

# Cultural Minds and the Perception of Tourism Slogans: the Case of Croatian Slogans on the British Market

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UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**Cultural minds and the perception of tourism slogans:  
The case of Croatian slogans on the British market**

Supervisor: Dr. Marija Brala Vukanović

Student: Željka Despot

Rijeka, January 2015

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Written and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. degree in English  
language and literature and philosophy

Supervisor: Dr. Marija Brala Vukanović

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## **ABSTRACT**

Albeit there being a growing need for surveys on the development of brand identity of countries who want to take a significant place on the world map of tourism destinations, there seem to be very few surveys on the Croatian tourism brand. Croatia aims towards an economic development with the help of tourism growth, and in order to achieve this it has to develop a unique brand as a tourist destination. This is even more important when it comes to specific markets such as the United Kingdom, a market examined in this work. British travellers have been showing an increased interest in Croatia as a new holiday destination. However, as this thesis suggests, Croatia's branding does not incorporate these travellers' needs and preferences. Tourism slogans are, indeed, a powerful branding tool. The aim of the survey presented in this master thesis is to show that official slogans of the Croatian National Tourism Board do not take the British culturally based holiday preferences into consideration, in order to successfully attract them to visit the country. The survey was conducted in the form of questionnaires distributed to a sample of 81 British holidaymakers who have stayed in hotels in the Croatian region of Istria in 2014. The results provided valuable data regarding their general holiday preferences, the most common associations about Croatia, the general perception of Croatia as a country as well as the perception of the Croatian tourism slogans. The data also enabled suggestions for the successful future development of the Croatian tourism slogans for the British market, with the help of theoretical findings from the fields of marketing and psycholinguistics.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising today is an increasingly multidisciplinary endeavour and the work presented below aims at showing how psycholinguistic insights can fruitfully inform branding, for example in tourism slogans. In fact, the results of the survey presented in this thesis, indicate that Croatian tourism slogans are not successful when it comes to advertising Croatia as a tourist destination on the British market, as they do not account for the cultural mindset of British travellers. In other words, the main hypothesis of my research is, indeed, that since the use of language when forming a Croatian tourism slogan does not account for the culturally bound perception and desires of British travellers, these slogans simply fail to attract them to visit Croatia, or in the best of cases, fall short of their desired marketing goal.

The survey includes an analysis of the nine tourism slogans that the Croatian National Tourist Board has used in the last 10 years, and presents the evaluation of the slogans by 81 British citizens who have arrived to Croatia for their holiday in August and September 2014. These slogans were not designed for specific markets, but as general tourism slogans of the Croatian National Tourism Board for the international market, considering that they were formed in the English language. Therefore, the slogans were aimed at Western European countries such as the United Kingdom but also other countries such as Germany, Italy, France, as well as the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The use of language in the slogans was therefore not culture-specific and the same slogans were used for various countries and consequently various cultures. They were either presented in the English language or simply translated into a different language, but kept the same semantic and stylistic structure.

In the field of tourism advertising, there has been a rising awareness of the importance of quality destination marketing and branding. Destination marketing stands for the process of creating positive images to promote tourist destinations for social and economic benefits (Pizam, 2012 : 9), while the meaning of destination branding is creating a unique image of the attributes and benefits a destination has to offer in the mind of a consumer, in this case a holidaymaker (Pike, Bianchi, 2013 : 2). Slogans are branding tools. It is not possible to achieve successful destination marketing and branding without the proper use of language in the advertising campaigns, in other words, in the proper choice of words and phrases in slogans which will have a significant effect on potential customers. In order to produce

successful and attractive slogans, it is essential to account for the culturally bound perception and preferences of holidaymakers. In the field of tourism, which is a growing economy branch worldwide, including Croatia, the use of quality advertising is essential if a tourist destination wants to become more competitive and generate more revenue. This is even more important when a destination wants to attract travellers from specific markets. This is the case with Croatia and the United Kingdom, as Croatia has in recent years become an interesting new destination for British travellers. Although in the period prior to the 1990s, there was a large number of British travellers holidaying in Croatia, due to the war years in Croatia this number is currently much lower than in the past, however it is slowly picking up as the interest in Croatia as a destination among British travellers is increasing. This is the main reason why I wanted to conduct a survey on the perception of the Croatian tourism slogans among British travellers, and try to show that without the adequate use of language which accounts for their cultural mindset, the Croatian tourism slogans will not have the desired effect on British tourists.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I present a theoretical background for the research conducted, from the field of psycholinguistics, as well as tourism marketing with emphasis on the destination marketing and branding. My main goal here is to explain the relations between tourism advertising, culture and language. The second chapter explains the methodology of the research. I conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire, which was distributed to 81 British guests in Istria, Croatia, by representatives of a large British tour operator, Thomson Holidays, part of the TUI Travel plc. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts. In the first part, participants were asked about their general preferences when it comes to their holidays, in order to obtain a better insight into their cultural mindset as travellers and holidaymakers. The second part deals with the participants' perception of Croatia both as a country and as a tourist destination, enabling me to use these findings as a basis for measuring how close or far away these Croatian tourism slogans were from the actual perception of Croatia in the minds of British travellers. The third part of the questionnaire is dedicated to the participants' evaluation of the actual slogans used in various advertising campaigns by the Croatian National Tourist Board. The main findings of the survey as well as their evaluation are presented in the fourth and the fifth chapter of the thesis. The results suggest that, indeed, the Croatian tourism slogans are not in line with the British cultural mindset and that by taking this factor into consideration, they could be much more successful. By focusing on how to use the language properly in accordance with the culturally bound travellers'

preferences, Croatia may develop a more successful destination brand, and attract more travellers from an interesting market such as the United Kingdom.



## 2. REVIEW

In this chapter I try to give a theoretical background to the survey conducted. First of all, I attempt to explain the meaning of marketing as well as its types such as tourism marketing and destination marketing. The link between marketing in general, tourism marketing and destination marketing is an important base for the understanding of the meaning of branding and its role. Branding is the central point of theoretical research in this thesis, as through branding and its concepts I try to explain the role of psycholinguistics and how it leads toward a more successful branding. In other words, we shall try to see how the understanding of psycholinguistics leads to a better understanding of the use of language in the branding of Croatia as a tourist destination. Furthermore, psycholinguistics can offer a valuable insight into culturally bound travellers' perceptions. Finally, I include an overview of some interesting surveys conducted on British holidaymakers and their culturally bound travel preferences, so that they can serve as a base for comparison with my own survey presented in this thesis.

The American Marketing Association's definition of marketing from 2004 is that marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Gundlach, 2007: 244). In 2008, the definition was slightly revised and broadened, in a sense that the value and offerings which are the object of marketing have value for customers, clients, partners and a society at large (Kotler, 2011:133). The term marketing and advertising are often mixed when it comes to their meaning. The main difference is that marketing is a broad process, while advertising is a single component of the marketing process (Brassington, Pettitt, 2006: 20). It is the part that involves getting the word out concerning a product or services that are offered (Brassington, Pettitt, 2006:20). For example, it can include placements of advertisements in newspapers, but also on billboards, television, radio, and the Internet (Brassington, Pettitt, 2006: 20).

Marketing as such has different types, one of which is a tourism marketing (Middleton, Clarke, 2012: 3). Destination marketing aims at creating positive images to promote tourist destinations for social and economic benefits (Pizam, 2012: 9). There are different definitions of a tourist destination, and although none of them is widely accepted, one which for the purpose of this work gives a broad view is the one by Leiper. In Leiper's model from 1979, a

destination is a place the consumers travel to temporarily, from the region they reside in, creating a tourism flow (demand) in both time and space (Pike, Page, 2014: 6). The three main aims of destination marketing are: to increase the awareness of an destination, to educate the market about the attributes and benefits a destination has to offer, and to encourage travellers to re (visit) a destination (Pike & Bianchi, 2013:2). All three aims, if achieved, ideally strengthen the brand identity (Pike, Bianchi, 2013:3). The brand identity represents the image that a destination aspires to in the marketplace (Pike, Bianchi, 2013: 3) as shown in Chart 1. The brand image, on the other hand, presents the actual perceptions of the destination held by consumers, in this case, holidaymakers. Pike and Bianchi (2013) argue that in order to achieve the congruence between brand identity and the brand image it is important to use a brand positioning. As shown in Chart 1, brand positioning stands for a set of activities with the aim to construct and spread a recognizable destination name and slogans which together or separately build a link between a brand identity and a brand image.

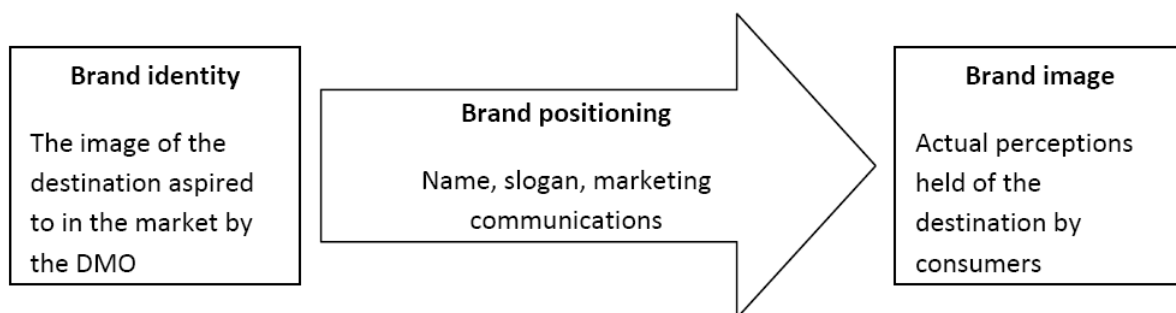


Chart 1. Source: Pike, S., Bianchi, C. (2013). Destination branding performance measurement: A non-technical discussion for practitioners. *Tourism Tribune*. 28 (1): 3

According to Pike and Bianchi (2013: 3), the so-called Decision Set Theory suggests that of all the brands available, the consumer will only actively consider between two and six brands in the decision making process. In other words, they choose between two plus or minus maximally other four tourist destinations when it comes to holiday. According to the authors, in that process of selection, the consumer will rely on brand associations, which represent cognitive perceptions. They also claim that a brand image as such is nothing else but a set of consumer's cognitive perceptions. J. Anderson (1983) claimed that an image can be anything that is linked to a brand in a memory of a traveller. He further explains that a

memory consists of nodes and links, while a node stands for the information about a concept. When a particular node concept is recalled, the strength of associations determines which other nodes will be activated in one's memory (Pike & Bianchi, 2013: 3). A destination or a brand image can therefore be conceptualized as a set of nodes to which a number of other attributes are linked in the travellers' minds (Pike & Bianchi, 2013: 4).

It is well known that destinations are nowadays using various branding techniques in order to develop unique positions in a competitive international environment (Soroka, 2011: 8). It may be interesting to note that the first journal article covering the topic of destination branding ever published actually focused on the case of Croatia and the appropriateness of its destination image (Soroka, 2011: 6). The second article of this kind was focused on Wales and was published by Morgan and Pritchard in 1998 under the name „Mood marketing – the new destination marketing strategy. A case study of Wales the brand“.

Everything that has been mentioned above is in the service of the concept of consumer-based *brand equity* (CBBE) commonly used as an indicator of brand performance, and consequently brand positioning (Pike, 2013: 5). It stands for the function of a hierarchy of brand salience, brand associations and brand loyalty (Pike, 2013: 5). Chart 2 presents the relationship between these concepts. They are closely related to the objectives of the destination marketing organisations as explained earlier in the text.

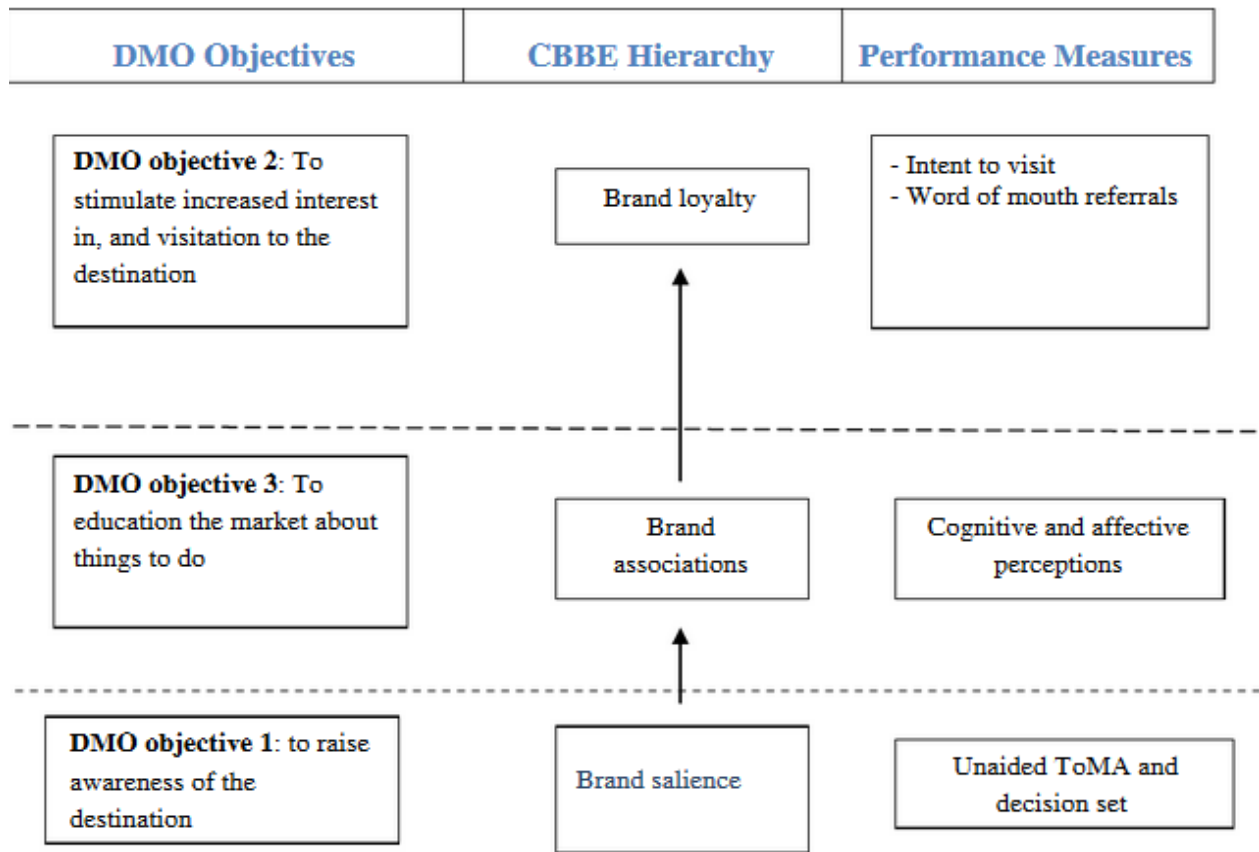


Chart 2. Source: Pike, S. (2013). Measuring destination brand equity between 2003 and 2012 using the consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) hierarchy. *In 8th Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure*, Istanbul.

Brand salience represents the strength of the destination's presence in the mind of a consumer (holidaymaker) when a given travel decision is being considered (Pike, 2013: 5). Salience is best operationalized through the unaided top of the mind awareness or the so-called ToMA (Pike, 2013: 5). However, it should be pointed out that the awareness of a destination is not such a strong indicator of a decision to visit. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how travellers select a destination in the set of two to six destinations what is the most common number in the decision making set (Pike, 2013: 6). It is also important to note that destinations which are not positioned in the consumer's decision set are therefore not salient and are actually at a competitive disadvantage (Pike, 2013: 6). Pike (2013:6) further explains that brand associations represent everything what is linked to a destination in the consumer's mind. Every individual makes a brand selection based on his or her own

preferences and desires, in other words, according to what is the most important and relevant to them. Pike (2013: 6) also explains that the travellers' determinacy in the choice of a tourist destination depends on the attitudes towards the features which are the most closely related to their preferences. The remaining features or attitudes, no matter how favourable, are not determinant (Pike, 2013:6). Finally, at the highest level of the hierarchy is the brand loyalty (Pike, 2013: 6). It is related to the second objective, as presented in Chart 2, and that one is to stimulate holidaymakers to visit or revisit a destination (Pike, 2013: 6).

In this work, I will focus on tourist destination slogans and their role within destination branding and destination marketing. It should be pointed out that although destination slogans are just a segment of the three destination concepts within destination branding<sup>1</sup>, they also play an important role in the general aim of destination branding to completely account for the visitors' preferences and habits, the competitive position of an destination among others as well as its distinctive identity (Soroka, 2011: 8).

Advertising slogans present a tool within brand positioning. For instance, Croatia as a tourist destination uses tourism slogans as a powerful tool with the aim to achieve a successful brand positioning on the international market. By definition, slogans stand for short, often memorable phrases used in advertising campaigns (Keller, 2002: 212). They are also described as simple and catchy phrases accompanying a logo or a brand that encapsulates a product's appeal or a mission of a firm and makes it more memorable (Keller, 2002: 212). Slogans are a key element of the brand's identity, and also contribute to a brand's equity (Kohli, Leuthessera, Surib, 2007: 417). Almost all brands today use slogans as they significantly help creating a brand differentiation in the consumers' minds (Kohli, Leuthessera, Surib, 2007: 419). A broader definition of slogans is that they stand for a short message, characterized by a poetic form, that has its meaning (information or promise and an encouragement to take action) which is most often implicit and uses largely emotional and paralinguistic means (Cwalina, Falkowski, Newman, 2011: 121). For instance, a tourism slogan "Green Mediterranean" is used for the Croatian region Istria (Berc Radišić, 2009: 43) and is aimed at conveying a message about the uniqueness of the green Istrian countryside despite the fact that it is a coastal Mediterranean area.

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<sup>1</sup> The three destination concepts within the destination branding are a brand slogan, a brand logo and a brand image (Soroka, 2011: 8)

Despite the recognized importance of slogans as a branding tool and their various definitions, there is little agreement as to what constitutes a successful slogan (Kohli, Leuthessera, Surib, 2007: 419). When it comes to slogans in the service of tourism destination branding, there is a wide gap in the available literature, which consequently could guide destination marketing organisations (DMOs) towards a more successful practice (Pike, 2004, 108).

According to Cook (2008: 13), the creative use of language in advertising actually makes advertising a very rich source for language and discourse analysis. The same is with tourism advertising and destination branding. The link between language used in the tourism advertising slogans and the desired effect on visitors is inevitable. Morgan and Pritchard (2000) pointed out that the battle for customers in the tourism industry will not be fought over the price but over the minds and hearts. Therefore, they claim that branding will be the key to the success.

How does psycholinguistics help to understand the notion of brand image? Which findings from this field can one use in order to actually understand the current destination marketing in Croatia? And finally, what can psycholinguistics say about the culturally bound perceptions and the cognitive images of travellers? Can it be used to improve the branding of Croatia via tourism slogans?

Psycholinguistics is the study of the cognitive processes that support the acquisition and the use of language (Harley, 2001:11). It is an interdisciplinary study, combining the findings from the fields of linguistics and psychology (Harley, 2001:12). During its development, especially in the early 1970s, it was largely absorbed by cognitive psychology (Harley, 2001:13). However, soon after, psycholinguistics was considered to belong to cognitive science which dealt with the study of the human mind, and it started to use the findings from the fields of philosophy, neuropsychology, sociology, and anthropology along with the linguistics and psychology (Harley, 2001:13). The scope of psycholinguistics is therefore very wide, from determining what language is, how we acquire it, how it is developed and used in different contexts. In other words, psycholinguistics aims at explaining the connection between language and the human mind. Modern psycholinguistics uses a number of approaches, including experiments, computer simulation, linguistic analysis and neuropsychology (Harley, 2001: 25).

There are different theories within the field of psycholinguistics, but the one which can help us to understand the notion of the brand image, and how is the language used in tourism slogans perceived in the mind of a consumer or a holidaymaker, is the spreading activation theory (also known as ACT theory). This theory was first presented by John Anderson in 1983. It represents the human knowledge as a network and explains memory processes with the help of that network (Anderson, 1983:1). Korchia (2004:2) describes Anderson's ACT theory as a complex, comprehensive model of memory. As it has already been stated in the text, in Anderson's view concepts stored in the long-term memory are called nodes (Korchia, 2004: 2). These concepts are interconnected by links, and the links are of different strength, depending on the proximity of the concepts to which they refer (Korchia, 2004: 2). In order to illustrate this, Korchia (2004: 2) gives an example of the „Barilla“ brand which is more closely linked to the concept of „pasta“ than to the concept of a „tomato sauce“ (Korchia, 2004: 2). The spreading activation process may result in a person hearing the stimulus word „Barilla“ thinking more readily of a „pasta“ than a „tomato sauce“ (Korchia, 2004: 2). The reason for this is that the link between „Barilla“ and „tomato sauce“ is below the activation threshold (Korchia, 2004: 2). The brand association concept is directly related to the ACT theory model, as a brand association is nothing else but a node linked to a particular brand (Korchia, 2004: 2). More importantly, these brand associations actually create the image of a brand in the consumers' mind (Korchia, 2004: 2). These findings are a valuable theoretical background to the analysis of the tourism slogans and their role in creating the recognizable destination brand.

There are also other researchers who have come to similar conclusions about the spreading activation process and the brand associations in the consumer's mind. Axelrod (1968), Haley and Case (1979) and Nedungadi and Hutchinson (1985) all demonstrated that the top of the mind awareness is strongly correlated with the brand choice (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 51). These findings suggest that memory plays an important role in both the evocation and the evaluation stages of the majority of consumers' decisions (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 51). A situation such as going to an early morning meeting may indirectly evoke Coke via a chain of associations. These associations are an early morning meeting, a need to stay awake and a caffeine, which consequently all lead to Coke (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 53). Frequent instantiations of this indirect link may make the brand, in this case the brand of Coke, more accessible in the cuing situation (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 53).

Everything mentioned above suggests that the attributes of a brand have been considered as a means of discriminating among alternatives (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 55). These so-called "determinant" attributes are defined as those attributes projected by the product's image which leads to the actual choice of that product by a consumer (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 55). For instance, certain attributes of Croatia as a brand, if they are adequately linked to the associations in a holidaymaker's mind, can be the determinant factor in the holidaymakers' choice of their holiday destination. In summary, attention needs to be directed to the associate-to-brand links, because the associates act as "cues" for retrieval of the brand in the purchase or the consumption situation. That is, a brand choice is modelled as a function of the brand(s) evoked by the specific associates (Holden, Lutz, 1992: 55).

Other findings from the field of psycholinguistics that are useful in the analysis of tourism slogans and their effect on the customers' perception of a tourist destination, are findings relative to the idea that words which occur frequently in a language are recognized and produced more quickly and accurately than words that occur less frequently in that language (Vitevitch, Donoso, 2012: 694). In other words, recent findings suggest that these and other word-related characteristics may also influence the processing of language-related information in the applied domains such as marketing and advertising (Vitevitch, Donoso, 2012: 694). It can be concluded that indeed there are a number of issues to consider both from the field of linguistics and psycholinguistics when it comes to designing brand slogans.

Finally, another area which is important to take into consideration when coining successful slogans, is the area of culture and its influence not only on language but also on the perceptions in the travellers' minds. Psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics offer valuable insights into how language is influenced by culture. Also, such an approach gives further insight into how the perceptions in the travellers' minds can be culturally based. Extensive cross-cultural consumer research suggests that the cultural differences account for the variation in the consumer reactions to several phenomena, including the perceptions of brands (Kastanakis, Voyer, 2014: 3). The culture of travellers plays a significant moderating role in their information-searching, decision-making and destination-selection behaviour, therefore experts in destination marketing should take into consideration the culture of the target group when they want to develop the most effective branding strategies (Wang, Pizam, 2011: 3). Most of all, the influence of culture is visible in the holidaymakers' preferences and their conceptions of a holiday destination. For instance, the same holiday destination will not be



perceived the same by a British and a German tourist nor will they have the same associations about that destination.

In one of the first surveys done on tourist destination branding, on the example of Croatia, Croatian authors Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, and Prebežac (1998: 110) wanted to investigate the appropriateness of the old and the new brand of Croatian tourism. They conducted a survey on both foreign tourists in Croatia and students of business economics in Croatia. The purpose of branding in international tourism is to identify the services belonging to a particular service provider's country and to enable a differentiation of its services from those of its competitors (Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 112). Of course, there are certain factors that determine why is it so difficult to evaluate the success of a tourist destination brand, such as the intangible results which are very difficult to measure, as well as the difficulty to measure the exact perception of a brand in the travellers' minds (Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 115). During the research, a competition for a new national tourism slogan was invited, while the old slogan „ A small country for a great holiday“ was used in the evaluation of the Croatian brand (Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 115). It is important to note that the participants also evaluated the official logos of Croatia however the focus will be on the evaluation of the respective slogan.

According to Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, and Prebežac (1998: 115), the elements by which the brand was evaluated were general assessment, likeability, clarity and the appropriateness of the brand expressed through the slogan and two respective logos (the first, old logo is so called „Rabuzian sun“ and originates from 1993, while the second, new one, is Boris Ljubičić's logo based on the Croatian coat of arms). There were Likert Scale questions as well as open-ended questions in which participants had to express their associations evoked by the slogan (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 115). The second group of participants comprising 308 students, were perceived as both the consumers of the brand as well as the future creators of Croatia's tourism (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 119). On the other hand, 123 tourists included in the survey were from Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany and Great Britain (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 119). When it comes to the assessed slogan „ A small country for a great holiday“, a total of 46, 40 % of the respondents found that this slogan was associated with Croatia's tourism (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 119). Furthermore, a total of 84, 68 % of the participants felt that the slogan was clear enough as a slogan for Croatia's tourism (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 124). When it comes to the logos, the new logo was

better ranked than the old one by tourists, while it was ranked less favourably than the old one according to the opinion of the students (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 125).

It can be concluded that the clarity of the slogan's association with Croatia's tourism is the most highly ranked feature of both logos and the slogan (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 125). The specific problem with this research is the unbalanced structure of the participants (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 126). The conclusion of the authors is that with relevant measures, the Croatian tourist destination branding could increase the level of safety and confidence of foreign travellers in Croatia as a tourist destination (Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 127). Also, they suggest that this can lead to the creation of loyal tourists, repeated consumption and better financial results.

Croatia is already being recognized for its tourism, sea and coast, gastronomy, its brand Vegeta, the town of Dubrovnik as well as preserved nature, cultural heritage and its healthy food (Perkov, 2005: 3). All of the mentioned can facilitate the creation of a strong brand and the image of a new, modern Croatia. The problem is in fact that Croatia does not know how to successfully promote them (Perkov, 2005: 3). According to Perkov (2005:3) “a brand in tourism has to be an ideal, essence or story”. The identity as such lies in the distinction from others (Perkov, 2005: 3). In other words, the identity is a unique set of associations that represent certain emotional and functional features of brands (Perkov, 2005: 3). It is not surprising therefore that the most dynamic field in marketing is branding, as it creates varieties that are relevant for the user, who will consequently accept them and reward the creators (Perkov, 2005: 3). Tourism marketing in general is in this sense very demanding as, along with the functional characteristics of products and services, it requires the addition of emotional features to create a distinctive brand (Perkov, 2005: 3).

A successful branding program lies in the principle of singularity. Namely, the goal is to create a perception of uniqueness in the minds of customers, so that they feel as if such product does not exist on the market (Perkov, 2005: 4). A brand must be more than a name, it must trigger words or associations (Perkov, 2005: 4). In other words, it has to create features and benefits (Perkov, 2005: 4). Perkov (2004) also gives examples of some of the famous successful slogans that account for such goal. For instance, „No Surprises“, a well-known slogan for the hotel chain „Holiday Inn“, then the slogan „The World's Favourite Airline“ used by the British Airways and „Can't beat the real thing“ used by Coca-Cola.

Almost every destination uses a slogan as the focus of the brand positioning (Pike, 2009: 9). However, most campaigns fail to achieve much more than the „ephemeral indifference“ as they do not differentiate a destination enough among competing places offering similar benefits (Pike, 2009: 9). For instance, the Australian tourism slogan „Where the bloody hell are you“ from 2008 was abolished for the same reason and later described by the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd as a „rolled gold disaster“ (Pike, 2009: 9).

### **3. THE STUDY**

In the following section I attempt to present the aim and the methodology of the study, the subjects involved and the brief outline of results. The last part of this section is dedicated to a discussion in which I try to connect the findings with the theoretical background presented in Section 2 and offer my own remarks about the study in general.

#### **3.1. THE AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this survey is to investigate whether the official slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board used in the last 10 years manage to attract British citizens to Croatia. My hypothesis is that these slogans do not account for the cultural mindset of British travellers. In order to test this hypothesis, I conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire which was administered to British travellers who visited Croatia in August and September 2014. There were 81 participants included in the study, all of which were British citizens who have booked their holiday in Croatia through a large British tour operator Thomson Holidays UK, part of the larger group TUI Travel plc. As Thomson Holidays has been operating in Croatia since 1997, so far it has attracted a large number of British travellers to the Croatian region Istria and the town Dubrovnik.

I decided to include 120 participants, who were given the questionnaires by four holiday representatives of Thomson Holidays during regular weekly welcome meetings that took place in the guests' respective hotels in Croatia. The questionnaires were filled in and collected over the period of three weeks, from the end of August to the middle of September 2014. I was able to elicit 81 valid questionnaires in which all questions were answered, and this number of questionnaires was included in the survey. All participants stayed in hotels on the western coast of Istria in Croatia, in the towns Medulin, Rovinj and Poreč, so they were all exclusively hotel guests in Croatia.

Except for the introductory part in which participants stated general information about their age, gender, profession, place of residence, reasons for visiting Croatia and the source of information on Croatia, the questionnaire consisted of 18 questions in total, divided into three

main parts. The first part of the questionnaire was dedicated to investigating the general associations that British citizens have when it comes to holidays, in order to get a better insight into their cultural mindset, especially as they are mostly very experienced travellers. The second part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the participants' general opinion and associations about Croatia, which, at the later stage of the research, served as a basis for a more qualitative evaluation of the nine proposed slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board. The third part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the participants' evaluation of the nine slogans that were used in the Croatian tourism advertising campaigns. Participants were asked to rate the slogans according to various factors such as accuracy, general appeal, the level of the positive and negative effect of each slogan, the main feature of Croatia expressed through the slogan and many others. The purpose of this set of questions was to get the most accurate possible evaluation of the slogans used so far in the advertising campaigns for Croatia as a tourist destination.

I find it important to note that the questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions, so both qualitative and quantitative data could be elicited from the answers. The evaluation of the nine proposed slogans was based mainly on the Likert Scale type of questions.

It took respondents around 10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire, although the time was not limited. There are two reasons why I opted for this method of data collection. Firstly, a questionnaire allowed for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, which I find extremely important for this type of survey. Secondly, the amount of time necessary to fill in the questionnaire properly was no more than 10 minutes. This was crucial considering that the questionnaires were briefly presented and handed in to the participants before the start of the welcome meeting, which was organized on the same day of the participants' arrival to Croatia or the day after. Out of 120 collected questionnaires, 81 questionnaires were filled in properly and could be included in the survey.

The main difficulty that I encountered during the process of data collection was the participants' willingness to answer all 18 questions adequately within 10 minutes and before the very the start of the welcome meeting. Because of this reason, 39 collected questionnaires could not be included in the survey as the number was not sufficient. The questions which participants frequently skipped were the Likert scale questions. If the questionnaire was left to a participant to be filled in after the welcome meeting, there were no problems with the

incomplete answers, however the rate of return in these cases was much lower than when the questionnaires were filled in before the start of the welcome meeting held by the Thomson representatives. It was also noticed that the rate of return of the questionnaires was much higher once the purpose of the questionnaires was explained in more detail, as in this case participants were much more willing to dedicate a few minutes of their holiday to participate in the survey.

### 3.2 SUBJECTS

All participants were from the United Kingdom, and next to those participants from the capital of London, there were also participants from different regions in the south, east and west of England, Scotland and Wales. Out of 81 participants, 39 were female and 42 male. In other words, 51,85 % of the participants were male and 48,15 % were female, so the gender structure was rather even with a small advantage of the male population. The gender as well as the age structure of the participants is shown in Table 1.

	AGE	Overall number	Percentage		
	<30	30 - 50	>50		
MALE	7	1	34	42	51,85%
FEMALE	13	4	22	39	48,15%

**Table 1. The age and the gender structure of the participants**

When it comes to the participants' age, it is visible from Table 1 that a total of 25 % of the participants were below the age of 30, a total of 6,17 % between 30 and 50 years of age, while a total of 69,14 % of the participants were above 50 years of age. Therefore, the smallest number of the participants were between 30 and 50 years of age, which is understandable considering the fact that this structure of travellers rarely go on holiday closer to the end of August or in September due to work obligations and the termination of school

holidays in the United Kingdom. It is not surprising that the highest number of the participants were above 50 years of age, as the period in which the questionnaires were collected is the period popular among the Thomson Holidays customers of this age.

Except their age, gender and the place of residence, participants had an option to state their profession. As this was optional, it was not possible to determine the exact structure of the participants regarding their profession, however it is interesting to note that the range of professions was very wide, including bank managers, singers, hairdressers, psychotherapists, engineers, electricians, architects, news reporters, waiters and waitresses, education consultants, customer service managers, teachers, insurance consultants, business analysts, and even forensic radiographers. A large number of the participants stated that they are retired.

In order to fully determine the structure of the participants, I decided to dedicate the first part of the questionnaire to investigating their reasons for visiting Croatia and what kind of source of information on Croatia determined their decision to visit. Table 2 shows four potential sources of information about Croatia that one can base his or her decision on. Furthermore, in order to determine why they decided to visit Croatia, participants were asked to choose between a printed brochure, an Internet source, a recommendation or a TV or radio commercial as a base for their decision to visit. The results have shown that the participants' decision to visit Croatia was based on different factors. A total of 51 % of the participants based their decision on a recommendation what is quite interesting and it can be taken into consideration for any future analysis and the creation of Croatian tourism advertising campaigns. On the other hand, 35 % of the participants based their decision on an Internet source, while only 10 % selected a printed brochure. Finally, only 2% of the participants based their choice on a TV or radio commercial, while the additional 2 % based their decision on a different source.

DECISION BASED ON	Number of answers	Percentage
<b>Printed brochure</b>	8	10%
<b>Internet source</b>	28	35%
<b>A recommendation</b>	41	51%
<b>TV or radio commercial</b>	2	2%
<b>Other</b>	2	2%
<i>Overall</i>	81	100%

**Table 2. Sources of information and the participants' decision to visit Croatia**

Reasons for visiting Croatia are also an important factor when it comes to describing the structure of the participants. It is important to point out that the participants' reasons to visit Croatia were similar regardless of their age. The results in Table 3 suggest that 53 % of all participants visited Croatia because they wanted to relax, while 30 % stated sightseeing as the reason of their visit to this particular country. A total of 13 % of the participants stated other reasons for visiting Croatia, such as work.

Reasons for visiting	Participants aged <30	Participants aged 30-50	Participants aged 50 >	Total number of participants per each reason for visiting	Percentage of the total number of participants
SIGHTSEEING	6	3	15	24	30%
SPORT	0	0	0	0	0%
RELAXING	12	2	29	43	53%
OTHER	2	0	1	3	4%
NONE	0	0	11	11	13%
TOTAL FOR EACH AGE GROUP	20	5	56	81	100%

**Table 3. Reasons for visiting Croatia**



### 3.3. RESULTS

Before looking into the perception of the Croatian tourism marketing slogans by British travellers, I found it important to determine the general associations that the British have when it comes to holiday. This is why the first part of the questionnaire was dedicated to their general associations about the holiday and, in this way, the new insights into their general cultural mindset when it comes to holidays. Participants were firstly asked to state one word that first comes to their mind when someone mentions the word *holiday*. Table 4 shows the most common associations that participants have stated.

ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE WORD HOLIDAY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	%
rest, relaxing, relaxation	32	39,51%
sun, sunshine	15	18,52%
new place	8	9,88%
sightseeing, culture	4	4,94%
excitement, fun	3	3,70%
water, sea	3	3,70%
Other : travel, Croatia, happiness, food, where ...	16	19,75%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4. The most common associations with the word *holiday***

The results suggest that the most common associations with the word *holiday* among the participants were the words such as *relax*, *relaxation*, *rest* and the words of the similar meaning. A total of 39, 5% of the participants stated one of the words from this group as their first association. The following were the words *sun* and *sunshine*, which were stated by 18, 5 % of the participants, and words that have the meaning of a new place by 9, 88 % of the participants. *Sightseeing*, *culture* and the words similar in meaning to them were stated by 4, 9 % of the participants, and were followed by the words such as *excitement*, *fun*, *water* and *sea*.

These results are in line with the reasons that participants stated for visiting Croatia in the introductory part of the questionnaire. This may suggest that the general associations that

they have with the word *holiday* are closely connected with the reasons why they decide to visit a holiday destination.

Furthermore, participants were asked to state at least three adjectives that they associated with a great holiday destination. The adjective *relaxing* was stated as the most common adjective that participants associated with a great holiday destination. This adjective was stated by 11, 5 % of the participants, and was followed by the adjectives *friendly* and *welcoming* by the same percentage of the participants. Other adjectives that participants associated with a great holiday destination were *sunny* (11, 1%), *scenic/picturesque* (10, 3%), *interesting/inspiring* (9, 1%), *good/quality* (7, 4%) with regard to the gastronomical and the hospitality offer of a holiday destination, *beautiful/attractive* (4, 9%), *peaceful /quiet* (4, 5%) and *fun/entertaining* (4, 1%).

ADJECTIVES ASSOCIATED WITH A GREAT HOLIDAY DESTINATION	Nr.	%
relaxing	28	11,5%
friendly/welcoming	28	11,5%
sunny	27	11,1%
scenic/picturesque	25	10,3%
interesting/inspiring	22	9,1%
good/quality	18	7,4%
beautiful/attractive	12	4,9%
peaceful/quiet	11	4,5%
fun /entertaining	10	4,1%
warm/hot	8	3,3%
old/historical	8	3,3%
Other : cultural, safe, varied/colourful, location, happy, economical/cheap, clean , comfortable, green, close	62	25,5%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5. Adjectives associated with a great holiday destination**

As the above mentioned results suggest, there are specific adjectives that holidaymakers are likely to associate with a quality holiday destination much more in comparison to other adjectives, it seemed important to investigate if these adjectives are in any way related to the most important motivators when choosing a holiday destination.

Participants were also asked about the motivating factors that influence their choice of a holiday destination. The results suggest that the most important motivator is safety, followed by sunshine, while warmth and good value for money share the third place of the most important motivators. On the other hand, popularity of a destination is the least important motivator when choosing a holiday destination. Other two least important motivators are closeness of a holiday destination and warmth, as shown in Table 6. Interestingly, warmth is a motivating factor which found its place both on the list of the most important and the least important motivators what is a rather ambiguous result.

Our results suggest that the adjectives that participants most frequently connect with a great holiday destination are the adjectives *relaxing*, *friendly/welcoming* and *sunny*. This is in line with the fact that safety and sunshine are the most important motivators when choosing a holiday destination. The safety of a holiday destination in a broader sense can be explained as providing the feeling of being protected, comfortable and welcome, so it can be connected to the feeling of a friendly, welcoming environment.

MOTIVATORS	MOST IMPORTANT:	LEAST IMPORTANT:
SAFETY	76	5
CLOSENESS	7	66
SUNSHINE	55	22
WARMTH	41	54
GOOD VALUE	41	8
POPULARITY	3	88
<b>Overall</b>	<b>243 answers</b>	<b>243 answers</b>

**Table 6. The most important and the least important motivators when choosing a holiday destination**

Before a thorough analysis of the Croatian tourism slogans and how successful they are among the British, it was vital to estimate the participants' opinions of Croatia in general and this is what the second part of the questionnaire was dedicated to. Participants were asked to state a word which they associated with Croatia the most. The results have shown that the most frequently mentioned words that participants associated with Croatia were the adjective *beautiful*, followed by the adjectives *friendly* and *welcoming*, *scenic* and *picturesque*, and the

adjective *unspoiled* as shown in Table 7. Less frequent but still present associations were the words such as *sea*, *holiday*, *sunny*, *Adriatic*, *different*, and *great*. Among associations that were stated only once, it may be interesting to point out *Davor Suker*, a famous Croatian football player and *Dubrovnik*, a town which is often considered to be the symbol of Croatia when it comes to destination marketing and tourism advertising campaigns.

The most common associations with Croatia	Number of participants
beautiful	17
friendly /welcoming	8
scenic/picturesque	6
unspoiled	5
sights/sightseeing	3
sea	3
holiday	3
sunny	2
Adriatic	2
different	2
great	2

Associations mentioned once	classical music, preserved, unfamiliar, Dubrovnik, Davor Sukar, boating/sailing, history, new, safe, romantic, green, clean, coast, islands
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**Table 7. The most common associations with Croatia**

By comparing the results from Table 7, in which participants had to state associations with Croatia, it is interesting to note that some of these adjectives can be compared with the adjectives that participants used to describe a great holiday destination. For instance, the adjective *friendly* or *welcoming*, as well as *scenic* and *picturesque* were rated high in case of both questions. This comparison suggests that Croatia has the qualities that participants associated with a great holiday destination.

In addition to the above mentioned, the answers to the following question also suggest that the natural beauty, safety and a good quality of life are recognized as features that best describe Croatia. Namely, in the question 7 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to state the features that best describe Croatia among eight different features, and these are the feature of being underdeveloped, small, naturally beautiful, unsafe, poor, rich, safe or offering a good quality of life in general. As shown in Table 8, 44, 44 % of the participants selected natural beauty as the recognizable feature of Croatia. Natural beauty is followed by safety (24, 69 %), and a good quality of life (11, 73%). On the other hand, a total of 9, 26 % of the participants agreed that Croatia is a small country, while 7, 41 % considered it underdeveloped. Interestingly, there were no participants who considered Croatia to be a poor or an unsafe country.

<b>FEATURES THAT BEST DESCRIBE CROATIA</b>	<b>Percentage of the total number of answers (162)</b>
naturally beautiful	44,44%
safe	24,69%
good quality of life	11,73%
small	9,26%
underdeveloped	7,41%
rich	1,85%
unsafe	0,00%
poor	0,00%

**Table 8. The list of features that best describe Croatia**

Since participants stated which features best describe Croatia, I found it important to see how suggestive these results are and therefore in the following questions participants were asked to rate the four features of Croatia as a country – its natural beauty, safety, economy and the quality of life in general. The features that were offered had to be graded from 1 to 5, while 1 was the lowest and 5 the highest grade. The results presented in Table 9 below have shown that the highest grades were those for the natural beauty of Croatia and its safety as a country. The mean for the natural beauty was 4, 64 (out of 5) and a standard deviation in this case was quite low, in a total of 0, 79. Safety was graded with the mean grade of 4, 11, also including a very low standard deviation of 0, 83. Quality of life was ranked the third, with the mean of 3, 72 and a standard deviation of 0, 83 points to the mean. The lowest grade was

given to the economy, and according to the participants' opinion the mean was 2,77 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 0,99. The low standard deviation in case of all four features that were graded means that the grades were not highly dispersed in the range between 1 and 5, and that the dispersion was lower than 1 point around the mean in the case of all four features. It suggests that the results are in accordance with the participants' choices of features in the previous question.

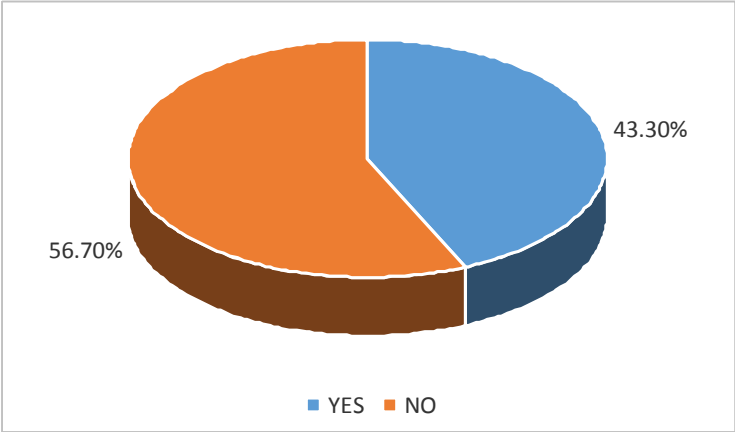
<b>FEATURES OF CROATIA AS A COUNTRY</b>	<b>Economy</b>	<b>Natural beauty</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>Quality of life</b>
<b>MEAN</b>	2,77	4,64	4,11	3,72
<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	0,99	0,79	0,83	0,83

**Table 9. Evaluation of the features of Croatia as a country**

Finally, the third part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the analysis of the nine official Croatian tourism slogans and the perception of these among the participants. When asked if they recall any of the Croatian tourism slogans, participants stated only three official slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board. Only 3 out of 81 participants recalled the Croatian slogan „So beautiful, so close“. Next, 2 out of 81 participants stated „The Mediterranean as it once was“ and „A small country for a great holiday“ as official slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board. It is interesting to note that although a very small percentage of the participants actually remembered some of the Croatian tourism slogans in the last 10 years, they also mentioned phrases they felt were used as slogans although that was not the case. For instance, some participants stated „The Walls of Dubrovnik“, „The picture of church in Rovinj“ and the phrase „Jewel of the Adriatic“ as slogans, although this was not the case. The first two may be considered as Croatian trademarks but so far were not used in any part of Croatian National Tourist Board's slogans in recent years. Other interesting examples are *Yugotours*, *Outlook festival* and *blue seas* which were never used as slogans but are connected to Croatia. *Yugotours* used to be a large Croatian tourist agency, *Outlook festival*

is a popular Croatian festival held in Pula, and blue seas are considered to be another symbol of the beautiful Croatian nature.

Before the very analysis of the nine official marketing slogans, participants were asked if they thought that a slogan can affect a decision to visit a particular country. A total of 55, 56 % of the participants answered NO, while 43, 21 % of them answered YES.



**Chart 3. Participants' opinion on whether a slogan can affect one's decision to visit a country**

They were also asked to state the reasons for their decision, so the reasons they offered are presented below in Table 10. The comments provided were of significant importance for determining why participants have a negative or a positive attitude towards the influence of slogans on travellers' decisions. It is visible that the common reasons for their negative answers were that the significance of slogans is very low as people make their travel decisions regardless of them, and that people act on recommendations. On the other hand, participants stated many more reasons for a positive answer. They mostly agreed that slogans are those which create the first impression about a tourist destination, can persuade a person to visit, and can be very effective with the right choice of words and if they reflect what travellers are looking for in a destination.

<b>Reasons for NO</b>	<b>Reasons for YES</b>
People go where they want, regardless of slogans	Helps with the first impression
I act on recommendations	It is efficient if it captures the beauty of the country
I don't look at marketing slogans to choose my holiday	Makes people want to visit to see if the slogan is true
I would look deeper than just words	Something catchy that people should remember and wander about
	It is the first thing a tourist hears before booking a holiday
	First "mental picture" when heard
	You need the right words
	Can persuade you to explore the country to see if the slogan suits it
	If one has never visited, will take notice of key words and slogans
	"Wording" is important - can be negative
	If it agrees with your own impression
	With originality
	You would want to find out more
	People will remember it
	If it reflects what I am looking for, but is also subtle
	It gives an immediate initial impression
	It creates either a good or bad impression
	One can oversell a holiday destination
Because if it is tacky, it puts me off	

**Table 10. Reasons for negative and positive answers on the influence of slogans**

Next, participants were asked to describe Croatia in a phrase. The purpose of this question was to test how close or far these descriptions are from the actual slogans used in recent years. Participants wrote phrases that can be grouped according to the similarity in meaning. As shown in Chart 3, there are six groups of phrases – those related to natural beauty, friendly people, scenery, culture and history, combined (including more features of the country at once) and unsorted (cannot be included in any of the previous groups).



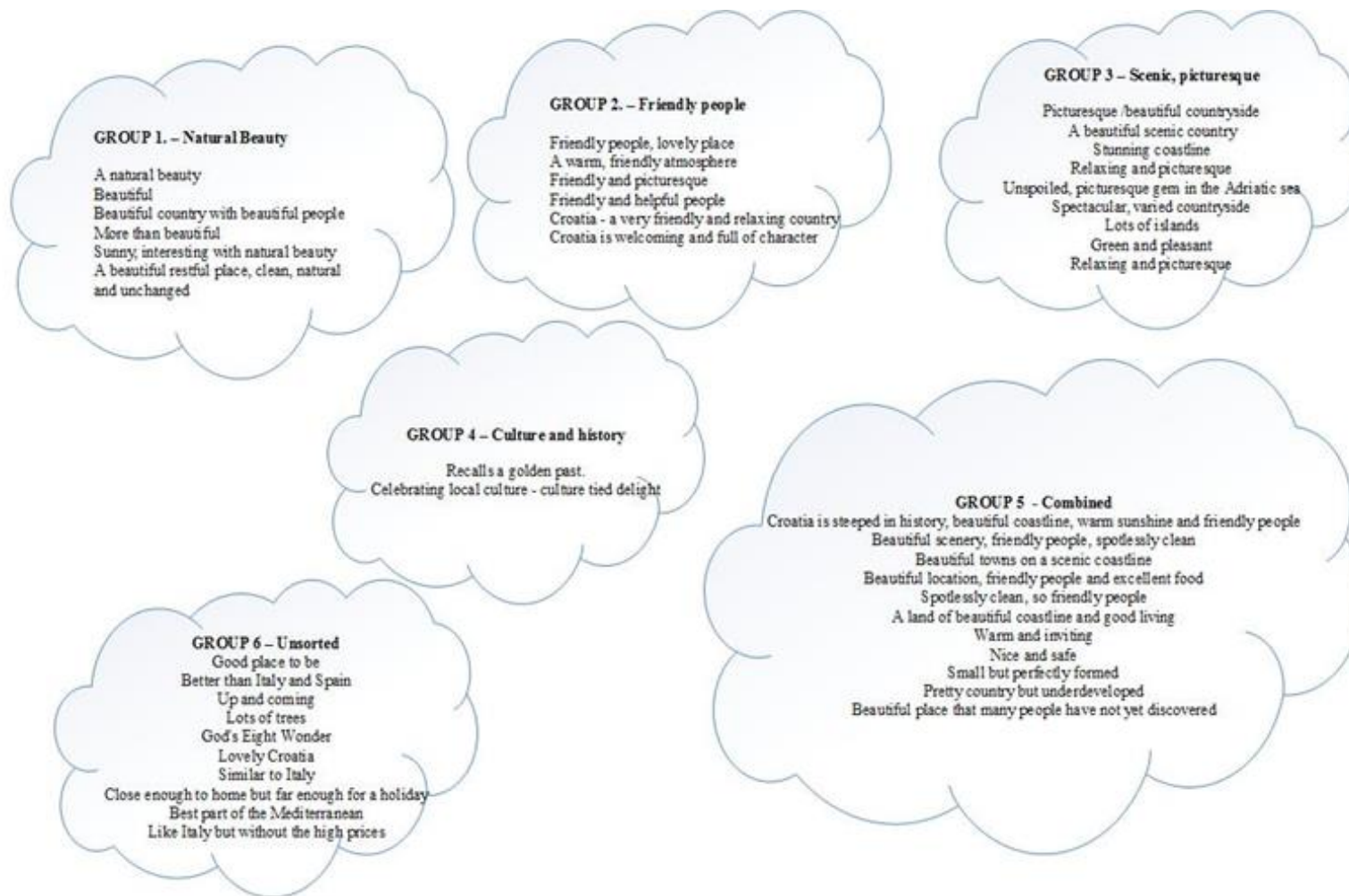


Chart 4. Description of Croatia in a phrase

The results obtained seem to suggest that the largest group of answers is unsorted, meaning that they have no similarity to others but are unique. Also, a large number of answers are grouped as combined, given that they include different features of Croatia in one description. This may suggest that combined and unique descriptions of Croatia appeal to participants more, and they are more likely to use them, instead of focusing on one feature such as natural beauty, friendliness of the local people or a long history of a country.

Finally, participants had to evaluate the slogans that the Croatian Tourist Board used in their advertising campaigns in recent years. Firstly, they had to grade the accuracy of each of the nine slogans using grades 1 to 5. Grade 1 stood for the lowest accuracy, and grade 5 for the highest accuracy. As it can be seen in Table 10, the slogan „Croatia – so beautiful, so close“ has the highest average grade of 4, 23, and in the participants' opinion, is the most accurate slogan. Standard deviation in case of this average grade is 0, 87 which suggests that the results across the group of participants are in the range of less than 1 point to the mean and therefore are quite unified. The second most accurate slogan is „A small country for a great holiday“ with the average grade 3, 97 and a low standard deviation of 0, 99. The third most accurate slogan, according to the survey, is the slogan „Natural Stress Relief“ with the average grade of 3, 83 and a standard deviation of 0, 99. It is interesting to point out that the least accurate slogan in the participants' opinion is the slogan „When the heart says summer, it says Croatia” with the average grade of 2, 94 and is followed by the slogan „The world of difference“ with the average grade of 3, 05. Even in the case of the least accurate slogans, standard deviation is around 1 point to the mean so the results seem unified.

SLOGANS OF CROATIAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD	AVERAGE GRADE PER SLOGAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Mediterranean as it once was	3,74	1,04
The world of difference	3,05	1,12
Natural Stress Relief	3,83	0,99
The New Star of the EU	3,19	1,14
A small country for a great holiday	3,97	0,99
Croatia like a picture - picture like Croatia	3,16	1,36
Croatia - a paradise on Earth	3,31	1,11
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia	2,94	1,13
Croatia- so beautiful, so close	4,23	0,87

**Table 11. Selection of the most accurate slogan**

After the selection of the most accurate slogan, participants were asked to choose the most appealing slogan. The purpose of this question was, first of all, to estimate the most appealing slogan among the nine of them offered, but also to test if the accuracy of the slogan is connected to its general appeal. A total of 81 participants answered the question and the results were quite interesting. The slogan „Croatia- so beautiful, so close“ which was ranked the highest as the most accurate slogan, also proved to be the most appealing slogan with the highest average grade, 3,98, and a low standard deviation of 1,21 points to the average grade. However, it was not followed by the slogans „A small country for a great holiday“ and „Natural Stress Relief“ which were ranked as highly accurate in the previous question. On the contrary, the second most appealing slogan was the slogan „Mediterranean as it once was“ with the average grade of 3,74 and a standard deviation of 1,2. The third most appealing slogan was „Natural Stress Relief“ with the average grade 3,44 and a standard deviation of 1,22 points to the average grade.

It is visible therefore that the slogan „Croatia- so beautiful, so close“ was perceived as both the most accurate and the most appealing slogan. Participants provided qualitative explanations for their answers so some of the participants stated that the short flight from the UK to Croatia is very convenient, and that next to short journey time, Croatia offers a good climate, and even historical connections to the United Kingdom. Although being a small country as described in the second part of the slogan it offers a great variety. A couple from Birmingham explained: „Croatia - so beautiful, so close, is exactly how we feel about it!“ Comments that explained the choice of the slogan „Mediterranean as it once was“ as the second most appealing slogan, were that Croatia is the best of Mediterranean countries despite the fact that it is not developed yet, and that it offers an opportunity to feel completely relaxed on holiday as it is not too touristy or crowded.

On the other hand, the least appealing slogan, according to the participants' opinion was the slogan „The New Star of the EU“. Participants also provided qualitative explanations for their answers so the least appealing slogan „The New Star of the EU“ was described as too political and biased by some of the participants. Some of them added that very few of the nine Croatian slogans appear to be appealing at all.

SLOGANS OF CROATIAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD	AVERAGE GRADE PER SLOGAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Mediterranean as it once was	3,74	1,2
The world of difference	2,93	1,16
Natural Stress Relief	3,44	1,22
The New Star of the EU	2,73	1,28
A small country for a great holiday	3,6	1,33
Croatia like a picture - picture like Croatia	2,88	1,21
Croatia - a paradise on Earth	3,28	1,25
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia	3,06	1,25
Croatia- so beautiful, so close	3,98	1,21

**Table 12. Selection of the most appealing slogan**

In the next question, participants were asked to state which feature of Croatia is mostly expressed by each of the nine proposed slogans. The results suggest that the slogan „Mediterranean as it once was“ was mostly associated with the adjective *unspoiled* in the description of Croatia, as 56, 36% of the participants decided for this adjective. This seems to be in line with the general aim and the message that this slogan was supposed to send. The second slogan „ The world of difference“ was obviously perceived to express the uniqueness of the country, according to the opinion of 41, 30% of the participants. Interestingly, another slogan was perceived as the one which expresses the uniqueness of the country, and that is the slogan „The New Star of the EU“. This is quite ambiguous, considering that the same slogan was perceived to be quite political or biased. There were three slogans for which participants stated that express the natural beauty of Croatia. These were the slogans „ Natural Stress Relief“, „Croatia like a picture, picture like Croatia“ and „Croatia- paradise on Earth“. On the other hand, the most successful slogans in terms of accuracy and appeal, „A small country for a great holiday“ and „Croatia – so beautiful, so close“ were perceived as those which expressed the uniqueness of the country and the feature of being unspoiled. In other words, a total of 28, 57 % of the participants agreed that the feature of being unspoiled was expressed in the slogan „Croatia – so beautiful, so close“. A total of 29,55% of the participants found the

slogan „A Small country for a great holiday“ to be an example of a slogan which expressed the uniqueness of a country.

The subjects were also asked to evaluate how positive an effect each of the slogans had on them. Therefore, they had to grade the strength of the positive effect by using the grades 1 to 5, the grade 1 being the lowest positive effect and 5 the highest positive effect. The results are presented in Table 13. As expected, the slogans „Croatia – so beautiful, so close“ with the average grade 4,2 , „ Mediterranean as it once was“ with the average grade of 3,89 and „ A small country for a great holiday“ with the average grade of 3,59 were ranked as the slogans with the highest positive effect.

POSITIVE EFFECT OF SLOGANS		
SLOGANS	AVERAGE GRADE	STANDARD DEVIATION
Mediterranean as it once was	3,89	1,29
The world of difference	3,26	1,32
Natural Stress Relief	3,16	1,43
The New Star of the EU	2,35	1,43
Small country for a great holiday	3,59	1,47
Croatia like a picture - picture like Croatia	3,19	1,39
Croatia - a paradise on Earth	3,12	1,42
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia	3,17	1,46
Croatia- so beautiful, so close	4,26	1

**Table 13. Evaluation of the positive effect of slogans**

The results presented in Table 13 are in line with the results of the previous questions in which the three slogans were selected as the most appealing slogans. Therefore, it is not surprising these had the highest positive effect on the participants.

It is also not surprising that the slogan with the lowest positive effect on participants was the slogan „The New Star of the EU“ , which, according to the earlier results, was also perceived as a rather biased and too political slogan.

The likelihood of the negative perception of the slogan „The New Star of the EU“ is shown by the results of the question in which participants were asked to state the level of the negative effect that each of the slogans had on them. The grade 1 stood for the lowest negative effect, while the grade 5 for the highest negative effect. As shown in Table 15, the slogan „The New Star of the EU“ got the highest negative average grade of 2,40, with a low standard deviation of 1,65. It was followed by the slogans „When the heart says summer, it says Croatia“ with the average grade of 2,10 and „Croatia – a paradise on Earth“ with the average grade of 1,97. Standard deviation in cases of both slogans was less than 2 points to the average grade.

NEGATIVE EFFECT OF SLOGANS		
SLOGANS	AVERAGE GRADE ( 1 – 5)	STANDARD DEVIATION
Mediterranean as it once was	1,57	1,01
The world of difference	1,45	0,93
Natural Stress Relief	1,54	1,06
The New Star of the EU	2,40	1,65
Small country for a great holiday	1,75	1,21
Croatia like a picture - picture like Croatia	1,67	1,31
Croatia - a paradise on Earth	1,97	1,42
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia	2,10	1,48
Croatia- so beautiful, so close	1,19	0,73

**Table 14. Evaluation of the negative effect of slogans**

The slogan with the lowest average grade of negative effect was, expectedly, the slogan „Croatia – so beautiful, so close“ what is in accordance with the previous results.

Finally, at the end of the questionnaire, participants were presented with the slogans used in advertising campaigns of other countries. They were asked to circle the one that they found to be the most appropriate. These slogans are presented in Table 15. For the purpose of this survey, the slogans were altered so that the name of the original country for which the slogan was used was replaced with the word *Croatia*. Table 15 also shows the percentage of the participants who have selected the particular slogan as the most appropriate. A total of 81 participants answered the question.

The results suggest that although the slogans from Table 15 were not used as slogans in tourism advertising campaigns for Croatia, some of them were perceived as appropriate new slogans for Croatia. For instance, 51,6 % of the participants chose the slogan „Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia“ as the most appropriate one. This slogan was used to promote Iceland as a tourist destination and its original form according to the Database of Slogans (2014) was the following: „Pure. Natural. Unspoiled. Iceland. The Way Life Should Be.“ Although for the purpose of this survey the slogan was shortened, it seems that it was still recognized as highly desirable by the participants. The reason for this may be the fact that this slogan contains the adjectives *natural* and *unspoiled* which were recognized as adjectives that best describe Croatia according to the participants' opinion. Also, it may be taken into consideration that the original slogan was created for Iceland, which is a country culturally and geographically close to the UK. The adjectives *natural* and *unspoiled* can definitely be used to describe Iceland, and it seems that these adjectives present a cultural preference of the British when it comes to the features of an attractive holiday destination. This slogan was followed by the slogan „Croatia. There's only one“ which was selected by 11,29 % of the participants and it was used by the regional Tourist Board in Andalusia in Spain (Database of slogans, 2014).

It may be interesting to know that the slogan „Croatia- Awaken to a Different World“ was used to promote Ireland in its original form and it was chosen to be the most appropriate new Croatian slogan by 9,68 % of the participants. The same percentage of participants chose the slogan „Smile! You are in Croatia.“ to be the most appropriate new slogan. This slogan, on the other hand, was used by the Spanish Tourist Board to promote Spain as a tourist destination, together with the slogan „Spain Marks“ and „Spain – Everything Under a Sun“ (Database of Slogans, 2014). The last two are also shown in Table 15 and while 8,06 % of the participants chose the slogan „Croatia - Everything Under a Sun“ to be the most appropriate slogan among the offered ones, the slogan „Croatia Marks“ in relation to the Spanish original proved to be unsuccessful and none of the participants found it appropriate as a new Croatian slogan. „Croatia – better than others“ is another slogan which was not chosen by any of the participants as an appropriate new slogan for Croatia. Therefore, it can be concluded that the two slogans which included comparisons with other countries were not found desirable by the participants.

Slogans such as „Croatia – A new point of view“, then „Croatia. Get natural“ and „Croatia. Positively Transforming“ were each chosen by 3,23 % of the participants as a

possibly appropriate new slogan for Croatia. It is interesting to note that the tagline „A new point of view“ was actually used in a campaign in Athens, Greece. Other two slogans were used in advertising campaigns for Switzerland and Estonia, so their original forms were „Switzerland. Get natural“ and „Estonia. Positively Transforming“ (Database of slogans, 2014).

SLOGANS	PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ANSWERS (81)
Croatia - Awaken to a Different World	9,68%
Croatia - A new point of view	3,23%
Smile! You are in Croatia	9,68%
Croatia. Get natural	3,23%
Croatia. There's only one	11,29%
Croatia. Positively Transforming	3,23%
Croatia - Everything Under a Sun	8,06%
Croatia - better than others	0,00%
Croatia marks	0,00%
Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia.	51,6%

**Table 15. Selection of the most appropriate new slogan for Croatia**

To sum up, the presented results suggest that the most appealing “borrowed” slogan was the slogan “Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia”, as it contains two adjectives *natural* and *unspoiled* which were ranked high when it comes to the description of Croatia. The least appealing slogans were the two slogans that emphasize a comparison with other holiday destinations and these are “Croatia- better than others” and “Croatia marks”. Other well accepted slogans were those that emphasize the uniqueness of the country, such as “Croatia – Awaken to a Different World” and “Croatia. There’s only one”. Finally, the slogan “Croatia – Everything Under a Sun” was also well received by the participants. These results suggest that among the highly ranked “borrowed” slogans were those that emphasize features such as the natural beauty, the state of being unspoiled, uniqueness as well as plenty of sunshine. These features were, in previous questions, elicited by the participants as highly desirable and a strong motivating factor when choosing a holiday destination.

Finally, in addition to evaluating possible new slogans for Croatia, which were chosen among the slogans used in the advertising campaigns for other countries worldwide,



participants got the opportunity to write their own proposal of a tourism slogan for Croatia. It was the last question of the questionnaire and the results were quite interesting. The list of proposals can be seen in Table 16 below. It is interesting to note that all of the proposals were combined, expressing more than one feature of Croatia in one slogan. Unspoiled nature, friendliness and uniqueness of the country were among the features that were most commonly used in the proposals.

<b>PROPOSALS OF A NEW SLOGAN FOR CROATIA</b>
Affordable beauty and adventure
Unspoiled, unknown, undiscovered, unique
The magical land of Croatia
All in one - unspoiled Croatia
Feel new in the Old Mediterranean
As good as Italy but without high prices
Croatia meets nature. Croatia creates friendship
The Pearl of the Adriatic - come and see what you are missing!
Croatia - Land of sun, sea and history
Croatia - Step back into time
Jewel of the Adriatic
Croatia - a beautiful country and lasting memories
Croatia - a friendly welcome
The perfect place to unwind
Croatia - the sunny side of the EU
Whatever your dream holiday is, it is in Croatia
Croatia - welcome to sunshine, friendship and beauty
My view - Croatia!
Small but perfectly formed
Croatia - excellerating, exceptional, outstanding - beautiful
Croatia - cool, careful and captivating
Be original - visit Croatia
Croatia captures the culture of the Adriatic

**Table 16. Suggestions for a new Croatian tourism slogan**

### **3.4 DISCUSSION**

As already mentioned in Section 3.1., the main problem encountered when conducting the survey was the fact that out of 120 distributed questionnaires, only 81 participants filled in

the questionnaire properly and these data could be used in the analysis. Although the sample was not sufficient to draw final conclusions, the results are suggestive and provide a valuable guidance for further research on this topic. As far as the age structure of participants is concerned, it is uneven to the advantage of the participants older than 50. If the survey could be done at a different time of the year, for instance, earlier in the summer season, the age structure of the participants could definitely be more varied. It would be interesting to compare such two sets of results.

However, since the participants in the survey were of different age, gender and professions, in other words, the structure of participants in general was varied, the first part of the questionnaire still provided valuable data regarding their reasons to visit Croatia. The fact that 51 % of the participants visited Croatia based on a recommendation, suggests that this part of the participants may have been less acquainted with Croatia as a tourist destination. Namely, according to Wang and Pizam (2001: 75), travellers who are unfamiliar with a destination are more likely to sample the opinion of others, such as their friends and family, because of their limited ability to process the product-related information. Travellers who are more familiarized with a destination, in other words, who are high in expertise, are likely to need specific and more detailed information on the potential destination and its attributes (Wang & Pizam, 2011: 76), so they may look for sources such as the Internet. When it comes to Croatian tourism slogans, it seems that the focus should be on the British travellers who are not that familiar with Croatia as a destination, and since 51% of the participants in this survey visited Croatia based on a recommendation, according to Wang and Pizam (2001) this specific group matches the desired profile. The reasons why the participants in this study visited Croatia are also quite unified and since the highest percentage of the participants stated relaxing and sightseeing as the reasons for their visit to Croatia, this fact goes in line with the research conducted on a motivation for travelling. The main motivators for travelling in general seem to be relaxation, the feeling of safety when it comes to health and recreation, showing the social status, self-affirmation, sightseeing (exploring other cultures) and admiration of beauty. So, Croatia as a destination is not specific in this sense (Mill & Morrison, 2002: 20).

When it comes to the first part of the questionnaire and the general associations the British have when it comes to holiday, the most common associations were rest, relaxing, relaxation, followed by the sun and the sunshine, a new place and sightseeing. The general

associations people have with holidays may be quite culture specific as findings from the field of psycholinguistics suggest. This is in accordance with the already mentioned view of Kastanakis and Voyer (2014: 3), who claim that cultural differences account for a variation in consumer reactions to several phenomena, including perceptions of brands. Since the perceptions of brands and travellers' preferences are culture specific, I find it crucial to limit the research of travel preferences to a specific culture group or nationality.

Subjects were also asked to state the adjectives that they most commonly associated with a great holiday destination. The final results were very much similar to the general associations they had when it comes to holiday. This fact was not surprising as it seems that the first association people would have of a holiday, is mostly related to what they would expect of an ideal holiday, in other words, of an ideal holiday destination. So, the same adjectives appeared in the description of an ideal holiday destination and in the description of the first associations when it comes to holiday. The only additional adjectives that appeared in the description of an ideal holiday destination were the adjectives *friendly/welcoming* which seem to be highly desired attributes of a holiday destination by the British travellers. Adjective *relaxing* was at the first place of the most desired attributes, adjective *friendly* and *welcoming* at the second place, followed by the adjective *sunny*, and *scenic/picturesque*. Not only that the first associations about a holiday match the participants' description of an ideal holiday destination, but also they are in line with the most important motivators when choosing a holiday destination. For instance, the results suggest that these are safety, sunshine, warmth and a good value for money. Since there is such a similarity between the first associations about the holiday, adjectives that describe a holiday destination as well as the most important motivators when it comes to choosing a holiday destination, these results suggest that there is a specific cultural mind-set of British travellers regarding the notion of a holiday, which exists prior to choosing a particular holiday destination.

In the second part of the questionnaire it was important to determine the participants' general view of Croatia as a country and as a tourist destination. Together with the British cultural mindset as travellers, this data can only serve as a good basis to determine the perception of the Croatian tourism slogans and their possible improvement. It is visible from the results that the most common adjectives used by the participants to describe Croatia were *beautiful*, *friendly*, *welcoming*, *scenic*, *picturesque* and *unspoiled*. Some of these adjectives were used by the participants in the description of an ideal holiday destination what is a great

finding, and a point from which the development of the Croatian tourism slogans should start. Anderson (1983) in his ACT theory presented human knowledge as a network. As it has already been stated in the thesis, in Anderson's view a brand image can be conceptualized as a set of nodes to which a number of other nodes or attributes are linked (Korchia, 2004: 2). The links between nodes are of different strength, depending on the proximity of the concepts to which they refer and this is explained with the help of the “Barilla” brand in Section 2 (Korchia, 2004: 2).

The idea of using the findings about the spreading activation process is that with the right choice of words in a tourism slogan, one can achieve that consumers immediately connect the attributes of an advertising country with the associations of a great holiday destination that they already have in their minds, in other words, in their network of concepts. Namely, in this way, the links between the concepts that should be recognized through a tourism slogan and the actual concepts of a quality tourist destination in a consumer's mind are getting stronger, and the image of a holiday destination in this way is becoming better perceived by a consumer. Moreover, the stronger these links get, the more loyal the consumers, in this case British holidaymakers, will be to this particular tourist destination. As Korchia (2004) suggested, a brand association is nothing else but a node linked to a particular brand and these brand associations actually create the image of a brand in consumers' minds (Korchia, 2004: 2). Another reason why this approach should be implemented in the development of the Croatian tourism slogans for the British market, is that the British travellers who participated in the survey actually highly ranked the mentioned associations as real features of Croatia. Again, in the following question the participants stated that the features that best describe Croatia are indeed the natural beauty, safety and a good quality of life. This is highly important as it could mean a possibility to construct a very strong Croatian brand and a distinctive loyalty of British customers. The fact that British travellers describe Croatia as a beautiful, friendly country with a lovely scenery, and at the same time they are sure that Croatia indeed is such a country, has to be taken into consideration as an excellent starting point for the development of the Croatia's brand, while using tourism slogans as a tool.

According to Pike (2013: 6), travellers' choice of destinations depends on the attitudes towards the features which are the most closely related to their preferences. Therefore, it is visible from the results of this survey that British holidaymakers recognize the

features of Croatia such as natural beauty, safety, good quality of life, and moreover, they find them closely related to their travel preferences. Such features are then determinant when it comes to a traveller's final choice of a holiday destination, so this is a great advantage of Croatia which should be used in the promotional purposes and in this way help in reaching a higher number of visits from the United Kingdom.

When it comes to the participants' evaluation of the nine proposed tourism slogans that the Croatian National Tourist Board has used in the last 10 years, it was deemed to investigate how close or how far they are from the British perception of an ideal holiday destination as well as from their general perception of Croatia. The aim of this part of the survey was to show that the slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board do not account for the specific cultural mindset of British holidaymakers and because of that will fail to attract the visitors from this particular market.

When asked if they thought that a slogan could affect their decision to visit a particular country, 55,56 % of the participants answered negatively, while 43,21% of the participants answered positively. This result is not surprising considering that the sample of participants included in this survey already stated that they mostly act on recommendations. The second indicative finding which is completely in accordance with a previous one is that there were only three official Croatian slogans that participants could remember, and these were the slogans "So beautiful, so close", "The Mediterranean as it once was" and "A small country for a great holiday". However, the percentage of the participants that could remember them was 3,7 % for the first slogan, and 2,46 % for the last two slogans. This fact suggests that indeed the Wang and Pizam's claim (2001: 75), that travellers who are less familiar with a destination will act on recommendations rather than on more detailed sources of information about a destination, may be indicative that the sample of participants in this survey were not familiar with the Croatian tourism slogans as they mostly acted on recommendations and therefore the rate of recognition was very low. Still, this fact presents a positive aspect of the survey conducted as it suggests that the majority of the participants who evaluated the slogans saw these slogans for the first time. This makes the results even more indicative as the purpose of slogans is to have an immediate effect on consumers and boost their interest in a particular holiday destination. Moreover, according to Pike (2013: 5), slogans have an important role in establishing brand associations which will consequently lead to a stronger brand loyalty and the intention to visit will be much stronger. These reasons were stated by

the participants themselves when asked why they thought that a slogan can influence their decision to visit. Some of the reasons stated, and presented in Table 10, are that slogans help with the first impression, make people want find out more, especially if it is something “catchy” that people can remember and wander about. Also, participants stated that the most successful slogans are those which reflect what travellers are looking for anyway, and which agree with travellers’ first impressions about a country.

Interestingly, when asked to describe Croatia in a sentence or in a phrase, participants have used the phrases related to the description of the natural beauty (for example : *beautiful country with beautiful people, more than beautiful, sunny and interesting with natural beauty*), friendly people ( *friendly people - lovely place, Croatia is welcoming and full of character*), nice scenery ( *stunning coastline, lots of islands, green and pleasant*), culture and history ( *recalls a golden past*) as well as phrases which combine the mentioned features ( *spotlessly clean, so friendly people, beautiful towns on a scenic coastline*). It is important to note that the adjectives expressing the most common participants’ associations about Croatia such as *beautiful, friendly/welcoming, scenic/picturesque, unspoiled* were present within the above mentioned groups of phrases. Moreover, the mentioned groups of phrases actually correspond to the most highly ranked features of Croatia and these are natural beauty, safety and a good quality of life. The largest number of phrases that participants stated was in the combined group, in other words, the majority of phrases were those which combined different features of Croatia. This may be indicative in a sense that the future development of the Croatian tourism slogans should emphasize more than one attractive feature of the country, and in this way become appealing to British holidaymakers. Since participants were mostly combining the features themselves, it can be concluded that in this way they found them to be more appealing.

The evaluation of the nine proposed official slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board focused on the selection of the most appealing and the most accurate slogan, and the results were quite interesting and indicative. Not only did participants select the most appealing and the most accurate slogan, but it also provided a possibility to determine the link between the two criteria – accuracy and general appeal. Interestingly, the most accurate slogan from the British perspective is the slogan “So beautiful, so close”, with a high average grade of 4, 23 out of 5. It is followed by the slogans “ A small country for a great holiday”, “Natural Stress Relief” and “Mediterranean as it once was”. As it can be noticed, the most

accurate slogan emphasizes two features of Croatia at the same time, and these are the natural beauty and the vicinity to the United Kingdom. The natural beauty of Croatia was already mentioned as a distinctive feature of the country that participants found important. The vicinity of the country was not stated as a typical association to a great holiday destination or Croatia as such, but it seems that participants recognized it as a valuable, real feature of Croatia and something what makes it distinctive from other destinations. Since emphasizing the closeness to the UK was obviously the message that the slogan was aiming to send, it seems that it was successful when it comes to the sample of British travellers in this survey and it may be used as a feature of Croatia along with the already recognized features such as the natural beauty, friendliness, safety and others. The second slogan also emphasizes two features, the fact that the country is small and a variety of opportunities for a great holiday. The fact that a country is small may suggest a less crowded place, what may be an attractive feature in the eyes of a potential holidaymaker. The other two slogans express only one feature of Croatia each.

On the other hand, the choice of the least accurate slogan is not surprising, and it is the slogan “When the heart says summer, it says Croatia” which does not express or emphasize a single recognized feature of Croatia and is quite universal in a sense that it could be used for any destination popular in the summer season.

Furthermore, the results suggest that the most accurate slogan, according to the participants’ opinion, “Croatia, so beautiful, so close”, is also the most appealing slogan among the nine offered slogans. This finding suggests that there may be a link between the accuracy and the general appeal of the slogans among consumers. For instance, the slogan “Natural Stress Relief” was the third most accurate slogan and it took the same third place on the list of the most appealing slogans. It seems that in order to find the slogan appealing, the consumers need to have the impression of its accuracy. Although on the list of the most accurate slogans, the slogan “A small country for a great holiday” was ranked on the high second place, on the list of the most appealing slogans it was replaced by the slogan “Mediterranean as it once was”. However, despite the changed places, both slogans were rated high as the most accurate and the most appealing slogans, so the results are still indicative and imply that indeed there is a link between the accuracy and the general appeal of the Croatian tourism slogans. The findings suggest that this link is the most visible in the simple relation that a slogan will not very likely be perceived as appealing if consumers do

not find it accurate for a particular holiday destination. Interestingly, this link is somewhat different in the opposite direction, as sometimes consumers may find a slogan accurate but not appealing at all. A perfect example is the Croatian tourism slogan “Croatia – The new star of the EU” which participants found accurate, but also the least appealing of all nine slogans.

It is not surprising that the slogans which were rated high, according to their general appeal and accuracy, were perceived as the ones with the highest positive effect. This suggests that the above mentioned results and the hypothesis of this thesis are unified and may be an inspiration for further research. Also, as expected, the slogan “Croatia – the new star of the EU” which was the least appealing slogan, was also chosen as the slogan with the lowest positive, and the highest negative effect. Except for the fact that the quality data in the form of the participants’ comments suggest that British holidaymakers find this slogan too political or biased, it seems that this attitude has a cultural basis too. For instance, the poll on the public opinion towards the EU from 2011 suggest that 49 % of the British citizens would vote against the UK remaining a member of the EU, while only 25 % stated that they would vote in favour of the UK staying part of the EU. (Miller &Barclay, 2012 : 1)

It seems that according to the British, being a member country of the EU is not considered to be a great success and a large number of the British citizens feel that their country could function well even without the EU membership. This may be the result of both the national pride as well as the awareness of the economic strength of the UK in comparison to many other European countries who are the members of the EU. So, from the cultural perspective, the British are much more sceptical towards the European Union and a great number of them perceive the European Union in the negative light. On the contrary, Croatia as a small European economy joined the EU in 2013. The process of admission was quite long and in order to become a member Croatia had to fulfil numerous conditions, many of which were related to political and economic issues in Croatia. Although not all Croatian citizens were pleased with the fact that Croatia was a candidate to enter the EU, the final admission in July in 2013 was warmly welcomed by the majority of the Croatian citizens and the Croatian government. This may be the reason why the Croatian National Tourist Board decided to use the fact that Croatia is a new EU member in the promotion of the Croatian tourism and developed the mentioned slogan. However, they did not take into consideration the cultural difference in the attitude towards the EU between the British and the Croatian citizens. Thus,



it is not surprising that the slogan was not very well accepted by the British participants in this survey.

It is also visible that the slogan “Croatia – The new star of the EU” does not express or describe a single feature of Croatia that participants find appealing and typical of Croatia. Moreover, it does not reflect any associations the British have about a great holiday destination. It is therefore not surprising that none of the links between the words used in that slogan could be connected to the already existing associations in the participants’ minds, in their network of concepts, which would boost additional interest for Croatia as a holiday destination. As this slogan proved unsuccessful, particularly for this reason, these aspects should be taken into consideration when thinking about the future development of the Croatian tourism slogans.

Since the previous set of questions made participants think about the accuracy, the general appeal, as well as the positive and the negative effects that each of the slogans provoked, it seems that despite the small sample of British holidaymakers in Croatia included in the survey, a great majority of the nine offered slogans were perceived as not particularly accurate or appealing. Therefore, I wanted to investigate if any of the existing slogans for other countries could be used to advertise Croatia with more success. The results have shown that these slogans were perceived as appropriate only in cases when the feature they advertise is closely related to Croatia. For instance, 51, 6% of the participants chose the slogan “Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia” to be the most appropriate new slogan for Croatia. Although in its original form this slogan was used to advertise Iceland, according to participants, it suits Croatia. The reason for this may be the fact that it emphasizes adjectives such as *natural* and *unspoiled* which were mostly used by the participants themselves when describing Croatia. Other well accepted slogans were those that emphasized the uniqueness of Croatia, such as “Croatia – Awaken to a Different World” and “Croatia – There’s only one” or plenty of sunshine as in “Croatia – Everything Under a Sun”. Again, participants chose the slogans that reflected their own holiday preferences, such as the one advocating plenty of sunshine, or those which emphasized the features of Croatia that they find specific of this country and at the same time desirable such as the natural beauty, the state of being unspoiled and the uniqueness of the country.

Interestingly, these features reappeared when participants were given a task to write their own proposal of a new tourism slogan for Croatia. Namely, it may suggest how strong the

influence of the holidaymakers' general destination associations and preferences is, especially when it comes to a new destination for the British market such as Croatia. The largest number of proposals included combined features, at least two features at the time. The proposed slogans were in accordance with the participants' general preferences and the main adjectives they were using to describe Croatia in the previous questions of the questionnaire. For instance, the proposed slogans were "Affordable beauty and adventure", "Croatia meets nature. Croatia creates friendship.", "Croatia-Land of sun, sea and history", "Croatia - a beautiful country and lasting memories", "Croatia – the sunny side of the EU", "Croatia – welcome to sunshine, friendship and beauty.", "Small but perfectly formed", "Croatia - cool, careful and captivating". It is visible from the selected sample of the proposed slogans that indeed they accurately advertise Croatia, in a sense that they do not include any feature that Croatia as a tourist destination does not have. These features are sunshine, natural beauty, friendliness of local people, membership in the EU, nice scenery and other. Not only that they are the features that are linked to the most common associations about a holiday that British holidaymakers have, therefore a link to their cultural mindset when it comes to holiday, but they are also the features that the British recognize as being real and accurate features of Croatia. Since the participants themselves used these features in their proposed slogans, it is worth noting that this type of slogans may be more appealing to them and it may have the necessary effect to boost their decision to visit Croatia.

Having this in mind, the difference between the slogans proposed by the participants and the actual slogans used so far in the process of the brand positioning of Croatia is obvious. The slogans proposed by the participants were focused on describing the features such as natural beauty, friendliness of the local people and sunshine. These features were perceived as highly desirable features of a holiday destination by the participants, moreover, they found them to be the real features of Croatia. The actual slogans used so far by the Croatian National Tourist Board did not focus explicitly on any of these features, except the slogans "Natural Stress Relief" and "Croatia –a paradise on Earth" which emphasized the natural beauty of Croatia. This may be the reason why the new slogans proposed by the participants were not similar to the actual slogans used to advertise Croatia as a tourist destination. Furthermore, the slogans used by the Croatian National Tourist Board did not describe at least two features of the country, but were mostly focused on one feature. For instance, the slogan "Croatia – The new star of the EU" was focused on the fact that Croatia is a new member of the EU. Also, the slogan "The Mediterranean as it once was" was also focused on one feature and that is the

one of being unspoiled. The lack of several features combined in one slogan, and the lack of features that a British holidaymaker would find appealing and Croatia actually has them, is what may have led to an unsatisfactory general appeal of the slogans to British holidaymakers.

So, these results suggest a new direction for the development of the Croatian tourism slogans which will be aimed for the British market. Although the findings leave space for further research on the topic, the suggestion arising from this survey is that the Croatian National Tourist Board may have more effective tourism slogans by combining several features of Croatia in one slogan. Also, if these features were related to relaxation, sun, natural beauty and friendliness, British holidaymakers would associate them with their own concepts of a great holiday destination and their holiday preferences, and consequently this would lead to a greater success of the slogans and their final effect – the rising number of British travellers who will visit Croatia based on this branding tool. As pointed out by Joppeet (2001), by linking the drivers of satisfaction with the image of the destination that is portrayed, it is possible to focus on the key attributes that will ensure that the destination can meet or exceed the visitor's expectations (Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 112).

The brand image of Croatia may be even stronger if the brand positioning tools would include logos or images next to slogans, but not just any logos or images. For instance, the participants in the survey mentioned the walls of Dubrovnik, and the picture of church in Rovinj as common associations about Croatia. However, considering that they are in a sense perceived as symbols of Croatia, including them as a part of the branding tool for the British market may develop a stronger and a more positive brand image of Croatia. Creating a concept of the uniqueness of a country, by using slogans as a branding tool, can indeed lead to a successful branding (Došen Ozretić, Vranešević, Prebežac, 1998: 112). The crucial aspect is of course to make sure that a particular image is indeed strongly associated with Croatia by British holidaymakers, so their cultural mindset has to be taken into consideration.

The results of this survey, despite the small sample, are in line with the results of the survey on the brand image of Germany as a tourist destination, in which the participants were British holidaymakers. Interestingly, as Germany is a different type of holiday destination than Croatia, some highly desirable attributes of Germany were also natural beauty and friendliness of the local people (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 12), what may have been culturally based associations of the British holidaymakers similarly to the case of

Croatia. Namely, it seems that the features such as the natural beauty and the friendliness of the local people generally appeal to British holidaymakers and they seem to look for them in destinations which they visit or plan on visiting. For example, if we compare the survey on the Croatian tourism slogans presented in the thesis and the study on the German tourism brand by Achterkamp and Robinson, the features such as the natural beauty and the friendliness of the local people indeed stand out as highly desirable features that British citizens found accurate for both countries. Therefore, it may be that the preference of these features is culturally based. If that is the case, those tourist destinations with features such as the natural beauty and the hospitality of the local people could take this fact at their advantage and promote such features in slogans aimed for the British market. As a result, destinations such as Croatia and Germany may become more attractive to British travellers.

Furthermore, the analysis of the results of the study on German tourism brand revealed that the most frequently occurring attributes these holidaymakers associated with Germany were *beautiful scenery* and *economic affluence* (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 12). Also, it was recommended that the German National Tourist Board focuses on communicating an image of outstanding hospitality and beautiful countryside (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 12). Furthermore, it was suggested that potential holidaymakers are introduced to the potential of Germany's beaches through different marketing activities (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 17). It is interesting to note that the highest discrepancies between the importance and performance ratings were found with regards to German beaches, climate as well the relation between the price and the quality of a holiday (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 17). This suggests that British visitors perceive Germany as rather unattractive regarding the climate and the availability of beaches and as a relatively expensive country (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 17). Moreover, according to the survey, many respondents also wrote that there are no existing beaches in Germany, what suggests a lack of knowledge about the country (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 13).

The results of the survey suggest that as a holiday destination, Germany is actually able to satisfy its visitors' needs while at the same time it seems that Germany is not communicating this to potential visitors. Successful branding in the case of Germany would mean a continuing emphasis on sightseeing, gastronomical offer and cleanliness while taking measures to raise awareness about outstanding hospitality and beautiful countryside (

Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 17). This is possible by using effective slogans which will advocate these particular features of Germany. The assumption made by Witt and Moutinho (1995) is that images even exist in the absence of factual knowledge, although this may be subconscious (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 16). This assumption may be visible in the fact that many visitors perceive Germany as a completely continental country with no exit to the sea.

Germany, together with Croatia, can build on this image and ensure that the visitors from the UK are aware of the country's potential and features through recommendations, but also other sources (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 16). The mentioned measures can significantly increase the confidence of potential visitors in terms of reducing their perceived risk and raising their expectations, which in turn creates a competitive advantage for Germany (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 16). A possible limitation is a small number of participants in the survey on the German tourism brand, so the findings may not be completely generalisable (Achterkamp, Robinson, Moital, 2011: 16). However, similarly to the survey on the Croatian tourism slogans, future researchers could use a larger and more representative sample in order to test the findings of this study on the perception of Germany among British tourists and possibly confirm the recommendations that arise from it.

When it comes to Croatia's brand and tourism slogans as a branding tool, I agree with Perkov (2005: 14) that it is essential that Croatia defines its own identity as a tourist destination. Only then the promotion of that identity will be possible (Perkov, 2005: 14). In order to do that successfully, Croatia as a country has to apply systematic, serious and coordinated approach (Perkov, 2005: 2). Only in this way it will be possible for Croatia to develop a better communication at an international level (Perkov, 2005: 2). I find it important to emphasize that the identity of Croatia as a tourist destination has to be oriented towards a specific market, taking into consideration the target audience, their culture and preferences.

By way of conclusion, let us observe that Croatian tourism slogans, a very useful branding tool, have so far proved unsuccessful when it comes to the specific market such as the United Kingdom and therefore it is an area which requires improvement with the goal of strengthening Croatia's brand. The results of the survey conducted suggest that there are ways how to successfully improve the Croatian tourism slogans and make them attractive for the British market. For instance, the results of the survey suggest that apart from its natural resources, the biggest assets of Croatia are its people and British holidaymakers recognize it.

Unfortunately, in the document of the Croatian Tourism Strategy until 2020 there is no sign of branding for specific markets, right on the contrary, the branding is oriented to the international market as a whole. However, without taking the cultural base for the perception of the Croatian tourism slogans on the specific market, such as the United Kingdom, it is difficult to expect that creating the unique Croatian tourism brand will be successful.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In the field of tourism today, there is a growing awareness of the importance of destination marketing. Croatia is currently among those countries with a need for a clearer and stronger brand identity as a tourist destination. It is maintained here that, this brand has to be oriented towards specific markets, such as the United Kingdom, as exemplified in this work.

Few surveys have been conducted so far on the image of Croatia as perceived by specific markets, and the only survey of this type, conducted by Ozretić, Vranešević and Prebežac in 1998, was aimed at mixed international visitors to Croatia, so the results are not quite comparable. Although a small sample of participants was included in the survey, the results of the survey presented in this thesis suggest that British holidaymakers may not be very well acquainted with Croatia as a tourism destination and because of that rely mostly on recommendations. It seems that they are a specific target group of holidaymakers who, by being exposed to a quality branding of Croatian tourism, could be encouraged to seek more information and choose Croatia as their holiday destination. Consequently, they may become customers loyal to Croatia's tourism brand. In order to achieve this, slogans seem to be a very good branding tool.

The results of the survey suggest that British holidaymakers have specific, culturally based preferences when it comes to their holidays, as well as specific most common mental associations about a great holiday destination. These associations inevitably influence their decisions on the choice of a holiday destination. The field of psycholinguistics provides invaluable insights in the network of concepts that exist in the travellers' minds, and explains the influence of the strengths of these links onto their final decision making. Since consumers actively consider between two and six options in decision making, according to Pike and Bianchi (2013: 3), they will rely on brand associations. The results of the survey presented in this thesis suggest that the most important general associations that British holidaymakers have about holiday are relaxation, sunshine, new place and sightseeing, while attributes that they associate with a great holiday destination are similar. In their view, a great holiday destination is relaxing, friendly and welcoming, sunny as well as scenic or picturesque. The crucial point of the survey is that many of these features are recognized as being present in Croatia and visitors describe it as naturally beautiful, safe and as a country which offers a

good quality of life. I find this an excellent and a very important starting point for the development of Croatia's brand.

For instance, taking the above mentioned factors into consideration, a possible suggestion for a new Croatian tourism slogan, to be used for the British market, could be "Sunny, scenic and smiling – Croatia". Alternatively, a slightly changed version could be "Sunny, scenic and smiling – your Croatia!". This slogan implies that Croatia has the features that British holidaymakers prefer, and is in line with their mental associations about a great holiday destination which is relaxing, friendly, scenic and sunny. Of these, this slogan highlights three features and these are the fact that Croatia is sunny, that it is naturally beautiful (*scenic*), and that it is friendly and welcoming (*smiling*). It therefore offers a complete picture of Croatia, in light of the British cultural mindset. Interestingly, this slogan can be altered by adding additional features and adjectives that describe Croatia. For example, the adjective *safe*. The altered slogan therefore becomes "Safe, sunny, scenic and smiling - Croatia!".

Except for the fact that the suggested slogan offers a possibility to describe additional features of Croatia, the position of each adjective within this slogan can also make a difference. For instance, by putting the adjective *safe* in first position in the slogan, the emphasis is on the safety of the country in comparison to all other features. In this case, the slogan will probably have more impact on the British travellers who consider safety of a country to be the most important when choosing a holiday destination. As the British holidaymakers included in the survey stated that safety of a country is an important factor when choosing a holiday destination, putting the adjective "safe" in the first place in the mentioned slogan will turn the focus of British travellers on the safety of Croatia as a country. Getting back to the preferences of the British holidaymakers included in this survey, it is worth noting that by opting for the combination of words such as "Smiling, scenic, safe and sunny – Croatia!" the biggest emphasis will be on the friendliness of the local people, which British holidaymakers appreciate very much.

Other possible suggestions for a new slogan based on the findings of this study are "Croatia – a welcoming mind & body treat under the sun!" and "Croatia – sun friendly destination for a great vacation!". Both slogans emphasize the recognized features of Croatia such as friendliness and sunshine. A suggestion of the new slogan that includes all desired features, except for safety, is the following: "Croatia – where the sun, beauty and friendship



unite!” Such slogans may have a more positive final effect on British holidaymakers considering that they account for the British cultural mindset.

When it comes to the evaluation of the Croatian tourism slogans that have been used in the last ten years, participants found the slogan “Croatia – so beautiful, so close” to be the most accurate and the most appealing Croatian tourism slogan. There were also slogans for which participants stated that have a negative effect on their decision to visit, such as the slogan “Croatia – The New Star of the EU”, which they considered to be too political. However, when participants had to decide which of the slogans used for other countries may be appropriate for Croatia, they based their choice on the same features they emphasized as desirable when it comes to a great holiday destination. So, the most desirable new but “borrowed” Croatian tourism slogan was *Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia*. The reason for this may be the fact that it contains two adjectives, *natural and unspoiled*, that best describe Croatia in the participants’ opinion. Also, even when participants wrote their suggestions of slogans, Croatia was mostly described as a naturally beautiful, relaxing, friendly country as well as unique in comparison to other tourist destinations. These seem to be the determinant associations with Croatia which may influence the British travellers’ decision to visit, and seem to be in line with their general holiday preferences and associations according to the Anderson’s psycholinguistic theory of spreading activation as well as decision making theories.

This finding seems very important and the Croatian National Tourist Board could use it to design effective slogans for this particular market, taking into consideration the cultural mindset of British holidaymakers. Also, the suggestions that participants have offered for new Croatian tourism slogans are very different in form and content from the actual Croatian tourism slogans that have been used in the last 10 years. Not only do the suggested slogans advocate the above mentioned features of Croatia, but they also combine at least two of these features. This suggests that the actual slogans that the Croatian National Tourist Board has used so far may not be entirely successful when it comes to the British market as the British cultural mindset and preferences of their travellers are not taken into consideration. The limitation of the survey is a small sample as well as the not too varied age range of the participants, so the hypothesis could not be confirmed. However, the results open a possibility for further research on the development of a successful Croatian tourism brand on the British market.

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I hope that the results of the survey presented in the thesis will be of interest to all those who want to know more about the development of Croatia's tourism brand, those who are employed in the tourism sector in Croatia and perhaps want to learn more on the perception of Croatia on the specific market such as the United Kingdom, but also to those who are simply interested in the use of language in tourism advertising. In any case, I hope that the survey presented and its results will be of interest for further research on the topic and the improvement of the Croatia's tourism brand on the British market and beyond, using the knowledge from the fields of marketing and psycholinguistics.

## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE CROATIAN TOURISM SLOGANS AND THE LANGUAGE USED IN HOLIDAY INDUSTRY

*Please take 5 to 10 minutes to fill in this questionnaire, in order to help us understand the efficiency of Croatian tourism slogans and the destination image of Croatia. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and it will be used as integral part of the Master Thesis of Zeljka Despot, M. Econ, from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia. Hopefully, it will provide valuable information for further advancement of Croatian tourism campaigns. Thank you!*

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER: \_\_\_\_\_

PROFESSION (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

**Travelling (select one option):**

- a) alone
- b) with a partner
- c) with family
- d) with friends

**Reasons for visiting Croatia (select one option):**

- a) sightseeing
- b) sport
- c) relaxing
- d) other \_\_\_\_\_

**Your decision to visit Croatia was based on:**

- a) Printed brochure
- b) Internet source
- c) a recommendation
- d) TV or radio commercial

**Part 1. General associations when it comes to holiday.**

1. What is the first word that comes to your mind when somebody mentions the word **HOLIDAY**?

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2. What are the typical **adjectives** that you associate with a great holiday destination? Please name at least three.

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3. When choosing a holiday destination, what are the 3 most important motivators for you?

Aspects to be considered	Level of importance	
	Most important (choose 3)	Least important ( choose 3)
Destination is safe.		
Destination is close to your home country.		
Destination is sunny.		
Destination is warm.		
Destination is a good value for money.		
Destination is popular.		

**Part 2. Associations connected to Croatia**

4. What adjective first comes to your mind when somebody mentions the word Croatia?

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5. Can you recall any slogan connected to Croatia?

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6. Can you describe Croatia in a phrase /sentence?

---

7. Circle **only two features** that, in your opinion, best describe Croatia as a country in general, not as tourist destination:

a) underdeveloped

d) unsafe

g) good quality of life

b) small

e) poor

h) safe

c) naturally beautiful

f) rich

8. Rate the following features of Croatia as a country, not as a tourist destination:

(1 poor, 2 satisfactory, 3 good, 4 very good, 5 excellent)

FEATURES	GRADE				
Economy	1	2	3	4	5
Natural beauty	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of life	1	2	3	4	5

### Part 3. Slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board.

9. Which of the following slogans for Croatia you find the most accurate in description of Croatia as a tourist destination? Rate the slogans 1 to 5.

(1 the least accurate, 5 the most accurate)

<i>Croatia - Mediterranean as it once was.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - The world of difference.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - Natural Stress Relief.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - The New Star of the European Union.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia like a picture –Picture like Croatia.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – Paradise on Earth.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – so beautiful, so close!</i>	1	2	3	4	5

10. Which of the following slogans of the Croatian National Tourist Board you find the most appealing? Rate the slogans 1 to 5.

(1 the least appealing, 5 the most appealing)

<i>Croatia - Mediterranean as it once was.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - The world of difference.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - Natural Stress Relief.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia - The New Star of the European Union.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia like a picture –picture like Croatia.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – Paradise on Earth.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Croatia – so beautiful, so close!</i>	1	2	3	4	5

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Tick the box below the statement if you feel that the statement is true for a slogan. Mark – if you feel that the statement is not true for a slogan.

SLOGAN	STATEMENT 1: Croatia is a quality holiday destination	STATEMENT 2: Croatia is better than other destinations.
Croatia - Mediterranean as it once was		
Croatia - The world of difference.		
Croatia - Natural Stress Relief.		
Croatia - The New Star of the European Union		
Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.		
Croatia like a picture –picture like Croatia		
Croatia – Paradise on Earth.		
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!		
Croatia – so beautiful, so close!		

12. Mark **only one word** that best describes your impression of Croatia through each of the slogans below.

	unspoiled	cheap	safe	unique	undiscovered	old	natural
Croatia – Mediterranean as it once was.							
Croatia - The world of difference							
Croatia – Natural Stress Relief.							
Croatia - The New Star of the European Union.							
Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.							
Croatia like a picture –picture like Croatia.							
Croatia – Paradise on Earth.							
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!							
Croatia – so beautiful, so close!							

13. For each of the slogans, mark how positive or negative impression it provokes for Croatia as a tourist destination.

	Croatia as a tourist destination	
	Positive	NEGATIVE
Mediterranean as it once was	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The world of difference.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Natural Stress Relief	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The New Star of the European Union.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Croatia like a picture – picture like Croatia	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Croatia – paradise on Earth.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Croatia – so beautiful, so close!	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

14. For every slogan, decide how strong it affects your desire to visit the country:

(1 – Low effect, 5 - high effect to visit the country)

Croatia - Mediterranean as it once was.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia - The world of difference.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia - Natural Stress Relief.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia - The New Star of the European Union.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia – A small country for a great holiday.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia like a picture – picture like Croatia.	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia – Paradise on Earth.	1	2	3	4	5
When the heart says summer, it says Croatia!	1	2	3	4	5
Croatia – so beautiful, so close!	1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you think a tourism slogan can affect a decision on tourist destination?

YES            NO

If yes, how/why? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Below are slogans used in tourist campaigns for different countries worldwide. Please **circle the one** that you think would fit Croatia best, and **underline the one** that you think is the least appropriate:

*Croatia - Awaken to a Different World*

*Croatia - A new point of view.*

*Smile! You are in Croatia.*

*Croatia. Get natural*

*Croatia. There's only one.*

*Croatia. Positively Transforming*

*Croatia – Everything Under a Sun.*

*Croatia – better than others.*

*Croatia marks.*

*Natural. Unspoiled. Croatia.*

17. Can you think of an interesting new slogan for Croatia?

\_\_\_\_\_

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**18.** Any additional comments you may have.....

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*Thank you very much for your collaboration! Have a nice holiday!*





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