (ski, hiking, kayaking, etc.)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.014</td>
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Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City breaks (architecture, night life)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>1.382</td>
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<td>you find the following Tourist opportunities: Wine tourism - visiting vineyards and participating to wine tasting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>1.083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please rate how appealing Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.194</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you find the following Tourist opportunities: Visiting salt mines and caves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>.147</td>
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<td>3.73</td>
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<td>you find the following Tourist opportunities: Visiting old fortresses</td>
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<td>you find the following Tourist opportunities: Bio tourism (bio food)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>you find the following Tourist opportunities: Experiencing local traditions and customs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.69</td>
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Independent Samples Test
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<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
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<td>Sig.</td>
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<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
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<td>.618</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.390</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural tourism/ agro tourism</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.068</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unspoiled nature</td>
<td>1.185</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
following tourist opportunities:
- Spa tourism (relaxation, wellness and bathing in thermal waters)

Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities:
- Sport tourism/activities and adventures (ski, hiking, kayaking, etc.)
- City breaks (architecture, night life)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.093</th>
<th>137.00</th>
<th>.926</th>
<th>.023</th>
<th>.246</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
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<td>not assumed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                  | .001 | .973  | .652 | 137  | .515 | .135  | .207 | -.274 | .544 |
| Equal variances  |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |       |      |
| assumed          |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |       |      |

|                  | .005 | .946  | .614 | 137  | .540 | .102  | .166 | -.226 | .429 |
| Equal variances  |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |       |      |
| not assumed      |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |       |      |

|                  | .615 | 136.81 | .540 | .102 | .165 | -.225 | .429 |
|                  |      |        |      |      |      |       |      |
Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities:

- **Wine tourism**
  - visiting vineyards and participating in wine tasting
  - Equal variances assumed
  - $t = 3.82, p = 0.004$
  - $t = 3.82, p = 0.004$

- **Visiting salt mines and caves**
  - Equal variances not assumed
  - $t = 1.75, p = 0.175$
  - $t = 1.75, p = 0.175$

- **Visiting old fortresses**
  - Equal variances assumed
  - $t = 0.385, p = 0.184$
  - $t = 0.385, p = 0.184$

- **Visiting historical sites**
  - Equal variances not assumed
  - $t = 0.211, p = 0.602$
  - $t = 0.211, p = 0.602$

- **Coastal activities**
  - Equal variances assumed
  - $t = 0.234, p = 0.602$
  - $t = 0.234, p = 0.602$
Please rate how appealing you find the following tourist opportunities:
- Experiencing local traditions and customs
- Bio tourism (bio food)

All the sig 2 tailed values in the Independent t-Test output generated by SPSS are above 0.05, meaning that there are no statistically significant differences between the means of scores offered by men vs. women in relation to the preferences for different types of touristic opportunities present in Moldova region.
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