

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Research on a projected brand and perceived personality differentiation of tourist destination: A case study of Shandong, China**

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Due to the accelerated pace of modern life, consumers reduce time of purchase decisions and tend to choose services that match their own personality. The development of the brand of tourist destination needs to introduce new, appropriate extension to meet the needs of tourists in order to maintain exuberant vitality. So, what the perception of the brand personality of tourist destination is and whether it has an impact on the effectiveness of tourists' evaluation of extended brand are needed to research. Based on a tourism website on visitors' reviews and advertisements on scenic areas, this paper examined Shandong Province and discussed differences in regional tourism brands. Firstly, tourists' comments were collected from the tourism website and high-frequency words that describe individual characteristics using the content analysis method were extracted. Secondly, the characteristics of vocabulary acquisition were summarized; the tourism brand personality dimension scale was used, put corresponding data into cross-contingency tables and obtains visitors' destination personality perception differences. Thirdly, after using group discussions and the Delphi method to obtain the Shandong tourism projected brand personality and this was compared with tourists' brand personalities, it was revealed that the perception of Shandong promulgated by its marketers differs from visitors' perceptions. Finally, the paper proves that tourism destination brand has a personality feature and the measurement of tourism brand personality dimensions should consider regional culture and resource advantages. Also, project brand personality is based on tourism's market supply and perceived brand personality is based on tourism's demand market, either on tourists' experiences or on information acquired from actual travel.

**Key words:** Perceived brand personality, projected brand personality, content analysis method, tourism destination brand, Shandong Province.

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the development and utilization of tourist resources, more and more destinations have become homogeneous

(Lu et al., 2008), which increases competition and forces tourist destinations to constantly change and diversify

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themselves (Morgan et al., 2002). A brand can be valuable when it stimulates a perceptible image in a customer's mind that influences his purchase intentions and behaviors (Aaker, 1995). As an intangible asset, brand image is a promise of quality that a destination communicates to its tourists. The central objective of branding is to improve brand equity, which would give destinations and competitive advantage over the others (Almeyda-Ibáñez et al., 2017). Whether a country or a single scenic destination, brand is an important tool of destination marketing (Gao and Jiao 2014) and the shaping of the brand is a key element in tourism marketing. Aaker (1995), the founder of the brand personality theory, said that 'brand personality' is a set of personality traits associated with the brand (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006). Brand personality is not innate but is built up with tourists' travel experience of tourism products. For destinations, the key to success lies in their brand personalities and interactions with the target market (Guo et al., 2011). When a destination has a clear personality, it can thrive against often-homogeneous competition (Bai and Hu, 2013) and become the bridge between tourists' perceptions of the destination and destinations' brand personality.

This paper studies concepts and brand personality dimensions, which offer symbolic value to consumers and give them an opportunity to express themselves (Keller, 1997). Once a brand personality is formed, it generally stays with the consumer and is difficult to change (Wee, 2004). Based on earlier literature by Aaker (1995) who defined destination personality as 'a set of personality traits associated with the destination', Henderson (2000) pointed out, using a content analysis study, that Singapore's tourism brand personality shows a young, comfortable, dynamic, reliable, and contemporary Asia (Hosany, 2006). According to Aaker's study of brand personality dimensions, Bai and Zhang (2009) found rural tourism brand personality to be affordable, interactive, healthy, joyful and leisurely, while also providing an escape. Mu and Li (2014) pointed out that the tourism brand personality of Chongqing city is characterized by truthfulness, passion, courage, wisdom and trust. Gao (2015) proposed that a waterfront tourist destination has five dimensions: its attraction, charm, spiritual interest, lifestyle and modernity. Using questionnaires, Hou et al (2015) found that Tsingtao's brand personality has some features, including mood, intellectual discipline, openness and dynamism. These empirical studies show that like general consumer goods brands, tourism destinations also have a brand personality, and different types of tourism destinations have different personalities.

In addition to the study of concepts and dimension measurements, destination brand personality research includes the relationship between destination brand personality and travel marketing organisations and the influence of destination brand personality on tourist behaviour. This reflects the ultimate goal: To understand

tourists' behaviour, meet market demands and provide a theoretical basis for tourism marketing management practice. Brand personality's relationship with tourism marketing organisations focuses on the influence of tourism-marketing organisations' image on the brand personality of a tourism destination (Ekinci et al., 2007). It also focuses on how to use tourists' perception of destination personality to assess brand positioning (Qu and Li, 2012). The study on destination brand personality and image pointed out that while destination personality and image are different; there is a correlation (Hosany, 2006): destination image positively influences its personality (Henderson, 2000). Destination brand personality positively influences the willingness to revisit, an intention to recommend the destination (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011) and tourist loyalty (Tang et al., 2011; Zhang and Bai, 2011; Yang, 2011). Brand personality research methods in this study included factor analysis (based on the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey), content analysis, projection technology and in-depth interviews (Prayag, 2007). Destination brand personality studies are usually based on quantitative analysis. Only in recent years have they incorporated other methods of qualitative and quantitative research (Gao and Jiao, 2014; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). The research on what tourists perceive about the original brand personality and whether these brand personalities have an impact on the effectiveness of tourists' evaluation of extended brand is still insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth exploration to provide a basis for tourism brand marketing practice.

## METHODOLOGY

### Theoretical background

The paper uses both 'projected image' and 'perceived image' as theoretical constructs. A projected image of a destination is what marketing communicators (tourism marketing organisations) hope to shape in tourists' minds. A 'perceived image' is tourists' comprehensive impression of the destination. As a key element of brand marketing, tourism destination brand personality also exists in the areas of 'projection' and 'perceived' personality. Projective personality establishes brand personality through different kinds of brand activities, while perception personality is the actual, perceived destination brand personality (Gao and Jiao, 2014).

### Research process

First, tourists' comments were collected from the tourism website as raw data. Second, high-frequency words that describe individual characteristics were extracted using ROST Content Mining 6 software. Before analyzing word frequency in the raw data, major names, product names, traffic information and function words (prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, etc.) not relevant to the study's four tourist attractions were placed into a word frequency statistics filter. Considering that comments differ in length and more words appear in long reviews than in short reviews, the extraction of high frequency reflect the importance of feature words towards long review. Hence, the same comments in two or more words do

**Table 1.** The sample survey's demographic characteristics.

Variable	Items	Samples (%)	Variable	Items	Samples (%)
Gender	Male	205(45.7)	Education level	Middle school	8(1.8)
	Female	244(54.3)		Senior high school	31(6.9)
Age	Under-18	5(1.1)	Junior college	91(20.2)	
	18-29	170(39.7)	Undergraduate course	278(61.9)	
	30-39	210(46.8)	Graduate	41(9.2)	
	40-49	46(10.2)	3000RMB and Below	94(20.9)	
	Over 50	18(4.0)	Monthly income	3001-6000RMB	216(48.1)
Occupation	Civil servant	49(10.9)	6001-9000RMB	97(21.6)	
	Professionals	84(18.7)	Over 9001RMB	42(9.4)	
	Company employee	198(44.1)	Marriage	Unmarried	171(38.1)
	Student	66(14.7)		Married	278(61.9)
	Individual business owner	22(5.4)	Visit times	2-3 times	377(84.0)
	Housewife	10(2.2)		Over 4 times	72(16.0)
	Peasant	5(1.1)			
	Soldier	3(0.7)			
	Others	10(2.2)			

Data sources: the statistical results about the questionnaire survey.

return one processing, with 'frequency', meaning the feature words appear in the raw data on the number of words, with 'frequency'; thus, the key file in a text analysis of key subset ratio (Guo et al., 2015).

Referring to existing research results, the consult experts summarize the characteristics of vocabulary acquisition, get the 'Friendly Shandong' tourism brand personality dimension scale, put corresponding data into cross-contingency tables and obtain visitors' destination personality perception differences. Lastly, group discussions and the Delphi method were used to obtain the Shandong tourism projected brand personality and compare this with tourists' brand personalities.

### Selection of the case study

This paper uses the random sampling method and selects cases with questionnaires on the Questionnaire Star website (<http://www.sojump.com>). For six days, from 20 to 25 April 2016, 611 questionnaires were collected. Seventy-six were deleted because those surveyed had no tourism experience in the Shandong Province. In addition, to improve the sample's credibility, 86 questionnaires were invalidated since respondents had visited the area less than two times. This left 449 useable questionnaires and an overall questionnaire effective rate of 84% (the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1).

The socio-demographic characteristics of the survey showed that the sampling distribution is representative. The SPSS software, used to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, showed a reliability index of above 0.5, indicating good internal quality of the questionnaire. It also indicates a KOM test coefficient of 0.85 and a Sig value P is less than 0.05, which show that the overall validity of the questionnaire is good.

Respondents, who based their answers on their own experiences and perceptions, chose 3-5 of the most representative scenic locations in Shandong, whose options are listed in a Shandong high-definition tourist promotional video. The survey's results (Figure 1) show that tourists gave Mount Tai Shan the strongest representative score of 66.4%. To simplify the study, we included the following cases with representative scores higher than 40%:

Mount Tai Shan Tourism Scenic Area (66.4%), the Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty (57.2%), the Shandong Coastal Tourist Area [Tsingtao, Yantai, Weihai and Rizhao (53.2%)] and the Best Spring in the World Scenic Area (43%). The socio-demographic characteristics of the survey showed that the sampling distribution of sample size is representative. SPSS software was used to test reliability and validity of questionnaire, reliability index above 0.5; indicating good internal quality of the questionnaire. KOM test coefficient 0.85, Sig value p is less than 0.05, indicating that the overall validity of the questionnaire is better.

Questionnaire respondents based on their own experiences and perceptions, chose 3-5 from the given options, considering most representative scene spots in Shandong. The options are listed over the Shandong tourism promotional video in high frequency determined through screening research. Survey results (Figure 1) shows that the tourists' perception of tourism scenic spot of Mount Tai Shan is the strongest representation of 66.4%. To simplify the study, the following cases representations were higher than 40% as the cases of this study: Mount Tai Shan Tourism Scenic area, 66.4%; Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty, 57.2%; Shandong Coastal Tourist Area (Tsingtao, Yantai, Weihai, Rizhao, etc.), 53.2%; The Best Spring in the world of Jinan, 43%.

It should be noted that in a fiercely competitive environment, Shandong Province's motto evolved from original brand 'Mount Tai Shan, Spouting Spring, Saint Confucius' to 'Near Confucius, Sailing in Tsingtao'. In 2007, the Tourism Bureau of Shandong Province first launched the tourism extended brand 'Friendly Shandong'. From research in the Shandong Province, this paper adopts 'Mount Tai Shan, Spouting Spring, Saint Confucius (the Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty), Coastal Tourism Area' as the most representative of Shandong tourism.

### Data sources

The top three travel sites were used: [www.ctrip.com](http://www.ctrip.com) (ranked first), [www.mafengwo.cn](http://www.mafengwo.cn) (ranked second) and [www.qunar.com](http://www.qunar.com) (ranked third) (updated 4 March 2016 by Alexa) as sources of research data. Data collection took place from 23 April to 5 May 2016. Tourist site reviews, are constantly updated, so the timeliness and

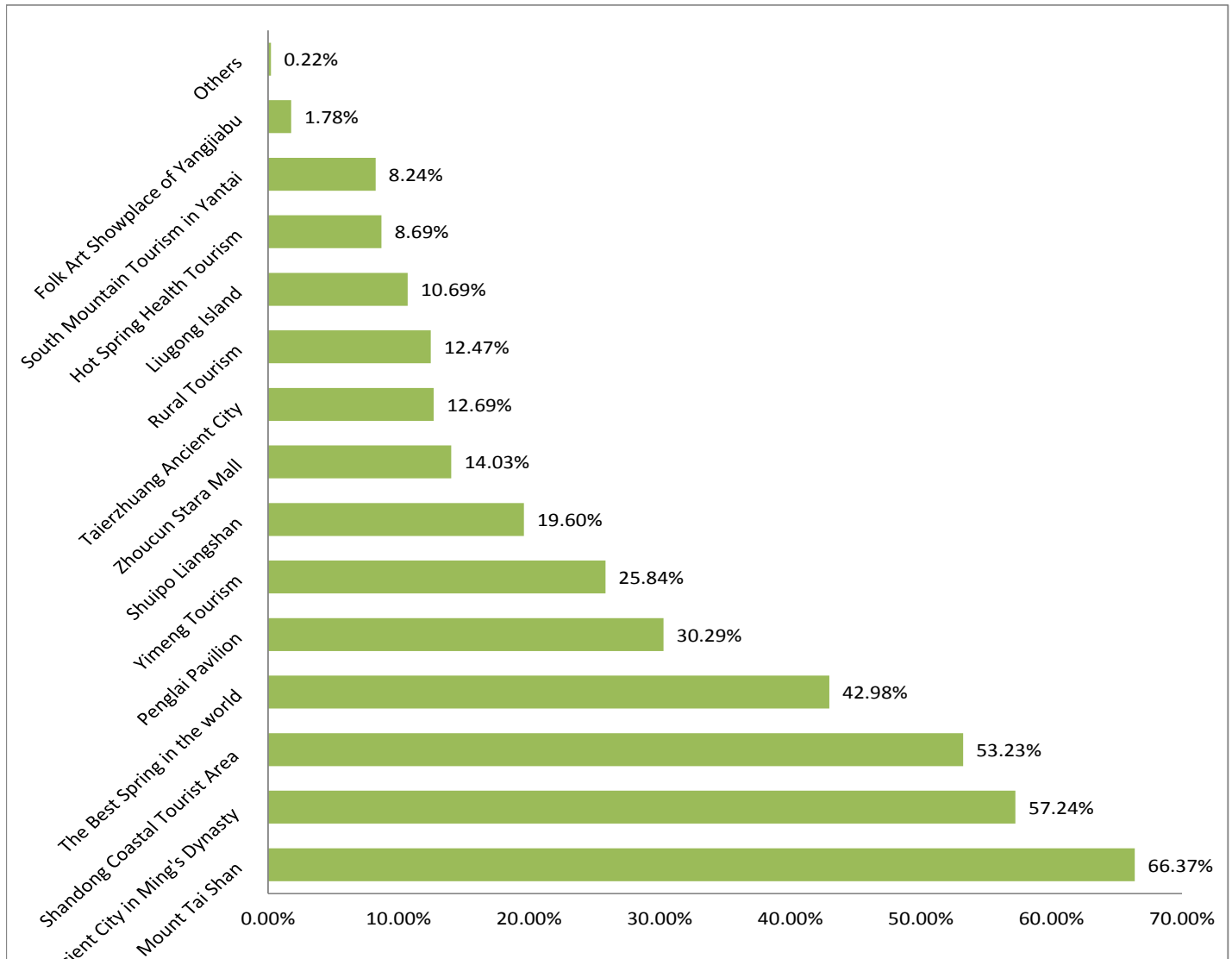


Figure 1. Survey results of Shandong's representative scenic points.

Table 2. Data about locations.

Cases	Mount Tai Shan	Ancient city in Ming's dynasty	Coastal tourism	The best spring in the world
Review(items)	1242	1243	1470	1265
Total (million words)	13.8	12.5	13.2	12.1

availability of data under web text mining software acquisition rules were considered (Zhong, 2015). Customer reviews were collected for a shorter period: 1 May to 5 May 2016. To improve data quality, the following filters were implemented: read the reviews, delete reviews of less than 30 words, remove invalid content (advertising, poetry, redundancies, etc.) and correct language that might be user-generated. For instance, 'mommy' is amended to 'mom'. After detailed reading and screening, ultimately, 6,393 effective reviews were collected with a total of 521,000 words. The distribution of case-specific data is shown in Table 2.

## RESULTS

### Tourists' perceptions of the shandong tourism brand personality

Content mining software was used to obtain high-frequency vocabulary. Each feature subset of the top 1,200 high-frequency words and then eliminate words

that either had nothing to do with this study or semantic fuzzy words, only retain words with semantic features. Summing up similar adjectives, 52 high-frequency words describing the resort's 'personality' were obtained, such as interesting, fun, pleasing, beautiful, pretty, elegant and graceful, among others. In addition, we deleted feature words according to their total frequency. The author believes that the total frequency characteristic vocabulary is as a result of lack of representation. Hence, with a total frequency of  $\geq 10$  for the tipping point, three characteristic words with a frequency of less than 10 (such as honest, charming and illusory) were removed, we finally got 30 high-frequency words regarding Shandong's tourism brand perception and the personality characteristics of Shandong's tourists (Table 3). Eleven high-frequency words were shared by the four case studies, with nine feature words for three tourist areas and six feature words for two tourist areas. The result shows that with the same cultural background, tourist personality perceptions for different types of tourism destinations are distinctive. However, their personality perceptions have something in common. Tourism resource characteristics, tourist culture background and experience account for these differences. We referred to the research achievements of destination brand personality dimension scales and conducted group discussions, consulted experts and referenced lexical properties and interpretations in a modern Chinese dictionary. Finally, the high-frequency feature words were divided into five dimensions, and these words are related to tourists' perspective regarding Shandong Tourism Brand Personality. The frequency of the feature words were used to determine the weight of each dimension (Table 4).

The research results were compared with an internationally recognized brand personality scale and a local brand personality dimension scale. The five dimensions of the Aaker Brand Personality Scale (15 aspects and 42 indicators) are 'Sincere', 'Stimulation', 'Ability', 'Refinement' and 'Straightforward'. In the index, 'Captivating' and 'Friendly' are the same as the Shandong Tourism Brand Personality. The local brand personality scale includes five dimensions: 'Benevolence', 'Wisdom', 'Courage', 'Joy' and 'Elegant' (14 aspects and 42 indicators); these are the same as 'Friendly', 'Cultural', 'Captivating', 'August', 'Modern', 'Graceful' and 'Beautiful' for the Shandong Tourism Brand Personality. The Aaker Brand Personality Scale and local brand dimension scale regard general consumer goods (cars, toothpaste, etc.) as tested brands. Two indicators of the Shandong Tourism Brand Personality dimension scale and the Aaker Brand Personality Scale are the same. The Shandong Tourism Brand Personality dimension scale is also the same as the local scale for seven indicators. While the expression of general consumer personality indicators focuses on practical functions, the destination brand personality dimensions scale is biased towards the expression of

mental perception. It relates to the particularity of tourism consumption (symbolic consumption), and the result confirmed that the existing general consumer goods brand personality scale does not apply to tourism destination brand personality research (Hosany, 2006). Therefore, research on tourism destination brand personality should be based on an analysis of regional differences developed based on personality scales, rather than on an existing general consumer goods brand personality dimension scale.

This paper compares its research results with the existing tourist destination brand personality research, using the following content as representative. Ekinci et al. (2007) pointed out that brand personality in the Turkish Mediterranean region is sincere, stimulation and friendly. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) pointed out that the tourism brand personality in the Las Vegas regional area is energy, education, ability, modern and sincere. In local research, Mu and Li (2014) pointed out that Chongqing city's tourism brand personality is characterized by passion, wisdom, brave, trust and openness. Shandong's tourism brand personality dimensions focus on traditional and regional features (culture, leisure, Confucian, old Jinan features and friendly). Differences in cross-cultural backgrounds and the characteristics of regional tourism resources give rise to these distinctive descriptors. This research on tourism destination brand personality considered regional differences and the characteristics of tourism resources.

### **Correspondence analysis of Shandong tourism brand personality perception**

Although tourists' perceptions of Shandong's tourism brand personality have some commonalities, the differences are more apparent. To demonstrate this, a cross-contingency table about high-frequency words used in tourists' perceptions was prepared. SPSS was used for the corresponding analysis. This resulted in three charts that reflect the similarities and differences of visitors' perceptions.

Chi-square observations for the cross-contingency table's chi-square test were 2,773.783, and the corresponding p values for  $p = 0.000a < 0.05$ . Therefore, the sample and the variables of the case study are related, which explains why the rate of the first dimension is 58.4%, more than half of the resolution of the original variable degree. The accumulation of the second dimension explanation rate was 83.3%. These two dimensions explain the variables of the four case studies (Table 5) as well as the corresponding analysis diagram. Figure 2 explains the relationship between the sample and the variables.

The two-dimensional diagram is divided into four quadrants, which is distributed close to the origin (0, 0). It shows that tourists' perceptions are similar when the

**Table 3.** High-frequency feature words in tourists' perceptions of the Shandong tourism brand.

S/N	Brand personality	Mount Tai Shan	Ancient city in Ming's dynasty	Coastal tourism area	The best spring in the world	Total
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	
1	Cultural	160(0.226)	296(0.339)	0(0.000)	73(0.080)	529
2	Beautiful	98(0.138)	20(0.023)	173(0.251)	207(0.226)	498
3	Grand	151(0.213)	52(0.060)	12(0.017)	27(0.029)	242
4	Historical	9(0.013)	177(0.203)	0(0.000)	50(0.055)	236
5	Regretful	75(0.106)	21(0.024)	0(0.000)	72(0.079)	168
6	Comfortable	18(0.025)	0(0.000)	126(0.182)	0(0.000)	144
7	Silent	16(0.023)	41(0.046)	43(0.062)	39(0.043)	139
8	Natural	53(0.074)	11(0.013)	25(0.036)	37(0.040)	126
9	Commercialized	24(0.033)	27(0.030)	38(0.055)	17(0.018)	106
10	Confucian	0(0.000)	104(0.118)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	104
11	Leisure	6(0.008)	0(0.000)	39(0.056)	58(0.063)	103
12	Agreeable	2(0.003)	6(0.007)	32(0.046)	50(0.054)	90
13	Enjoyable	16(0.022)	10(0.011)	44(0.064)	17(0.018)	87
14	Old Jinan Feature	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	74(0.081)	74
15	Deserve Reputation	9(0.013)	4(0.005)	10(0.014)	43(0.047)	66
16	Interesting	5(0.007)	24(0.026)	17(0.025)	20(0.022)	66
17	Fresh	6(0.008)	8(0.009)	32(0.046)	19(0.021)	65
18	Sunshine	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	44(0.065)	9(0.009)	53
19	Enthusiastic	12(0.016)	12(0.013)	18(0.026)	8(0.008)	52
20	Delightful	3(0.004)	0(0.000)	20(0.029)	29(0.032)	52
21	Lingering Charm	4(0.005)	9(0.010)	0(0.000)	27(0.029)	40
22	Graceful	0(0.000)	5(0.006)	0(0.000)	32(0.035)	37
23	August	0(0.000)	32(0.036)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	32
24	Clever	19(0.027)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	4(0.004)	23
25	Satisfactory	7(0.010)	0(0.000)	11(0.016)	0(0.000)	18
26	Friendly	4(0.005)	4(0.005)	0(0.000)	2(0.002)	10
27	Captivating	3(0.004)	4(0.005)	0(0.000)	3(0.003)	10
28	Religious	10(0.014)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	0(0.000)	10
29	Modern	2(0.003)	4(0.005)	2(0.003)	2(0.002)	10
30	Particular	0(0.000)	5(0.006)	5(0.007)	0(0.000)	10
	Total	708,1	874,1	691,1	919,1	3192

Data sources: the statistical results of tourist site reviews which include [www.ctrip.com](http://www.ctrip.com), [www.mafengwo.cn](http://www.mafengwo.cn) and [www.qunar.com](http://www.qunar.com) during from 23 April to 5 May 2016.

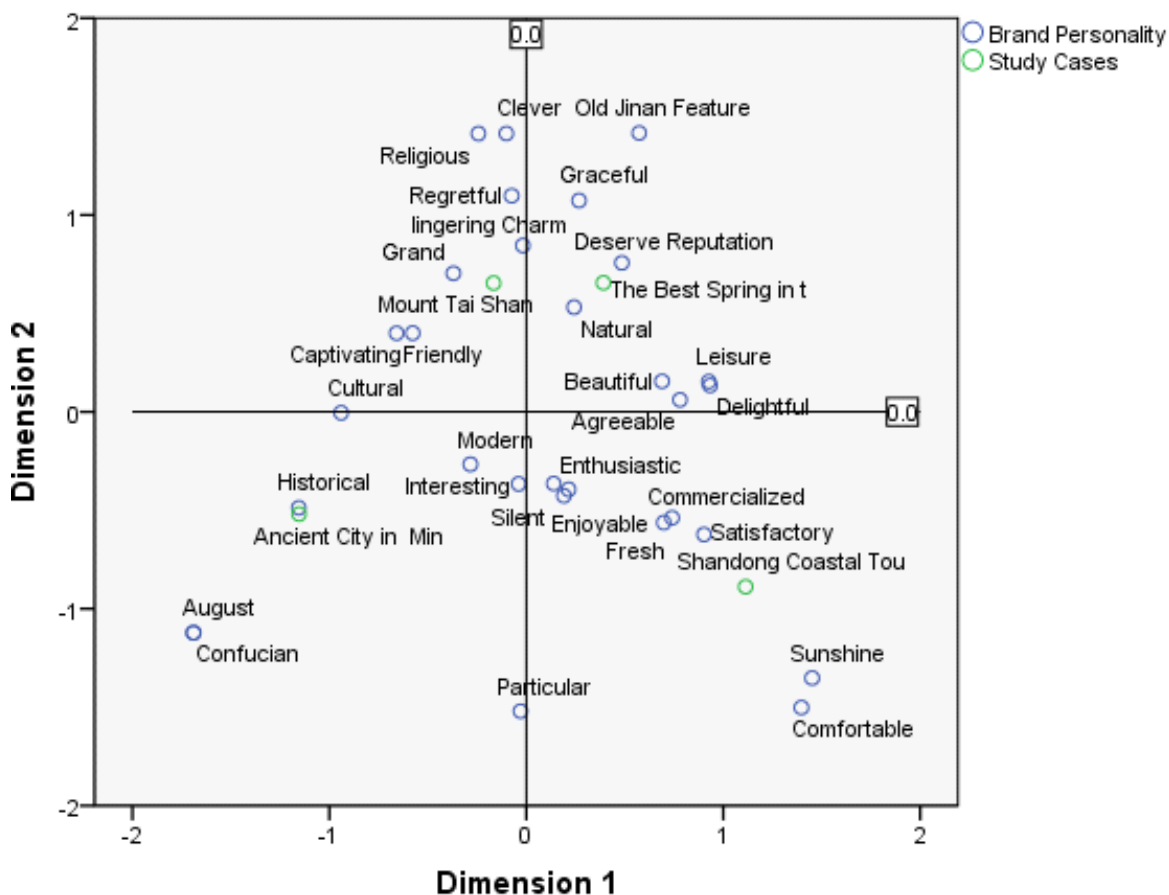
distance is far, and differences can be observed. The four cases are scattered in different quadrants, which means that tourists' perceptions of different tourist areas have obvious distinctions. According to the appearance of high-frequency words and the difference in quadrants, perceptions of the Shandong Tourism Brand Personality can be classified into the following three categories. First is the leisure destination brand personality perception of the Shandong Coastal Tourist Area and The Best Spring in the World (the high-frequency vocabulary is Graceful, Leisure, Natural, Enjoyable and Comfortable). The next one is the cultural destination brand personality perception of the Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty, where the vocabulary is Historical, Cultural and Confucian. The last one is the sightseeing-oriented destination brand

personality perception of the Mount Tai Shan tourist area, where the vocabulary is Grand, Captivating and Clever.

Table 5 shows that the interpretation ratios of the Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty and the Shandong Coastal Tourist Area are the highest in the sample with 97.9 and 98.3%. This demonstrates the powerful tourist attraction of Confucian culture, the Gold Coast in Shandong and Rufenghaiyun. However, according to Figure 1, Mount Tai Shan, the core tourist area in Shandong, has an interpretation ratio of 31.5%. Tourists visiting Mount Tai Shan, which is the most representative tourist area in Shandong tourism (66.37%), have no obvious perception of this site's natural and cultural heritage. In future brand marketing of Mount Tai Shan, marketers should consider resource characteristics and

**Table 4.** Brand personality dimension scales of shandong’s tourism perception.

S/N	Brand personality dimensions	Indexes	Weights (%)
1	Mental enjoyment	Cultural, beautiful, grand, historical, regretful, comfortable, enjoyable, sunshine, august	62.0
2	Leisure	Silent, natural, leisure, agreeable, interesting, fresh, delightful	20.0
3	Shandong local feature	Confucian, old Jinan feature, particular, clever, religious	7.2
4	Friendly	Commercialized, enthusiastic, satisfactory, friendly, modern	6.1
5	Captivating	Deserve reputation, lingering charm, graceful, captivating	4.7



**Figure 2.** Analysis of the study cases.

tourists’ perceptions, which will strengthen Mount Tai Shan’s brand personality.

**Analysis of Shandong tourism’s projected brand personality**

To analyse the project brand personality of Shandong tourism marketing organizations, the author uses related advertisements and Shandong tourism promotional videos available at the area’s official website on the Shandong Tourism Government Network

(<http://www.sdta.gov.cn/>) and the Friendly Shandong Network’s Shandong Tourist Information Network (<http://www.sdta.cn/>), where one can make a word document. After basic content filtering, six experts on tourism marketing, tourism planning and management and regional economic geography were invited; also invited were nine graduate students with a tourism-related major. The study’s background was first explained to them, imagining the Shandong tourism brand as ‘people’ with characteristic features. Then, they analyzed the textual information. After scoring the results four times, it was shown that their opinions were the

**Table 5.** Dimensions' interpretation ratios for the study cases.

Study case	Mass	Score in dimension			Inertia	Contribution				
		1	2	Of point to inertia of dimension		Of point to inertia of dimension		Total		
						1	2			
Mount Tai Shan	0.223	-0.166	0.153	0.009	0.009	0.206	0.027	0.287	0.315	
Ancient City in Ming's Dynasty	0.274	-0.154	-0.519	0.289	0.534	0.159	0.861	0.118	0.979	
Coastal Tourism	0.216	10.113	-0.888	0.266	0.392	0.368	0.687	0.296	0.983	
The Best Spring in the World	0.287	0.391	0.655	0.159	0.064	0.267	0.190	0.361	0.550	
Active total	1.000			0.867	1.000	1.000				

<sup>a</sup>Symmetrical normalization.

**Table 6.** Projected and perceived brand personalities: A comparison in Shandong tourism.

Brand characteristic	personality	Projected personality (order by the importance degree)	Weight in the perceived brand personality (%)
Cultural		1	16.6
Beautiful		2	15.6
Leisure		3	3.2
Enthusiastic and friendly		4	1.9
Shandong local feature		5	7.2

same. The Shandong Tourism Project Brand Personalities they obtained were Cultural, Beautiful, Leisure, Friendly and Shandong Features (ranked according to degree of importance). The article contrast analysis about it and Shandong Tourism Brand Personality of tourists' perception (Table 6).

Despite the similarity in the current marketing organization's projection of brand personality and tourists' perceptions of personality, a gap exists between each dimension. Visitors with a 'Friendly' perception only accounted for 1.9% of the total because of overcharging in the tourism industry and lack of standardization in tourism management services. Tourists' perception of 'Leisure' is 3.2%, which shows that tourists' perception is delayed.

In recent years, Shandong tourism has tried to build coastal leisure vacation destinations but without success. A wide gap exists between it and Shandong's core tourism brand: 'Friendly Shandong'. This is the actual basis for judging Shandong's tourism brand: whether it can meet the demands of the current market or if it needs to adjust its marketing strategy.

## DISCUSSION

This paper explores differences in the Shandong tourism brand personality versus a tourism destination's projected brand personality and perception. The results have a practical significance for Shandong, specifically in terms

of building up tourism in the province and shaping the regional tourism brand. The conclusions prove that tourism destination brands have a personality feature, the same as general consumer products. However, a general consumer brand personality dimension scale does not apply to destination brand research. The measurement of tourism brand personality dimensions should consider regional culture and resource advantages. As an exploratory research, this paper selected the landscape saint and the Gold Coast as case studies. However, given Shandong's abundant tourism resources, this research still has some limitations. In addition, this paper adopts content analysis and has quantitatively analyzed visitors' high-frequency word choices, but failed to effectively utilize uploaded pictures of visitors comment. The utilization rate of the data should be improved in later research and conduct a study using multivariate data.

## Conclusion

The study found conclusive methods to bring about the reshaping of Shandong's Tourism Brand Personality. Shandong's Tourism Project Brand Personality is the same type as tourists' perceptions (tourists' identity). Attention should be paid to the dislocation of tourists' perceptions. Shandong's tourism image evolved from 'Mount Tai Shan, Spouting Spring, Saint Confucius, Near Confucius, Sailing in Tsingtao' to 'Friendly Shandong'. The attraction of cultural tourism, leisure vacation travel



and Local Characteristics, tourists' perception for Shandong tourist reception capacity and coastal leisure environment is misplaced. Also, a stable brand personality, when formed, will have a long span and will affect travel decisions. The buyer pays attention to the brand that is most similar to his own personality, so when visitors resonate with a brand personality, it can promote tourism decision-making behavior. Equally important, Seraphin et al. (2016) explained that in their branding strategy, destinations should adopt an ambidextrous approach by combining elements based on the identity and history (past) of the destination and elements that are more marketing and aesthetically based (future). Therefore, destination management cannot just consider marketing without taking into account tourists' perceptions in their travel decisions because these perceptions affect travel decisions. Third, tourism's destination brand personality and tourists' perception brand personality, as stated earlier, are based on the theoretical background of 'projection image' and 'perceived image'. Project brand personality is based on tourism's market supply. Tourism marketing organizations express personality characteristics, such as quality commitment and a guarantee of the destination. Perceived brand personality is based on tourism's market demand, either on tourists' experiences or on information acquired from actual travel. Therefore, shaping a destination brand personality should incorporate brand image transmission and tourists' perceptions.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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