Branding and website communication: a long road ahead

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Destination managers have accepted and are committed to the development of destination brands; however, is this branding effort reflected in their website communication?

Branding and Website Communication

- Destination management from the standpoint of branding has become a broadly accepted method, since Simon Anholt 1997.

- Branding not only as the development of an explicit logo but also as the construction of a symbolic background: implicit values, ideas and personality (AMA, 2013).

- Solid and coherent brand personalities has a major bearing on a potential tourist's intent to travel (Stokburger-Sauer, 2011).

- Websites have become the main proxy for each destination information (Luna-Nevarez & Hyman, 2012).

CODETUR Assessment Methodology

A content analysis tool developed specifically for assessing tourism websites.

(a) Home page	(e) Web positioning	(i) Discourse analysis
(b) Content amount and quality	(f) Marketing	(j) Interactivity
(c) Information architecture	(g) Languages	(k) Social web
(d) Usability and accessibility	**(h) Branding**	(l) Mobile communication

123 indicators total.

*Weighting system to get a score from 0 to 1 - **WQI**
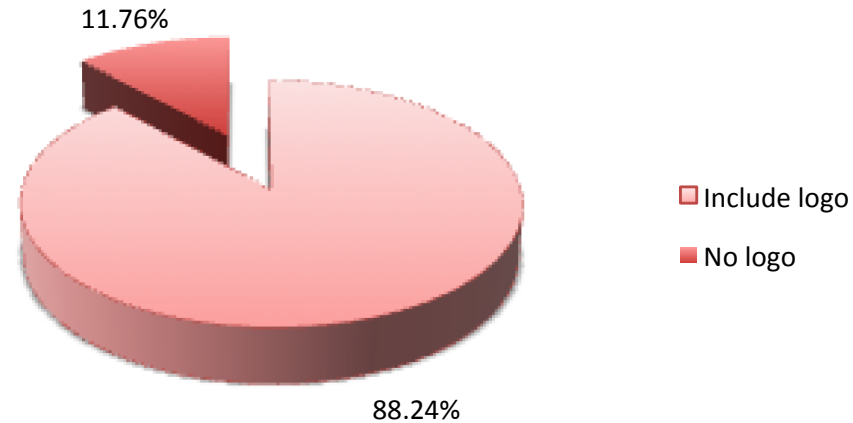
CODETUR Assessment Methodology

(h) Branding - 13 indicators.

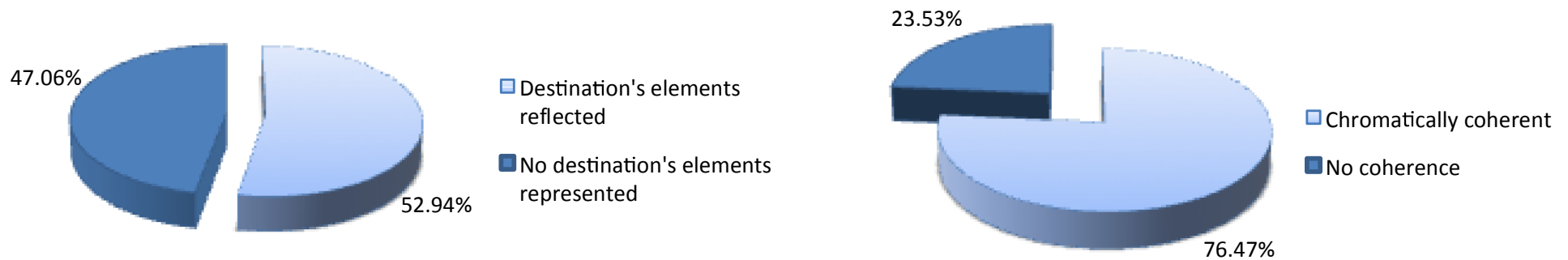|	Branding indicators	
H1	Slogan appears on homepage	Home
H2	Presence of logo	Home+2+2
H3	Logo includes a short description and graphical applications	Search
H4	The logo incorporates a functional/emotional aspect of the destination	Home
H5	The main colors used on the web page match those of the logo	Home
H6	There is a video supporting the creation of a functional brand identity	Home
H7	There is a video supporting the creation of an emotional brand identity	Home
H8	A photograph of the destination supports the creation of a functional brand identity	Home
H9	A photograph of the destination supports the creation of an emotional brand identity	Home
H10	The images (graphic images/photos/videos) are distinctive to the destination	Home
H11	Stories, tales and myths are associated with or telling about the brand	Home+2
H12	There is a brief description of the destination brand	Search
H13	The main values or characteristics defining the brand's character are clear	Home+2

*An analysis comprised by a total of **17 destination websites**

Specific results

Importance of the logo

11.76%

88.24%

- ☐ Include logo
- ■ No logo

* Just a 35.29% of the sample include a supplementary slogan

47.06%

52.94%

- ☐ Destination's elements reflected
- ■ No destination's elements represented

23.53%

76.47%

- ☐ Chromatically coherent
- ■ No coherence

Specific results

Symbolic background

How discourse contributes to the communication of brand personalities?
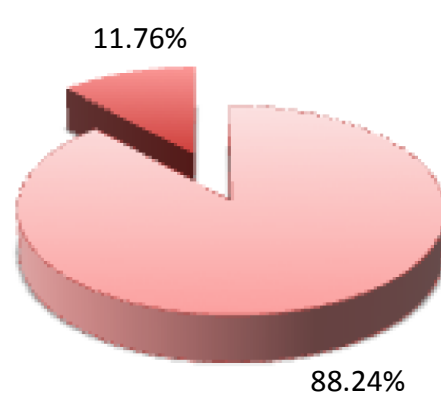
Images

11.76%

88.24%

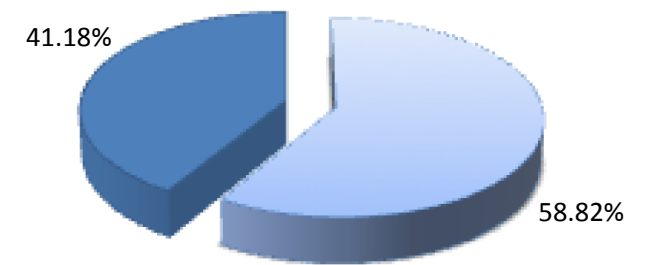□ Functional brand identity

■ No meaningfull images

47.06%

52.94%

□ Emotional brand identity

■ No meaningfull images
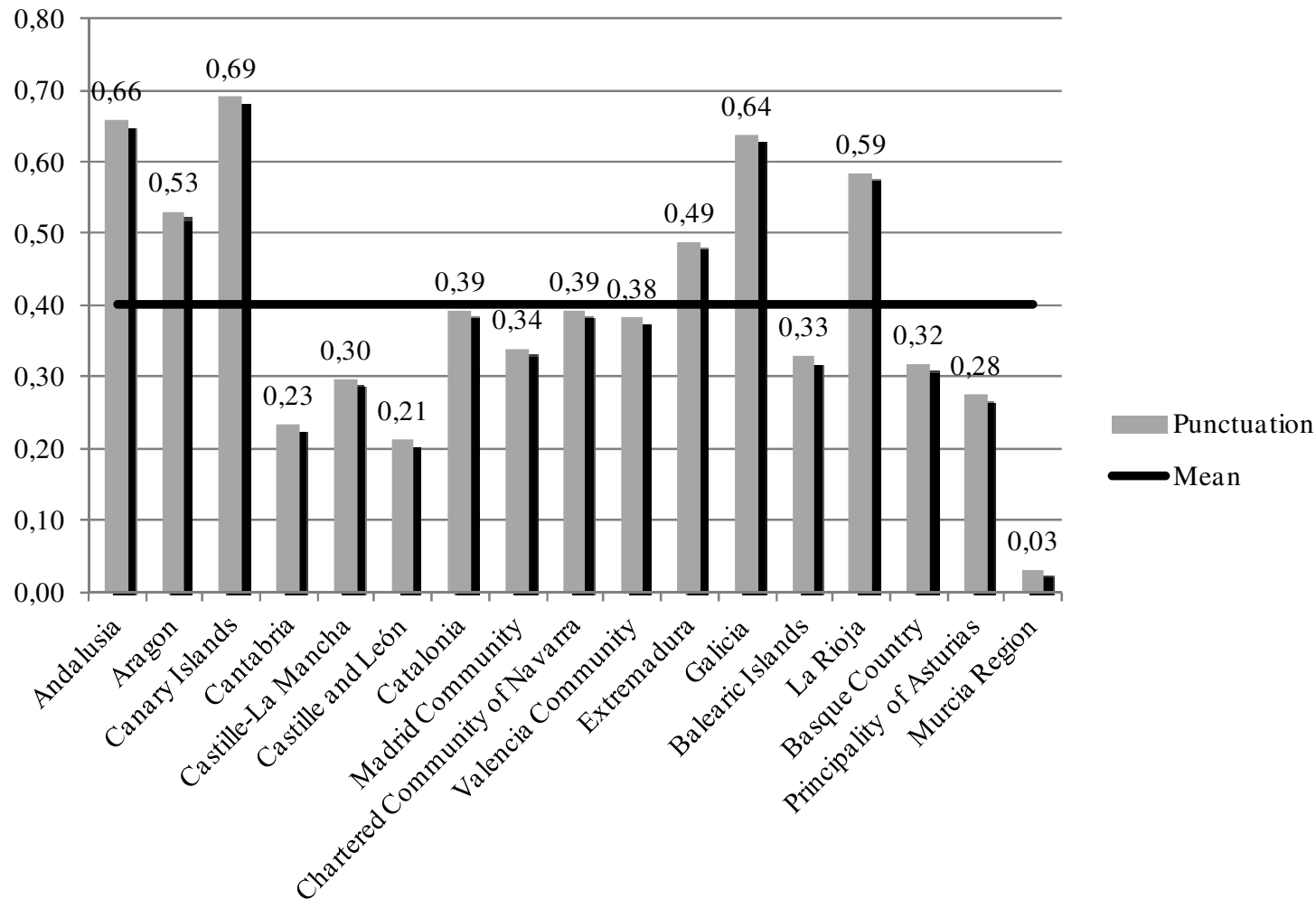
Written discourse

41.18%

58.82%

□ Brand identity

■ No values or traits of personality

✚

* 41.18 % of the sample also showed some stories, myths or legends

Global results

Branding, global scores.

Mean: 0.4
Max: 0.69
Min: 0.03

Limitations

- Fast changing websites make analyses more difficult

- Communication strategies are not considered in the assessment system.

Main conclusion

Branding is an important aspect in the destination promotion but many of the remaining website opportunities are still overlook when it comes to brand identity communication

References

American Marketing Association (2013). Branding. AMA Dictionary. Retrieved December 27, 2013, from http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx.

Fernández-Cavia, J., Rovira, C., Díaz-Luque, P. & Cavaller, V. (2014). Web Quality Index (WQI) for official tourist destination websites. Proposal for an assessment system. In: Tourism Management Perspectives, Vol. 9 (1), pp. 5-13.

Luna-Nevarez, C. & Hyman, M. (2012). Common practices in destination website design. In: Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Vol. 1 (1-2), pp. 94-106.

Stokburger-Sauer, N.E. (2011). The relevance of visitors' nation brand embeddedness and personality congruence for nation brand identification, visit intentions and advocacy. In: Tourism Management, Vol. 32 (1), pp. 1282-1289.

Assessment methodology: www.marcasturisticas.org