Synopsis of Research Work Undertaken for the Award of Ph.D.
On

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF DESTINATION PERSONALITY IN PREDICTING TOURIST BEHAVIOUR

Submitted by

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Introduction

In today's highly competitive marketplace, consumers have not only surrounded with various brands from different organizations, but also targeted by different marketing strategies so that they can differentiate their brands from the competitors. Although the application of branding in product and services can be traced back to 1960s, the idea of branding tourism destinations is comparatively new (Gnoth, 1998; Cai, 2002). A tourism destination can be considered as a product or as a brand as it consists of a bundle of tangible and intangible attributes (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal, 2007). Marketers associated with varied destinations are focusing on branding the destinations in order to craft a unique identity which can motivate the tourists to visit those destinations. The destination marketing organizations (DMO's) are striving hard to attract tourists because destinations are becoming substitutable owing to the growing competition (Pike and Ryan, 2004). Destination branding is emerging as a popular and imperative tool to differentiate one destination from another (Usakli & Baloglu, 2013; Chen & Phou, 2013). Ekinci and Hosany (2006) argued that destination personality (DP) can act as a viable metaphor for creating destination brands, crafting a unique destination identity, and understanding destination perceptions of a visitor.

Destination personality refers to the brand personality in the context of tourism literature. On the basis of Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) described destination personality to be a set of human characteristics that are associated with a particular destination. Keller (1993) suggested that the product related attributes serve utilitarian function and brand personality serve symbolic function of the product or service. In addition, according to the self–congruity theory, there should be similarity between destination personality and tourists' self-concept. Self–congruity refers to the similarity or dissimilarity between destination personality and one's self-concept (Sirgy et al., 1982). Aaker (1995) suggested that the basic notion of self–congruity theory refers to the drive of buying products and services of those personalities that match the consumer's own personality. Similarly, applying the same notion in tourism, it can be argued that greater the similarity between tourist's self–concept and destination personality, higher is the chance of favorable attitude development in the tourists toward that destination. This favorable attitude may affect the tourist's intention to revisit or willingness to recommend that destination. Thus, understanding of the concept of self–congruity can help to predict the complex behavior of the tourists.

Although destination personality and self–congruity are the two major elements of destination branding (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), the relationship between the two has remained largely unexplored (Murphy et al., 2007). Thus, additional research must be focused in order to fill this void in literature, especially with regard to tourist–destination relationship that may enhance the tourist loyalty (Chen & Phou, 2013; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Nevertheless the destination marketers have long recognized the importance of branding destinations, the concept of tourist–destination relationship has received less research attention.
Every destination around the world is competing for larger market share which has made destinations more belligerent and sophisticated than they have been in the past. India is one of the major destinations for the international tourists and is famous worldwide because of magnificent places, beautiful ranges of mountains, rivers, temples, and landscapes. Furthermore, India is a country which is eminent for its unity in diversity. This diversity is not only because of

the difference in religion, language, or caste, but also because India offers a variety of destinations that may fulfill both the functional and symbolic needs of the visitors. This country offers diverse experience of culture, pilgrimage, medical, adventure, and ecotourism to the travelers.

According to the report of Ministry of Tourism (MoT, 2014), the number of international visitors to India has increased manifold from 1998 to 2014. In 1998, 3.46 million foreigners visited India, which increased to 7.68 million in 2014. The annual growth rate of international tourists visiting India is 10.2% for the fiscal year 2013–2014. The international visitors spent 18.45 billion dollars in 2013 in India which is a huge amount (MoT, 2014). In addition, the tourism industry of India is expected to contribute INR 4306.6 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2023 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2013). The figures presented above reveal that India is a popular destination brand among international visitors. Although India as a destination brand which continues to grow and flourish in terms of numbers of visitors and popularity, the destinations must retain their competitive advantage. To achieve this, destination marketers of India must focus on the dimensions of destination branding, especially destination personality and self–congruity. In this way, destination marketers would be able to better understand the perceptions and intentions of the visitors to India and craft a distinctive brand identity.

Research Objectives

The present study is designed to examine the perceived brand personality of India and to investigate the relationship among destination personality, self–congruity, tourist–destination relationship, and destination loyalty. Accordingly, the study will address the following four major objectives:

Objective 1: To gain a conceptual understanding of the nature and structure of destination personality construct

Objective 2: To develop and validate a reliable and generalizable destination personality scale

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between destination personality and tourists' affective and behavioral outcomes, viz., i) Satisfaction, ii) Trust, iii) Attachment, and iv) Loyalty

Objective 4: To examine the relationship between self–congruity and tourists' affective and behavioral outcomes, viz., i) Satisfaction, ii) Trust, iii) Attachment, and iv) Loyalty

Literature Review & Gaps Identified

An extensive review of literature related to tourism marketing was performed. The online databases such as EBSCO Business Source, Elsevier Science Direct, JSTOR, Emerald, Taylor and Francis, EBSCO (Business source complete), John Willey and Springer etc. were used to collect the journal papers related to this dissertation topic. Several major gaps were identified after reviewing the all tourism marketing literature extensively. First, there is a lack of studies in tourism marketing, destination branding and tourism management within the Indian context.

Second, there are a very few studies which have explored the importance of destination personality as a vital element of destination branding. Third, self-congruity which refers to the match/mismatch between consumer's personality and product personality has been largely left unexplored in the context of tourism destinations. Fourth, to the best of our knowledge, no study has explored the cumulative effect of destination personality and self-congruity in predicting tourist behavior in the context of tourist-destination relationship.

Based on the gaps identified in literature review stage, the following conceptual model was proposed.
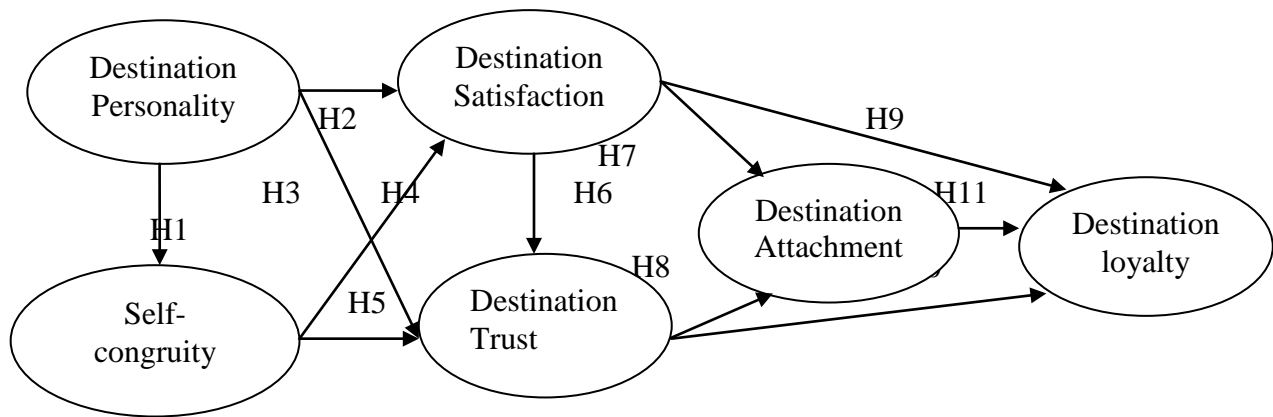
Figure 1: Conceptual model

Research Methodology

This study uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodology. In qualitative stage, all the unique and different human traits associated with India as a tourism destination were explored using literature review, interviews, online tourism sites etc. In quantitative stage, a scale for destination personality was constructed and the same has been used to explore its influence on affective and behavioral outcomes of tourists visiting India. Moreover, a cumulative effect of destination personality and self-congruity on destination loyalty through tourists-destination relationship was verified using structural equation modeling (SEM). The survey has been conducted in two locations of India: Shimla and Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. For data collection, convenience sampling method was used. Sample size for the study is 356, which is sufficiently larger than the suggested number (Hair et al., 1998).

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

SPSS 20 and AMOS 20 statistical packages were used for analyzing the collected data. The analysis of data was performed in various stages. As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1998), the confirmatory factor analysis with the maximum liklihood estimation was performed to check the reliability and validity of the constructs of our conceptual model. The model fit indices were as follows: χ^2= 184.773, df= 103, $\chi2$/df = 1.794, GFI= 0.923, CFI= 0.954, NFI= 0.912, IFI=

0.955, RMR=0.046, RMSEA= 0.066. This suggested a good model fit as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). A structural model with maximum likelihood estimation was used to examine the various relationships among constructs in the proposed model. The findings revealed a good model fit with following fit indices: χ^2 = 200.944, df = 107, χ^2/df = 1.878, GFI = 0.916 ,CFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.897, IFI = 0.948, RMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.07). All the hypotheses except for the hypothesis related to the path between self-congruity and destination trust, were supported.

Table: Results of Hypotheses Testing

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	Result
H1: Destination personality → Self-congruity	.528	_	.528	Accept
H2: Destination personality → Destination satisfaction	.693	.132	.825	Accept
H3: Destination personality → Destination trust	.183	.352	.535	Accept
H4: Self-congruity → Destination satisfaction	.202	_	.202	Accept
H5: Self-congruity → Destination trust	_	.216	.216	Reject
H6: Destination satisfaction → Destination trust	.413	_	.413	Accept
H7: Destination satisfaction → Destination attachment	.236	.468	.704	Accept
H8: Destination trust → Destination attachment	.787	_	.787	Accept
H9: Destination satisfaction → Destination loyalty	.408	.342	.742	Accept
H10: Destination trust → Destination loyalty	.562	.196	.758	Accept
H11: Destination attachment → Destination loyalty	.264	_	.264	Accept

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this study was to examine the role of destination personality in predicting the tourist's post visit behavior within Indian context. More specifically, this study investigated the relationships among destination personality, self-congruity, tourist–destination relationship and destination loyalty. This study used brand relationship theory and Bagozzi's (1992) reformulation of attitude theory (i.e. cognitive →affective → behavior) for examining the antecedents and consequences of tourist–destination relationship in tourism research. The results of structural equation modeling revealed that destination personality plays an important role in building a destination brand. This study findings supported the self-congruity theory (the match between tourist's self-concept and destination personality) in the context of tourism destinations. Furthermore, destination satisfaction emerged as a significant predictor of destination trust. The findings showed that destination trust plays a vital role in building tourist's attachment towards the destination. Although, this study failed to show any relationship between self-congruity and destination trust, further verification of this relationship in future studies is required.

The study offered multiple theoretical and managerial implications. From a theoretical point of view, the results confirm the notion that tourists attribute peronality traits to the destinations as suggested by numerous tourism researchers (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007b; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). Furthermore, this study contributed to tourism literature by developing a destination personality scale to capture the brand personality of the destinations. Unlike Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale, the destination personality scale developed in this study has both context specific and negative personality traits. Furthermore, the six dimensions

of destinations personality scale developed in this study are unique and specific to Indian tourism destinations. The final theoretical contribution of this study is methodological. The study displayed that destination personality should be measured using both qualitative and quantitaive approach consistent with Usakli and Baloglu' (2011) study.

The study also offers specific practical implications for the destination marketers of India. The findings suggest that India has five destination personality dimensions: well-mannered, vibrancy, creativity, conformity, and viciousness. The results also reveal that the positioning of a destination personality scale should consider the context (destination) specific values and cultural attributes while targeting specific population segments. Hence, the destination marketing organizations should position the destinations keeping in mind the target tourist's profile. The results also reveal that the positioning of a destination personality scale should consider the context (destination) specific values and cultural attributes while targeting specific population segments. Hence, the destination marketing organizations should position the destinations keeping in mind the target tourist's profile. The findings of the study suggest that symbolic benefits of a destination sought by the tourists help in understanding the complex travel behaviour. Another practical implication offered by this study is that tourists who experience a match between their perception of destinations and their perception about themselves or their views related to others perception about themselves are more likely to get satisfied with the destination.

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1. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J.K. (2015). "Self-congruity, functional congruity and destination choice: The moderating role of prior experience", "GCMRM Conference" to be organized by **MDI Gurgaon** on 11th-13th March, 2015.

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<u>CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION</u>

I hereby certify that the work which is being presented in the thesis entitled "**EXAMINING THE ROLE OF DESTINATION PERSONALITY IN PREDICTING TOURIST BEHAVIOUR"** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and submitted in the Department of Management Studies of the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee, is an authentic record of my own work carried out during a period from January 2013 to August 2015 under the supervision of *Dr. J. K. Nayak*, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee.

The matter presented in this thesis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of this or any other Institute.

(VIKAS KUMAR)

This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my (our) knowledge.

(J. K. NAYAK)
Supervisor

Date: August 11, 2015

Abstract

Although the efforts of destination branding have started since 1960's, the importance of destination personality in creating the destination brands has been left largely unexplored. This study aims to explore the perceived destination personality of India and to investigate the relationships between destination personality, tourist–destination relationship, self–congruity and destination loyalty. This present study is conceptualized based on the brand relationship theory and attitude theory. A sample of 356 foreign tourists visiting Shimla and Dharamsala-famous holiday destinations in India-is collected using the convenience sampling technique. SPSS 20 and AMOS 20 were used to perform the various multivariate analysis such as factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. In order to measure destination personality, a scale with six dimensions, such as courteousness, vibrancy, creativity, conformity, viciousness, and tranquility is developed. All other remaining constructs have been measured using previously developed scales. The results of the study reveal that tourists attribute personality traits to the destinations. Furthermore, the results of structural equation modeling reveal that destination personality positively influences tourist–destination relationship which further affects tourist's post visit behavior.

In addition, within the context of tourism destinations, this study supports the self–congruity theory and reveals that self–congruity directly or indirectly influences tourist–destination relationship which further influences tourist's post visit behavior. The collective role of destination personality and self–congruity in influencing tourist behavior through tourist–destination relationship is investigated for the first time in this study. The study findings additionally offer multiple theoretical and practical implications for both academicians and practitioners.

The parts of this thesis work have been published as research papers in journals of repute such as Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research (Sage), Tourism Management Perspectives (Elsevier), Advances in Hospitality & Tourism Research and Anatolia (Taylor & Francis).

Keywords: Destination personality, self-congruity, tourist-destination relationship, loyalty, India.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full Name
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BPS	Brand Personality Scale
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
DMO's	Destination Marketing Organizations
DPS	Destination Personality Scale
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
NFI	Normalized Fit Index
RMSR	Root Mean Square Residual
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Chapter 1
Introduction

In this era of globalization, consumers have not been entirely surrounded by various brands from different organizations, but also targeted by different marketing strategies in order to differentiate their brands from the competitors. Although the application of branding in product and services can be traced back to the 1960s, the efforts on branding tourism destinations are comparatively recent (Gnoth, 1998; Cai, 2002). Marketers associated with varied destinations are focusing on branding the destinations in order to craft a unique identity which can motivate the tourists to visit these destinations (Aktaş, Aksu, & Çizel, 2007). The destination marketing organizations (DMO's) are striving hard to attract tourists due to the increasing substitutability of the destinations (Pike & Ryan, 2004).

Destination branding is emerging as a well-liked and imperative tool to differentiate one destination from another (Usakli & Baloglu, 2013; Chen & Phou, 2013). While branding a destination, most destination marketers are still focusing on the functional attributes, such as beaches, mountains, beautiful scenery, in their promotional campaigns and advertisements (Usakli & Baloglu, 2013, Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007a). However, the tourists can find that these functional attributes are common in many destinations; as a consequence, these functional attributes are no longer helpful in distinguishing the destination from others. Therefore, the use of symbolic attributes may better help the destination marketers build a unique identity for their destinations. Ekinci and Hosany (2006) argued that destination personality can act as a feasible metaphor for creating destination brands, building a distinctive destination identity, and understanding destination perceptions of a visitor. Thus, DMO's are advised to focus on distinct personality traits of the destinations in their promotional campaigns and advertisements.

Destination personality refers to the brand personality in the context of tourism destinations. On the basis of Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) described destination personality as the attribution of human personality traits to a particular tourism destination. Tourism researchers have considered tourism destination as a product or as a brand as it comprises of utilitarian and symbolic functions (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2007). The utilitarian function of a product or service refers to the product related attributes

symbolic function is related to emotional aspects such as brand personality (Keller, 1993). In addition, self–congruity theory states that there should be a match between tourists' self-concept and destination personality. Self–congruity refers to the similarity or dissimilarity between one's self-concept and destination personality (Sirgy et al., 1982). The basic notion of self–congruity theory exhibits the drive of buying products and services of those personalities that match the consumer's own personality (Aaker, 1995). Similarly, applying the same notion in tourism, it can be argued that greater the similarity between destination personality and tourist's self–concept, the higher is the chance of favorable attitude development in the tourists toward that destination. This favorable attitude may affect the tourist's intention to revisit or willingness to recommend that destination. Thus, understanding of the concept of self–congruity can help to predict the complex behavior of the tourists.

Destination loyalty has emerged as an imperative element of management research and destination marketing because of the growing competition and acknowledgment of the loyal tourists. Although, the role of satisfaction in predicting tourist loyalty has been thoroughly examined, the influence of other crucial variables, such as attachment and trust, is left unexplored (Yuksel et al., 2010). Moreover, the literature review suggests that merely satisfying the customers in not enough for retaining them in this highly competitive marketplace (Mittal & Lasar, 1998). In this research, the concept of relationship theory is considered, and a better and appropriate concept than satisfaction is proposed for explaining tourist loyalty.

While destination personality and self–congruity are the two major elements of destination branding (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), the relationship between the two has remained largely unexplored (Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendroff, 2007). Thus, additional research is required in order to fill this void in literature, especially with regard to tourist–destination relationship that may further enhance the tourist's loyalty towards the destination (Chen & Phou, 2013; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Nevertheless the destination marketers have realized the significance of branding destinations; the concept of tourist–destination relationship is left largely under investigated.

Every destination around the world is competing for larger market share, which has made destinations more belligerent and sophisticated than they have been in the past. India is one of the major destinations for the international tourists and is famous worldwide because of magnificent places, beautiful ranges of mountains, rivers, temples, and landscapes. Furthermore, India is a country which is eminent for its unity in diversity (Gupta, 2009). This diversity is not only because of the difference in religion, language, or caste, but also because India offers a variety of

destinations that may fulfill both the functional and symbolic needs of the visitors. This country offers diverse experience of culture, pilgrimage, medical, adventure, and ecotourism to the travelers.

According to the report of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT, 2014), the number of international visitors to India has increased manifold from 2004 to 2013. In 2004, 3.46 million foreigners visited India, which increased to 6.97 million in 2013. The annual growth rate of international tourists visiting India is 5.9% for the fiscal year 2012–2013. The international visitors spent 18.45 billion dollars in 2013 in India, which is a huge amount (MoT, 2014). In addition, the tourism industry of India is expected to contribute INR 4306.6 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2023 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2013).

The figures presented above reveal that India is a popular destination brand among international visitors. Although India as a destination brand which continues to grow and flourish in terms of numbers of visitors and popularity, the destinations must retain their competitive advantage. To achieve this, destination marketers of India must focus on the dimensions of destination branding, especially destination personality and self–congruity. In this way, destination marketers of India would be able to recognize the perceptions and intentions of the foreign visitors, which would eventually help them to better meet these visitors' expectations from India as a tourism destination.

1.1. Problem statement

The present study is designed to explore the perceived destination personality of India for developing a valid, reliable, and generalizable destination personality scale (DPS) and to observe the relationships among destination personality, self–congruity, tourist–destination relationship, and destination loyalty. Brand personality is viewed as one of the major elements of branding, and therefore in this study, we examine its application in tourism destinations. First, the underlying dimensions of brand personality in India as a tourism destination are explored. A unique brand personality helps in differentiating a brand from its competitors (Aaker, 1996), increasing brand equity (Keller, 1993), enhancing brand preference (Sirgy, 1982), and building an affective emotional bond or relationship between consumer and brands, thus leading to higher trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Moreover, consumers select brands those have personalities similar to their own personality (Aaker, 1999). Thus, it becomes imperative to understand the significance of brand personality in consumer behavior.

Second, this study explores the personality dimensions of India as a tourist destination and develops a six–dimensional scale for studying the brand personality of destinations. Third, the study investigates the effect of destination personality on the elements of tourist–destination relationship. Fourth, the study examines the effects of self–congruity on the dimensions of tourist–destination relationship. Finally, the study explores the various relationships among destination personality, self–congruity, tourist–destination relationship and destination loyalty to find out the direct and indirect effects among the different constructs of the conceptualized model.

Self–congruity theory states that a part of consumer behavior is explained by the similarity between a product or brand image and consumer's self–concept (Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg et al., 1997). Although several researchers have studied the congruence between consumer's self–concept and brand image, the analogy between consumer's self–concept and brand personality has been largely ignored. Brand image includes both functional and symbolic benefits of brands (Low & Lamb, 2000), whereas, brand personality reflects the symbolic benefits of a brand (Keller, 1993). Thus, it can be argued that brand personality is closely related to the self–concept of consumer compared to brand image because it concentrates on the brand' personality traits. Moreover, the results of Aaker's (1999) study supported the argument associated with the congruency effect of brand personality. Therefore, this study conceptualizes that self–congruity leads to the congruence between brand personality and consumer's self–concept. Similarly, self–congruity for a destination is conceptualized as congruence between tourist's self–concept and destination personality.

Self–congruity is classified into four major types, namely actual self–congruity, ideal self–congruity, social self–congruity and ideal social self–congruity (Sirgy et al., 1997). The present study focuses only on actual self–congruity and ideal self–congruity because most of the researchers have empirically verified these two types of self–congruity in consumer behavior literature (Sirgy, 1982; Hung & Petrick, 2011).

1.2. Research Objectives

This study is designed to examine the perceived brand personality of India and to investigate the relationship among destination personality, self–congruity, tourist–destination relationship, and destination loyalty. Accordingly, the study will address the following four major objectives:

Objective 1: To gain a conceptual understanding of the nature and structure of destination personality construct.

Objective 2: To develop and validate a reliable and generalizable DPS.

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between destination personality and tourists' affective and behavioral outcomes, viz., i) Satisfaction, ii) Trust, iii) Attachment, and iv) Loyalty.

Objective 4: To examine the relationship between self–congruity and tourists' affective and behavioral outcomes, viz., i) Satisfaction, ii) Trust, iii) Attachment, and iv) Loyalty.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

The present study proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Destination personality positively influences self–congruity.

H2: Destination personality positively influences destination satisfaction.

H3: Destination personality positively influences destination trust.

H4: Self–congruity positively influences destination satisfaction.

H5: Self–congruity positively influences destination trust.

H6: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination trust.

H7: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination attachment.

H8: Destination trust positively influences destination attachment.

H9: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty.

H10: Destination trust positively influences destination loyalty.

H11: Destination attachment positively influences destination loyalty.

1.4. Significance of the study

Although the concept of destination branding is studied thoroughly by tourism researchers (Gnoth, 1998; Hall, 1999), the examination and relevance of brand personality as a branding tool in the context of tourism destinations are comparatively new (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Chen & Phou, 2013). Ekinci and Hosany (2006) for the first time in tourism literature examined the relevance of Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework for studying the brand personality of a tourism destination. From that time onwards, some tourism researchers have empirically examined the application of destination personality in destination branding (Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006, Murphy et al., 2007a; Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007b; Chen & Phou, 2013). However, the research on destination personality is sparse and limited till date. In addition, the applicability of self–congruity theory in conjunction with destination personality is

required to be investigated. The relationships among destination personality, self–congruity, tourist–destination relationship, and destination loyalty must be acknowledged.

The study contributes both theoretically and practically to the literatures on destination branding, especially tourist's self–concept and destination personality. In particular, destination personality and self-congruity are the two emerging areas in destination branding, but most of the tourism researchers have ignored these two important constructs. Thus, there is a need to further develop these constructs for better understanding of their importance and contributions to destination branding. Hence, focusing on the personality traits of the destination brands, this study contributes to the existing literature on destination branding. Moreover, the present study assists the destination marketers identifying their destination brands' personality dimensions and contribution of these dimensions in determining tourist's post visit behavioral intentions.

This study also assists destination marketers to understand the complex post visit behavior of the tourist by focusing on the match between personality dimensions of a destination and tourist's self–concept. Furthermore, the study throws light on the role of destination personality and self–congruity in building a relationship or bond between tourist and destination which may further lead to destination loyalty.

1.5. Background and Motivation for this Research

The present study is designed with an aim of branding the Indian destinations by using destination personality and self–congruity as constructs because the tourism industry in India, though growing rapidly, it still ranks 65th in the list of overall 144 countries (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013). Hence, there is an ample scope of further strengthening the positioning of the Indian tourism industry in order to attract and retain a large number of potential travelers throughout the world. This research focuses on two main marketing constructs—destination personality and self–congruity—which may play a critical role in differentiating the destinations from competitive foreign and domestic destinations, and thereby, enhance the attractiveness by better positioning them in the mind of foreign travelers.

Several tourism researchers have empirically examined the relationship between destination personality and tourist behavior by observing a tourist's destination choice and destination loyalty (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), but there is a lack of research focusing on the value of relationship variables (i.e., satisfaction, trust, attachment) in the context of research on tourism behavior. Although the consumer behavior research argues that consumers tend to prefer

or buy products or brands having congruence between consumer's self–concept and brand image, only a few researchers have examined the role of self–congruity (the similarity between consumer's self–concept and brand image) in determining tourist behavior. Thus, to comprehend the literature with new insights, the present study will explore the role of destination personality in conjunction with self–congruity for determining the tourist's post visit behavior.

In addition, the previous studies have used Aaker's (1997) BPS to measure the brand personality of the tourism destinations. There are two major limitations of using Aaker's (1997) scale. First, there is an absence of negative personality traits that a consumer may attribute to a brand. Second, the scale was developed keeping in mind the personality traits a consumer may attach to a brand, and hence may not be appropriate for measuring the brand personality of tourism destinations. Thus, this study makes an attempt to build a valid, reliable, and generalizable DPS for Indian destinations.

1.6. Definition of Terms

Brand: The American Marketing Association (AMA) describes a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (Kotler & Gertner, 2004, p. 41).

Brand Image: According to Keller (1993) brand image is "the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" (p. 3).

Brand Personality: Aaker (1997) defined brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 347).

Destination Branding: Destination branding is "the marketing activities (1) that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates a destination; (2) that convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; and (3) that serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers' decisions to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative one" (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005, p. 331).

Destination Image: Destination image is defined as "the sum of the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a tourist holds about a destination" (Crompton, 1979, p. 70), and it is

considered as a multidimensional construct having three primary dimensions, which are cognitive, affective, and conative (Prayag, 2007).

Destination Personality: According to Hosany et al., (2006) destination personality is "the set of human characteristics associated to a tourism destination" (p. 639).

Self–concept: Rosenberg (1979) defined self–concept as "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (p. 7). In consumer behavior literature, self–concept is viewed as a multidimensional concept having more than one type of self–perspective. For instance, Sirgy (1982, p. 288) "recognized four sorts of self–concept, specifically, (i) actual self–concept, (ii) ideal self–concept, (iii) social self–concept, and (iv) ideal social self–concept". The definitions of social self–concept and ideal social self–concept are not given in this section, because this study uses only actual and ideal self–concept.

Actual Self–Concept: According to Sirgy, 1982, "actual self–concept is the perception of an individual about himself or herself" (p. 288).

Ideal Self–Concept: The ideal self–concept refers to the way in which an individual would like to perceive himself or herself (Sirgy, 1982).

Self–Congruity: Self–congruity represents the degree of similarity between consumer's self–concept and product or brand image (Sirgy, 1982). This similarity is called self–image or product image congruity, or self–congruity in short (Sirgy et al., 1991). In this study, self–congruity is conceptualized as the similarity between tourist's self–concept and destination brand personality.

Destination satisfaction: According to Chen & Chen, 2010, "Tourist satisfaction is primarily referred to as a function of pre-travel expectation and post-travel experience" (p. 30). Accordingly, destination satisfaction is defined as a tourist's emotional response to the extent the destination is capable of meeting their needs and expectations.

Destination Trust: Brand trust is "affect–based, which refers to a feeling that is the outcome of a communal relationship with a brand" (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006, p. 100), and is defined as "the consumer's willingness to rely upon his or her expectations about a firm's future behavior" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 42). Accordingly, destination trust is defined as the tourist's willingness to depend upon their expectations about the future behavior of a particular destination.

Destination attachment: Place attachment is defined as "a set of positive beliefs and emotions that an individual experiences about a physical site and that experience gets meaning through interaction" (Milligan, 1998, p. 2). Accordingly, destination attachment is defined as the affective bond or emotional linkage of the tourist to the destination.

Destination loyalty: Customer loyalty is defined as "the relationship between relative attitude and repeat patronage" (Dick & Basu, 1994, p. 49; Oliver, 1999). Tourist loyalty is considered as an extension of customer loyalty in tourism setting (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Baloglu, 2001). Hence, we define destination loyalty as tourist's intention to revisit or recommend to others a particular destination.

1.7. Organization of Thesis

The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, the conceptualization and measurement of destination personality and self–congruity are studied. Moreover, the existing studies related to destination personality and self–congruity are reviewed. Finally, the hypotheses development section is discussed using relevant literature. In Chapter 3, the methodology is described, which includes measures, pilot study, data collection, sample profile, and hypotheses testing. More specifically, this chapter discusses all the aspects starting from questionnaire designing to data analysis. In Chapter 4, the results of the present study are discussed.

Finally, the thesis concludes in Chapter 5, in which the discussion of the findings is presented. Furthermore, the chapter discusses about the theoretical and practical implications and contribution of the study. At the end, the limitations and future research are discussed.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

The literature review reveals that the concept of branding has been thoroughly explored and applied in general marketing field. However, the application of branding to destinations is a recent development (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Hosany et al., 2006). A strong brand facilitates in differentiating a product from its competitors (Keller, 1993), thereby minimizing perceived risks (O'Cass& Grace, 2003) along with reducing information search costs (Biswas, 1992) and also satisfying both functional and symbolic needs of customers (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). According to the AMA, brand may be defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (Kotler & Gertner, 2004, p. 41). The tourism researchers consider destination as a product and assumes that it can be branded just as any other product. In spite of this, building destination brands is a more complicated process than creating brands for traditional products and services (Hankinson, 2001). Blain et al. (2005) established in their study that most of the destination marketing organizations are concentrating on selective aspects of branding, such as punch lines, logos, etc. Though, on the contrary, destination branding is "much more than creating slogan, punch lines and logos" (Ekinci et al., 2007, p. 435). The process of destination branding includes capturing the different elements of a destination in the brand and communicating those elements to potential and current consumers through different components of brand, such as brand personality or brand image.

2.1. Brand Personality in General Marketing Literature

Brand personality refers to "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). Although the brands are inanimate objects, the human characteristics can be attributed to them (Aaker, 1997; Plummer, 1985). These human characteristics could be traits like energetic, active, sophisticated or youthful. For example, consumers may describe Coca–cola as a cool drink, whereas Pepsi may be associated with young trait (Aaker, 1997). Similarly, Marlboro cigarettes can be described as masculine (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006), Dr. Pepper as unique (Plummer, 1985) and BMW as sophisticated (Phau & Lau, 2000).

A unique and distinctive brand personality helps in brand differentiation (Aaker, 1996) increases brand equity (Keller, 1993), enhances brand preference and consumption (Aaker, 1999), builds strong brand attachment (Landon, 1974), evokes emotional links and thus leading to greater trust and loyalty between brands and consumers (Fournier, 1998). Aaker (1999) argues that it is crucial to understand the concept of brand personality since consumers prefer products which match with their personalities. Although numerous researchers attempted to understand the concept of brand personality, very few studies are present because of the absence of a solid theoretical framework and reliable and valid scale to measure brand personality (Aaker, 1997). In a pioneering study, Aaker (1997) constructed a comprehensive, valid, reliable, and generalizable BPS using a large sample and a wide range of personality traits. As can be seen in Figure 1, Aaker (1997) not only constructed a 42–item BPS, but also presented a conceptual framework for brand personality with five dimensions that are 'sincerity', 'excitement', 'sophistication', 'competence' and 'ruggedness'. Aaker (1997) included 37 brands across various categories. Although he argued that the dimensions of BPS are generic and can be exercised across different product categories, the use of these dimensions across different cultures may not be suitable. Thus, more investigation is essential to assess the applicability of these dimensions of BPS across different cultures. Since then, many researchers have applied the framework of BPS to different product categories and across various cultures (Aaker, Benet- Martinez, & Garolera, 2001; Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003; Freling & Forbes, 2005). The findings of some of the studies are discussed in the next section.

Aaker et al. (2001) tested the brand personality structures of commercial brands across different cultures by conducting four studies in different countries. The counties included in the study were Japan, Spain, and USA. The findings of the studies suggested a five–dimensional brand personality structure for the three countries. From the findings it was also learnt that of the five, three dimensions (sincerity, sophistication, and excitement) were present across all three countries. The 'ruggedness' dimension emerged only for United States and 'passion' dimension was specific to Spain. Additionally, the 'peacefulness' as a dimension was common to both Japan and Spain. Although some dimensions were found to be common across the three countries, the personality traits comprising the common dimensions were different.
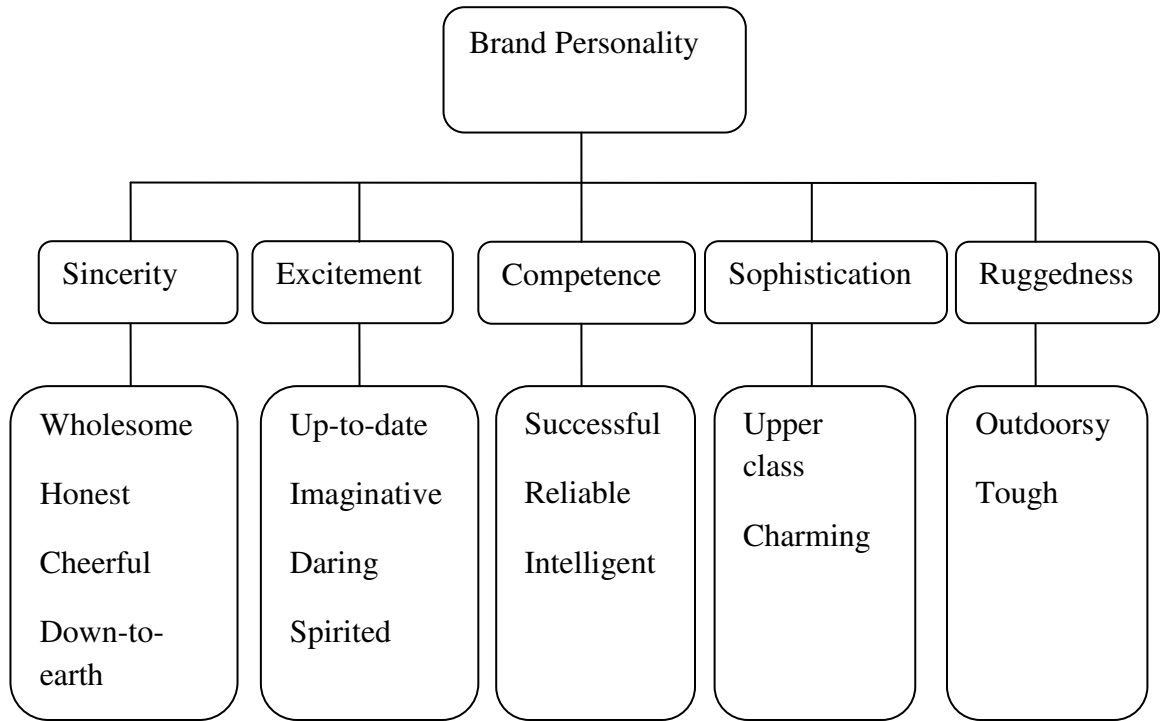
Figure 1: Brand Personality Framework. Adapted from "Dimensions of Brand Personality" (Source: Aaker, 1997)

Later on, Supphellen and Grønhaug (2003) examined the validity of Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework in Russian culture and found a five–dimensional brand personality construct which was having similarities to Aaker's (1997) brand personality construct. The five dimensions found in the study were 'sincerity', 'excitement', 'sophistication', 'successful and contemporary', and 'ruggedness'. In spite of the similarity in the dimensions observed in this study, some personality traits shifted to different dimensions. For instance, traits such as 'upper class' and 'up-to-date' respectively moved from the dimensions' sophistication' and 'excitement' to 'successful and contemporary' dimension. Hence, the findings of this study confirmed Aaker's (1997) argument that BPS is not so robust across cultures.

Siguaw, Mattila, & Austin (1999) examined the applicability of Aaker's (BPS) for determining the brand personality of the restaurants across three segments: casual, quick-service, and upscale. The findings revealed that consumers perceive the restaurants differently on five dimensions of BPS across the three segments. Quick service restaurants emerged as less rugged and less exciting, whereas, upscale restaurants were perceived to be more sophisticated. Casual restaurants were perceived as more sincere, but less competent. Similarly, Murase and Bojanic

(2004) employed Aaker's (1997) BPS for examining the consumer perceptions about the personalities of three quick service restaurants across two cultures. A sample of university students of United States and Japan was used to evaluate the ability of the BPS for observing cultural differences. The findings revealed small cultural differences among brands across cultures. The American consumers evaluated the restaurants as less rugged and sophisticated than the Japanese consumers, but no differences were found for other dimensions like sincerity, competence, and excitement. However, the findings suggested significant differences across the brands. KFC was evaluated as less exciting and competent, whereas, Wendy's was found to be more sincere and sophisticated. In addition, some other differences across brands were observed, such as in Japan both the restaurants were perceived with positive brand personalities, but in United States Wendy's brand personality was perceived to be more positive than KFC.

Furthermore, Freling and Forbes (2005) examined the relationship between brand personality and different performance outcomes using experimental research with 192 objects. The results exhibited a positive relationship between brand personality and product evaluations. Furthermore, the findings revealed that consumers tend to develop favorable attitudes toward brands with robust and positive personalities. In addition, the authors observed that a positive and strong brand personality engenders strong brand associations. Moreover, they suggested that for building unique and distinctive brand equity, it is necessary to develop a strong and unique brand personality.

2.2. Self–congruity and Self–concept in General Marketing Literature

Researchers have recommended that consumers often prefer to buy products that are congruent to how they see themselves or how they might want to see themselves (Landon, 1974; Sirgy, 1982). The literature review suggests that many studies have focused on the ways in which consumers express themselves with the help of brand personality (Belk, 1988; Birdwell, 1968; Malhotra, 1988). Self–concept refers to "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 7). Though self–concept has been conceptualized as a unidimensional construct in the earlier studies, the later studies have conceptualized it as a dual construct that includes actual self–concept and ideal self–concept (Malhotra, 1988). Sirgy (1982) further extended the scope of self–concept by conceptualizing it as a multidimensional construct with the inclusion of social self–concept and ideal social self-concept. Thus self–concept constituted of four dimensions that are actual self–concept, ideal self–concept, social self–concept and ideal social self-concept. Actual self-concept refers to the actual

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perception of an individual about himself or herself, whereas the ideal self–concept refers to the way in which an individual would like to perceive him or her own self. Social self–concept refers to an individual's thought regarding other's perception about him or her own self, while ideal social self–concept corresponds to an individual's desire to be perceived by others (Sirgy, 1982).

Self–congruity theory is grounded on the notion that a consumer prefers products or brands which are congruent with their self-concept. In other words, higher the degree of congruence, greater is the probability of a consumer's intention to buy the product or brand. According to Sirgy et al. (1997), self-image or product image congruity (or self–congruity) refers to the degree of similarity between consumer's self-concept and brand image. Self–congruity theory suggests that consumer behavior can be examined by analyzing a consumer's self–concept and value–expressive attributes towards a product (Sirgy, Johar, Samli, & Claiborne, 1991). There are two main components of self–congruity theory; one is self–concept and the other is product or brand image.

Based on the aforementioned four types of self-concept, self–congruity theory is also categorized into four types – (i) actual self–congruity, (ii) ideal self–congruity, (iii) social self–congruity, and (iv) ideal social self–congruity (Sirgy, 1982). Actual self–congruity refers to the match between actual self–concept and product or brand image. Ideal self–congruity refers to the match between ideal self–concept and product/brand image. Social self–congruity is defined as a match between social self–concept and product or brand image and ideal social self–image refers to match between the ideal social self–concept and the product or brand image (Sirgy, 1985b).

Numerous researchers have studied the effect of self–congruity on the variables of consumer behavior, like product or brand intention, attitude, satisfaction, and loyalty (Sirgy, 1982; Chon & Olsen, 1991; Sirgy et al., 1991). These researchers have mainly emphasized on the congruence between consumers' self–concept and product or brand image. However, Aaker (1997) extended the scope of self–congruity by providing the evidence for the congruence between consumer's self-concept and product or brand personality. It's since then that there has been a sparse investigation of self–congruity based on the match between consumers' self–concept and product or brand personality (Aaker, 1999; Stokburger–Sauer, 2011; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Guido, 2001; Chen & Phou, 2013).

Aaker (1999) argued that consumers prefer those brands whose personality traits are coherent with their own. She applied two experimental research designs to empirically examine the relationship between consumers' personality and brand personality. She employed malleable self–concept which states that self–concept vary according to the situations. Markus and Kunda (1986),

introduced the concept of malleable self–concept, according to which numerous conceptions can be made accessible at a given point of time, such as bad self, good self, social self and ideal self. In her first experiment, Aaker (1999) included only those brands which have strong brand personalities, and the results reinforced her hypotheses. In her second experiment, she used brands with less brand personalities in order to observe whether the same results would be produced. For achieving this, personality traits were imbued to fictitious brands. However, the research hypotheses were supported by the findings of the second experiment. In simple words, the findings of both the studies provided evidence for the assertion that people refer to those brands whose personality characteristics are congruent with the customers' personalities. In addition, the result revealed that personality congruity effect exits and influences consumer perceptions and attitudes through their relationship towards malleable self–concept (Aaker, 1999).

2.3. Brand Personality to Destination Personality

Brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand", has drawn significant attention in consumer behavior research. In contrast to "product related attributes," which tend to serve as a utilitarian function for consumers, brand personality tends to serve as a symbolic function (Keller, 1993). Utilitarian function is related to the intrinsic advantages of a product or service consumption (e.g., product quality), whereas symbolic function tends to serve the extrinsic advantages of the product or service (e.g., brand name, price, etc.) (Riezebos, Kist et al., 2003; Keller, 1993). Practitioners consider the personality of a brand as a key differentiator in a product category (Halliday, 1996), and an essential factor for evaluating consumer behavioral intentions (Biel, 1993). The symbolic use of brands is feasible because consumers attach personality traits to brands (termed animism; e.g., Gilmore, 1919). Consumers can simply consider the brands as celebrities (Rook, 1985) in the same way that they think about themselves. For evaluating the ways and reasons of associating human personality characteristics with non-living objects, such as brands and locations, it can be useful to apply the theories of anthropomorphism (Boyer, 1996). Anthropomorphism refers to the attribution of human characteristics to anything other than human beings (Guthrie, 1997). Anthropomorphism is prevalent in religion, culture, and daily life (Boyer, 1996; Guthrie, 1997). Thus, advertisers tend to use strategies that imbue a brand with personality traits, which is similar to anthropomorphism, in order to make their brand enduring and distinct.

Personality traits of human beings and brands share the same conceptualization, but vary in terms of how they are shaped. Perceptions of human personality characteristics are deduced from an individual's beliefs, attitudes and demographic characteristics (Park, 1986), whereas perceptions about brand personality traits can be influenced and formed by direct or indirect interaction with the brand (Plummer, 1985). These perceptions about personality associated with objects facilitate consumers' interaction with the nonmaterial world (Fournier, 1998). In addition, consumers build up a relationship with a brand based on its symbolic value which, in turn, makes the brand alive and active partner in their minds. Blackston (1993) suggested that brands and consumers are the counterparts of a single system that is analogous to interpersonal relationships.

In the consumer behavior research context, Aaker (1997) describes brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated to a brand" (p. 347). In her pioneering study, Aaker (1997) demonstrated the validity of the brand personality constructs. The BPS has five basic dimensions: sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness, excitement, and competence. Since then, numerous researchers have replicated Aaker's (1997) BPS framework using a variety of consumer brands within different product categories and across different settings (e.g., Siguaw et al., 1999; Aaker et al., 2001). On the basis of the above discussions, one can conclude that brand personality is an extension of human personality traits to products or brands. Likewise, researchers have further broadened the scope of personality construct to encapsulate destinations. Accordingly, destination personality may be described as the set of human characteristics associated with a person visiting a destination. Tourists collect and internalize the different communications projected by a destination and construct a picture of the "behavior" of the destination. Destinations can be attributed with human personality traits in a direct manner through citizens of the nation, hotel employees, and tourist attractions, or merely through the tourist's imagery (Aaker, 1997). Likewise, destinations can be attributed with personality traits in an indirect way through marketing campaigns, including cooperative advertising, value pricing, and media construction of destinations (Cai, 2002).

Although, the research on the application of brand personality to consumer products and services began in 1960's, its' application on tourism destination is comparatively new (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; d'Astous & Boujbel, 2007; Chen &Phou, 2013; Kumar & Nayak, 2014, 2014a). A unique and distinctive brand personality helps in differentiating the brand from competitors' brand (Aaker, 1996), increases brand preference and consumption (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982), enhances the brand equity (Keller, 1993) develops strong emotional bonds between consumers and brands,

thereby, leading to greater trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Similarly, a well-established unique destination personality can help to build a strong perceived image of a destination which in turn may affect the tourist behavior (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006).

2.4. The meaning and conceptualization of destination personality

The review of existing literature reveals that both destination personality and destination image are two different but related concepts (Hosany et al., 2006). Destination image refers to the sum of the ideas, beliefs and impressions that tourists hold about a destination (Crompton, 1979). Numerous researchers have examined the empirical relationship between brand image and brand personality and established that brand image is an encompassing concept, whereas brand personality is more linked to the affective component of the brand image (Patterson, 1999; Hosany et al., 2006). Both destination image and destination personality are key components of destination branding (Chen & Phou, 2013; Hosany et al., 2006). Destination branding has emerged as a powerful marketing tool due to increasing competition and substitutability of destinations. Ekinci and Hosany (2006) suggested the importance of destination personality as a viable metaphor for building destination brands and understanding tourists' perceptions about the destination. Prior research suggests the relevance of destination personality in crafting a unique identity for destinations and building strong destination brands (Stokburger–Sauer, 2011; Ye, 2012; Kim & Lehto, 2013).

The study of destination personality can be considered as a subset of the more well-known field of personality measurement. It is suggested that personality formation and measurement are related to user imagery (Plummer, 1985) and, hence, a brief discussion of this notion is necessary at this stage. Psychologists classify imagery as a unique method of processing and accumulating multisensory information in the memory. In particular, holistic or gestalt methods of representing information are the two main constituents of imagery processing. Imagery includes taste, feeling, smell and vision. On the other hand, 'discursive processing', which is totally opposite to imagery processing, includes the processing of bits of information on individual attributes of the stimuli rather than holistic impressions (MacInnis & Price, 1987). MacInnis and Price (1987) examined the association between imagery and consumer behavior. The authors emphasized the role of both imagery and discursive modes in information processing. In particular, they suggested that a consumer perceives products in terms of both holistic impressions and individual attributes. They

further suggested that the consumer decision-making process utilizes both imagery and discursive information.

An extensive review of the marketing literature suggests that the term 'product personality' has been defined ambiguously. To address the different ways in which 'personality' has been defined in different marketing contexts, the different definitions of brand, store and corporate personality are shown in Table 1. On examining these definitions, we find that the term 'personality' is used to illustrate both imagery and discursive modes of information processing but hardly ever in the same definition. The definitions allude that the perceptions of individual characteristics and the attribution of personality traits to a product are based on the discursive forms of information processing. In contrast, references that are made to total impressions and feelings relate to the imagery or holistic forms of information processing.

Table 1: Selected Definitions of Brand, Store and Organization Personality

Brand
- "The set of human characteristics associated with a brand."

  (Aaker, 1997)
- "Brand personality serves as a powerful tool in increasing consumers' engagement and identification with a brand."

  (Fournier, 1998)
- "A strategic way to differentiate a brand in the eyes of the consumer."

  (Biel, 1993)

Store
- "The way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes."

  (Martineau, 1958)
- "A consumer's perception of the human personality traits attributed to a retail brand."

  (Das, Datta, & Guin, 2012)
- "The mental representation of a store on dimensions that typically capture an individual's personality."

  (d'Astous & Lévesque 2003)

Organization
- "Organization personality is defined as the set of human personality characteristics perceived to be associated with an organization."

  (Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004)
- "It can be defined in terms of the human characteristics or traits of the employees of the corporation as a whole."

  (Keller & Richey, 2006)

Although researchers have often applied the term 'destination personality', an accurate definition of it is frequently avoided. An extensive study of the definitions presented in major destination personality measurement studies conducted until date is shown in Table 2. In reviewing these definitions, it is obvious that many are vague and, in some instances, are not even explicitly mentioned. In most cases, destination personality has been described as "human characteristics associated to a place". It is not evident from the definitions whether the researchers are considering the functional or the symbolic attributes of destination.

Table 2: Definitions Used by Destination Personality Researchers

Author(s)	Objective of the study	Definition of Destination Personality
Chen & Phou (2013)	"A closer look at destination: Image, personality, relationship and loyalty"	"Destination personality refers to brand personality in the tourism context, and uses human personality traits to describe a destination"
Ekinci & Hosany (2006)	"Destination Personality: An Application of Brand Personality to Tourism Destinations"	"The set of human characteristics associated with a destination"
Hosany et al. (2006)	"Destination Image and Destination Personality: An Application of Branding Theories to Tourism Places"	"The set of human characteristics associated to a tourism destination"
Murphy et al. (2007)	"Linking Travel Motivation, Tourist Self-Image and Destination Brand Personality"	Not defined
Li & Kaplanidou (2013)	"The Impact of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games on China's Destination Brand: A U. S. -Based Examination"	"The set of human characteristics associated with a destination"
Usakli & Balgolu (2011)	"Brand personality of tourist destinations: An application of self-congruity theory"	"Destination personality refers to brand personality in the context of tourism literature"
Opoku (2009)	"Mapping Destination Personality in Cyberspace: An Evaluation of Country Web Sites Using Correspondence	"Destination personality is viewed as the set of human characteristics associated with a particular destination

	Analysis"	(country) and how these are communicated through a country Web site"
Kim & Lehto (2012)	"Projected and Perceived Destination Brand Personalities: The Case of South Korea"	Not defined
Ye (2012)	"The impact of destination personality dimensions on destination brand awareness and attractiveness: Australia as a case study"	"Destination personality refers to human personality traits associated with a destination"
Rojas-Méndez, Murphy, & Papadopoulos (2013)	"The U.S. brand personality: A Sino perspective"	"Nation brand personality (NBP) means that a country is personified to have a set of human characteristics associated with consumers"
Stokburger-Sauer (2011)	"The relevance of visitors' nation brand embeddedness and personality congruence for nation brand identification, visit intentions and advocacy"	Not defined
Murphy et al. (2007a)	"Using Brand Personality to Differentiate Regional Tourism Destinations"	Not defined
Pitt, Opoku, Hultman, Abratt, & Spyropoulou (2007)	"What I say about myself: Communication of brand personality by African countries"	"The set of human characteristics associated with a particular country"
De Moya & Jain (2013)	"When tourists are your friends: Exploring the brand personality of Mexico and Brazil on Facebook"	Not defined
d'Astous & Boujbel (2007)	"Positioning countries on personality dimensions: Scale development and implications for country marketing"	"Country personality is defined as the mental representation of a country on dimensions that typically capture an individual's personality"
Hankinson	"Relational network brands: Towards a	"Destination brand personality is defined as the functional, symbolic and

| (2004) | conceptual model of place brands" | experiential attributes of a place" |
| Prayag (2007) | "Exploring the Relationship between Destination Image & Brand Personality of a Tourist Destination – An Application of Projective Techniques" | "It reflects the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" |

However, the methodologies employed to measure destination personality reveal that the majority of the studies conceptualize destination personality in terms of symbolic attributes rather than functional benefits (refer to Table 3). In contrast, Hankinson (2004) described brand personality as the functional, symbolic and experiential attributes of a location. Furthermore, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) proposed that destination personality may act as a viable metaphor for building brands, evaluating visitors' perceptions, and crafting a distinctive identity for tourism destinations. In the context of nation brand personality, d'Astous and Boujbel (2007) described destination personality as "the mental representation of a country on dimensions that typically capture an individual's personality". In a similar study on developing Nation Brand Personality (NBP), Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) described NBP as the personification of a country with a set of characteristics associated with human personality. Some researchers have examined the role of destination personality in the context of online destination branding and describe it as "the set of human characteristics associated with a particular destination and how these are communicated through a destination Web site" (Opoku, 2009; De Moya & Jain, 2013). Consequently, it can be deduced that in most of the studies, destination personality is defined as the set of human characteristics that are attributed to a destination. Furthermore, destination personalities can be positioned on a continuum ranging from traits that can be commonly used for comparing all the destinations to those that are unique to a few destinations. It is evident in the literature that there is an association between the method of measurement and the ability to assess destination personality. This will be discussed in the following section, which addresses the procedures used to measure DP.

2.5. Measuring Destination Personality

For measuring destination personality, the symbolic attributes equivalent to a set of human characteristics associated with the destination need to be considered. Furthermore, in the process of measuring destination personality, not only the traits common to all destinations be considered, but

equal importance should also be given to the traits unique to a particular destination. This segment explores methodologies that are employed by tourism researchers for measuring destination personality.

2.5.1. *General techniques for measuring destination personality*

The review of measurement studies in the destination personality literature suggests two basic approaches: structured and unstructured (refer to Table 3). In a structured methodology, a mixture of personality adjectives is specified and incorporated in a standardized instrument. In examining various studies related to destination personality, it was apparent that most of the studies have used Aaker's (1997) BPS to measure the destination personality of a place (i.e., country, state, city, etc.). The respondents are required to rate personality adjectives based upon which 'personality profile' is derived from these ratings (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011).The limitations of using Aaker's (1997) BPS are that i) it does not include the negative traits that a tourist may perceive about a destination, and ii) the scale is culture specific and requires the inclusion of destination-specific attributes. Moreover, the structured methodologies are simple to administer and easy to code because of the standardization of scales. The findings can be analyzed using advanced statistical techniques (Marks, 1976). Structured methodologies are attribute focused, which forces respondents to think about product personality in terms of attributes specified by the scales. Furthermore, the scale items lack the capability to measure unique characteristics of the product.

3: Destination Personality Measurement Methodologies

Author(s)	Destination(s) covered	Methodology	Personality Dimensions
Ekinci & Hosany (2006)	A number of destinations in a European city	Structured: Aaker's (1997) BPS, content validity, 27 items, 5-point bipolar scale	3 Dimensions: sincerity, excitement, and conviviality.
Hosany et al. (2006)	A number of destinations	Structured: Aaker's (1997) BPS, content validity, 27 items, 5-point bipolar scale	3 Dimensions: excitement, sincerity, and conviviality.
d'Astous & Boujbel (2007)	A number of countries	Structured: A number of personality scales, 5-point bipolar scales Unstructured: interviews	6 Dimensions: conformity, agreeableness, assiduousness, wickedness, snobbism, and unobtrusiveness.

Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, and Baloglu (2007)	Mediterranean region Turkey	Structured: 20-item adopted from Ekinci and Hosany (2006) DP traits, 5-point bipolar scale	3 Dimensions: sincerity, excitement, and conviviality.
Murphy, Moscardo, And Benckendorff (2007)	Two destinations in Queensland, Australia: Cairns Whitsunday Islands	Structured: 20 items of Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale Unstructured: Open-ended questions	Cairns (3 dimensions): sophisticated, sincere, and outdoorsy Whitsunday Islands (4 dimensions): Upper class, honest, exciting, and tough.
Murphy et al. (2007a)	Whitsunday Islands, Queensland, Australia	Structured: 20 items of Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	4 Dimensions: sincerity, sophistication and competence, ruggedness and excitement.
Murphy, Benckendorff, and Moscardo (2007b)	Whitsunday Islands, Queensland, Australia	Structured: 20 items of Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	4 Dimensions: sincerity, sophistication and competence, ruggedness and excitement.
Pitt et al. (2007)	10 African countries	Content analysis: a list of 922 synonyms to Aaker's (1997) BPS was prepared, and then classified according to Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions.	Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions were used to evaluate the countries.
Prayag (2007)	South Africa and Cape Town	Unstructured: Projective techniques, in-depth interviews	No dimensions.
Opoku (2009)	10 African countries Websites	Correspondence Analysis: 42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS 5-point bipolar scale	5 Dimensions: sophistication, excitement, sincerity, competence, and ruggedness.
Sahin and Baloglu (2009)	Istanbul, Turkey	Structured: 23 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5 items based on content analysis of travel booklets and online sources, 5-point bipolar scale. Unstructured: open-ended questions	5 Dimensions: sincerity, originality and vibrancy, cool and trendy, competence and modernity and conviviality.

Stokburger-Sauer (2011)	Republic of Ireland	Structured: 13 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	The congruence between the individual's personality and the DP was used to assess personality congruence.
Usakli and Baloglu (2011)	Las Vegas	Structured: 29 personality traits generated from unique trait generation state and Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale Unstructured: open-ended Questions	5 dimensions: vibrancy, contemporary sophistication, competence, and sincerity.
Klabi (2012)	Tunisia (North Africa)	Structured: previous personality scales, 5-point bipolar scales Unstructured: interviews	3 Dimensions: conviviality, masculinity, and unpleasantness. 4 Dimensions: excitement, sincerity, sophistication, and ruggedness.
Ye (2012)	Australia	Structured Analysis: 27 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS5-point bipolar scale	
Chen and Phou (2013)	Cambodia	Structured:42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS	5 Dimensions: excitement, sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness, and contemporary.
Kim and Lehto (2013)	South Korea	Content analysis: 42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	5 Dimensions: competence, sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness.
Li and Kaplanidou (2013)	China	Structured: 11 items from Ekinci & Hosany's (2006) scale, 5-point bipolar Scale	3 Dimensions: sincerity, excitement, and conviviality
De Moya and Jain (2013)	Mexico & Brazil	Content analysis: 42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS 5-point bipolar scale	5 Dimensions: excitement, sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness, and competence.
Rojas-Méndez et al. (2013)	USA	Structured: previous personality scales, 5-point bipolar scale, Unstructured Interviews	3 Facets of NBP: amicableness, resourcefulness, and self-centeredness.
Xie and Lee (2013)	Beijing (China)	Structured:42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-	4 dimensions: excitement, sophistication, ruggedness,

		point bipolar scale Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	and competence
Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, and Kaplanidou (2014)	Athens (Greece)	Structured: 16 items from personality scales 5-point bipolar scale	2 dimensions: excitement and sincerity.
Gómez Aguilar, Yagüe Guillén, and Villaseñor Roman (2014)	Andalusia (Spain)	Structured: 26 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS, 5-point bipolar scale	5 dimensions: excitement, sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness and competence.
Kumar and Nayak (2014a)	11 Indian Destinations	Structured: Previous personality scales, 5-point bipolar scale Unstructured: interviews	6 dimensions: courteousness, vibrancy, creativity, conformity, viciousness and tranquility

Unstructured methodologies are an alternate form of measurement that follows free form descriptions to measure image (Boivin, 1986). This methodology does not specify the attributes of the personality at the onset of the research. Rather, a free elicitation process for generation of product attributes is undertaken. The sample is collected through focus groups, personal interviews or open-ended questions. To determine personality dimensions, content analysis and various sorting techniques are then used. From the above discussion, it is apparent that unstructured methodologies are more advantageous to capture the holistic components of product personality. However, the unstructured methodologies are highly variable in nature and mainly depend upon the verbal and writing skills of the subjects, their willingness to provide multiple details and their base knowledge about the product (McDougall et al., 1974). Moreover, scope for analyzing the collected data through statistical tools is limited. In addition, comparative analyses, among various product categories are not possible using unstructured methodologies.

As the third column of Table 3 illustrates, destination personality researchers have a substantial preference for structured methodologies. Furthermore, some researchers have used a mixed approach, i.e., both unstructured and structured methodologies. Indeed, almost all of the researchers have used bipolar scales in the measurement of destination personality. Due to the application of structured methodologies in measuring destination personality, researchers have focused more on including attribute-based components and have failed to capture more holistic and

unique components. Even in terms of measuring attribute components of destination personality, earlier studies have some limitations. As explained previously, the attribute list may be incomplete due to not including all relevant and unique personality characteristics of the destination. To tackle this issue, a fair amount of research is required in the primary stage of scale development. For example, qualitative research in terms of focus groups or personal interviews is very crucial to uncover all the relevant and salient attributes of a destination.

However, few researchers till date (d'Astous & Boujbel, 2007; Murphy et al., 2007; Prayag, 2007; Sahin & Baloglu, 2009; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Rojas-Méndez et al., 2013) have employed tourists to uncover salient destination personality characteristics. Most of the researchers have relied on secondary sources of information (literature reviews, media). Although exploratory research with consumers is a costly and time-consuming affair, it is very difficult to construct a valid and reliable instrument for measuring destination personality without such input.

2.6. Empirical studies on Destination personality

Plummer (1985) argued that brand personality can be influenced by direct or indirect contact of consumers with the brand. Aaker (1997) presented two ways of associating personality traits to the brands: direct and indirect. In the direct way, people associated with the brand, such as the executives or employees and the product endorsers, are proposed to attach personality traits to the brands by means of user imagery, which is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with the typical user of a brand". On the other hand, the indirect method includes associating a brand to the traits that are related to their product attributes, brand name, price, symbol, advertisements, logo or distribution channels (Aaker, 1997). Likewise, the destination can be attributed both directly and indirectly with the personality traits of the location. A destination can be directly associated with the imageries related to the visitors of the place, local people, citizens of the country, hotel or restaurants, and tourist attractions. Alternatively, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) suggested that destinations can be attributed with personality traits in an indirect way through marketing practices such as logos, symbols, cooperative advertising and value pricing.

Although researchers acknowledge destination personality as a critical component of branding, limited numbers of studies have explored the prominent and unique personality traits of the destinations. For instance, Ministry of Tourism of India has developed the brand 'Incredible India' in 2002 and positioned India as a premier high-end destination. The key personality traits which have been emphasized in this "Incredible India" campaign are 'spirituality', 'spirited' and

'vibrant' (Kant, 2009). Henderson (2000) conducted a study among local residents and international tourists in Singapore, and the findings of the study revealed that the personality of Singapore comprises of various characteristics such as 'reliability', 'modern Asia', 'vibrant', 'youthful', 'cosmopolitan' and 'comfort'. Santos (2004) performed framing analysis of selected U.S newspapers' travel sections during the years 1996 to 2002 to study tourism in Portugal. The results suggested that US newspapers' travel sections portray Portugal personality as 'sophisticated', 'modern', 'contemporary' and 'traditional'.

Aaker (1997) argued that there is very limited research on brand personality because of the non-availability of a valid, reliable, and generalizable scale to measure it. Thus, in a pioneering study, she developed a comprehensive BPS (BPS) which proved to be a reliable, valid, and generalizable across various brands. The BPS consists of five basic dimensions: sincerity, ruggedness, sophistication, competence and excitement. From then onwards, numerous researchers have applied this scale on various products across different cultures. Later on, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) argued that destinations can be treated as brands on the basis of the assumption that tourism destinations comprised of tangible and intangible attributes. They adopted brand personality terminology given by Aaker (1997) and termed destination personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a destination" (p. 127). In addition, they studied whether Aaker's (1997) BPS is applicable the context of tourism destinations, and tested the content validity of the scale among 20 native British residents. Subsequent to this, 15 personality traits were eliminated, and the remaining 27 were retained by splitting them across five dimensions. In total, two samples each consisting of 250 travelers from UK were used for the study. The first sample was collected in UK, where respondents were asked to rate the different items in the questionnaire based on their experiences with the foreign destination visited by them in the last three months. Another sample was collected at the European airport's lounge, where the respondents evaluated the destination personality immediately after visiting the place. The findings suggested that tourists ascribe personality traits to the destinations, which suggests that Aaker's (1997) BPS can be applied to the tourism destinations. The results of this study also suggested that destination personality consists of three dimensions rather than the original five dimensions. The three dimensions are 'sincerity', 'excitement', and 'conviviality'. Sincerity and excitement emerged as the two most significant dimensions. Conviviality was novel was also destinations' specific. Furthermore, the findings suggested that destination personality positively influenced the tourist's intention to recommend

the destination to others. The destination personality moderated the relationship between destination image and intention to recommend (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006).

Hosany et al. (2006) examined the relationship between destination personality and destination image. The study used Aaker's (1997) BPS to measure the destination personality. In the content validity stage of the scale, 15 items were removed, and hence 27 items were employed for further study. The sample was collected from three different cities of UK. The randomly selected respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire based on the destination they had visited outside UK over a period of three months. The results suggested three dimensions of destination personality, and they are 'sincerity', 'excitement', and 'conviviality'. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that destination personality and destination image are different but related concepts.

d'Astous and Boujbel (2007) developed a nation BPS (NBPS) to position different countries on a personality continuum. The study revealed six country personality dimensions labeled as: agreeableness, assiduousness, conformity, wickedness, snobbism, and unobtrusiveness. The sample consisted of 170 French speaking Canadians. The authors also checked the psychometric properties of the scale and assessed its stability. Both the full (37-items) and reduced scale (24-items) displayed stable structure and good psychometric properties.

Moreover, the study investigated the applicability of 24-items scale to evaluate the peoples' attitudes towards countries in general, product-country attitudes, and attitudes towards countries as travelling destinations. Although all the relationships were found statistically significant, the dimensions such as snobbism, unobtrusiveness and assiduousness emerged as insignificant predictors to find out attitudes towards travel destinations. Hence, the results suggested that this scale may be less helpful for assessing tourists' attitudes towards countries as travel destinations.

Ekinci et al. (2007) demonstrated the relationship among destination personality, tourists' perceptions of host image, and behavioral intentions. Using the method of convenience sampling, a sample of 365 German travelers who came to visit the Mediterranean region of Turkey was collected. The findings supported the external validity of the results given by the study of Ekinci and Hosany (2006). The study demonstrated three dimensions of destination personality, which are sincerity, excitement, and conviviality. Host image emerged as an antecedent of destination personality by manifesting a positive influence on it. In addition, the results revealed a significant positive relationship among destination personality, intention to revisit, and intention to recommend. In spite of employing non–probabilistic sampling method and including only German

travelers limited the generalizibilty of the study, it still contributed to both theoretical and managerial implications (Ekinci et al., 2007).

Murphy et al. (2007) examined the role of brand personality perceptions among tourists to differentiate between two travel destinations. The study employed a sample of 480 respondents from two locations i.e. Whitsundays and Cairns Island in Australia. They measured destination personality by using the BPS of 20 personality traits. They also used free elicitation method with open ended questions. The authors avoided the use of the entire 42-item scale to reduce the respondent fatigue. The findings of the study revealed that destinations can be differentiated by using brand personality. Nevertheless, the authors argued that Aaker's (1997) BPS cannot be directly employed to tourism destinations. Thus, they suggested that future research should develop a valid and reliable scale for tourism destinations (Murphy et al., 2007).

Murphy et al. (2007a) examined the brand personality of Whitsunday Island in Queensland, Australia. They additionally explored the relationships among destination personality, self-congruity, travel motivations, and actual and intended visitation. In total, a sample of 277 respondents was collected. Aaker's (1997) BPS with five dimensions having 15 facets was employed to measure destination personality. The study findings suggested four dimensions of destination personality for Whitsunday Island, and they are 'sophistication and competence', 'excitement', 'ruggedness' and 'sincerity'. However, the study failed to establish a relationship between actual and intended visitation. The four types of self-congruity—actual, ideal, social, and ideal social—were measured using the measures suggested by Sirgy and Su (2000). The results revealed that brand personality and actual and ideal self-congruity are strongly related to each other. Furthermore, the findings suggested a strong link between brand personality and travel motivation.

Pitt et al. (2007) examined the destination personality projected by the African countries through their tourism websites. The objective of the study was to find out the possible means through which the countries are projecting their brand personalities rather than measuring it. The framework of Aaker's (1997) BPS was employed to study the 25 official tourism websites of 10 African countries. The study used content analysis for analyzing the websites and employed correspondence analysis for identifying the relationship between brand personality dimensions and websites. In the first stage, a list of 922 words was prepared which were synonyms to Aaker's (1997) 42 brand personality traits. In the second stage, the categorization of all synonyms was done based on Aaker's (1997) BPS dimensions. Subsequent to this, the content analysis was

performed on selected websites using these synonyms. In the last stage, correspondence analysis was conducted for exploring the relationship between brand personality dimensions and websites. The results revealed that specific brand personality dimensions were communicated by different African countries. For example, South Africa and Angola emphasize 'competence'; Kenya and Zimbabwe communicate 'ruggedness'; Zambia and Botswana express 'sincerity'. However, some countries such as Malawi failed to convey any dimensions of brand personality. Only 10 countries out of total 53 African countries were included in this study. Moreover, websites selection was performed systematically because there were many non-functioning and non-English websites. Although the study has these limitations, the intend of this research was to show the possible ways following which the brands communicate their personalities online (Pitt et al., 2007).

Prayag (2007) investigated the perceptions of international tourists about destination image and destination personality of two locations: South Africa and Cape Town. This study employed a different research approach to elicit the traits specific to the destinations based on Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal's (2006) call for future research. Prayag (2007) employed projective methods, such as brand fingerprint, brand personification, and word association. A total of 85 international tourists who visited Cape Town were interviewed. The findings suggested that Cape Town is recognized as more 'adventurous' and 'young' than South Africa. In addition, the study established the importance of brand personality technique for eliciting destination specific traits. Moreover, the findings revealed personality traits that were different from the dimensions of Aaker's (1997) BPS (Prayag, 2007).

Opoku (2009) studied the difference between projected destination personalities of 10 African countries through their tourism websites and perceived personalities by observing the user of those websites. The study highlighted the importance of correspondence analysis for mapping websites. First a synonym list to Aaker' (1997) BPS was prepared, and the contents of the 10 websites were analyzed. The findings revealed that of all the words listed, sincerity is 21 percent; excitement is 17 percent; sophistication is 21 percent; competence is 20 percent; and ruggedness is 21 percent. The results found a mismatch between projected and perceived destination personalities. Although the study has the limitations of systematically choosing the websites and analyzing only the texts, it emphasizes the importance of perceived destination personality which may differ from projected destination personality.

Sahin and Baloglu (2009) investigated the perceived destination personality of international visitors' about Istanbul, Turkey. A total of 272 first time travelers to Istanbul were targeted for the

study. The study exercised a mixed approach to elicit the personality traits in which 23items were taken from Aaker's (1997) BPS and Ekinci and Hosany's (2006) study, and five items were taken on the basis of content analysis of travel brochures and internet sources. The findings suggested that the perceived personality of Istanbul and behavioral intentions of visitors varied across different nationalities.

Stokburger–Sauer (2011) examined the effect of personality congruence for nation brand identification, nation brand advocacy and visit intentions. A sample constituting of 421 Germans visiting Republic of Ireland was collected. The study used Aaker's (1997) BPS to measure brand personality. By using structural equation modeling technique, the study revealed that personality congruence has a significant positive influence on visit intentions. Furthermore, the study suggested that personality congruence and strong identification between the nation's and tourist's personality strongly influence the nation brand visit intentions. Although the study used only one country to collect the data, the findings revealed various crucial theoretical and managerial implications to both academicians and destination practitioners.

Usakli and Baloglu (2011) examined the role of destination personality and self-congruity in influencing the tourists' post visit behavioral intentions in Las Vegas. By using the convenience sampling technique, a sample constituting of 368 respondents was collected. The authors used a mixed approach for trait elicitation in which the first stage included unique traits generation and the second stage included testing of content validity of Aaker's (1997) BPS. This process generated 29 destination personality traits. The results of structural equation modeling revealed that tourists ascribe personality traits to the tourism destination. The findings suggested that Las Vegas personality is composed of five dimensions that are vibrancy, contemporary, sincerity, sophistication, and competence. All these dimensions were observed to have a positive influence on tourists' intention to recommend and intention to return. Furthermore, the results observed that self–congruity is a partial mediator of the relationship between tourist's behavioral intentions and destination personality. In spite of the fact that there are some limitations such as collecting data from one place and using convenience sampling, the study offered various theoretical and managerial implications by empirically validating the significance of destination personality towards influencing tourists' behavioral intentions.

Klabi (2012) investigated the effect of destination personality congruence (DPC) on destination preference (DP) in Tunisia, North Africa. A sample of 442 tourists was collected using the convenience sampling method. The study used qualitative methods to elicit personality traits

that are unique to Tunisia and generated 18 distinctive personality traits. The findings of the study revealed that DPC positively influence DP. In addition, the DPC–DP relationship is influenced by functional congruity, destination consumption levels, and involvement to tourism.

Ye (2012) explored the effect of destination personality dimensions on destination brand awareness and attractiveness in Australia. A sample of 210 Chinese respondents was collected. The destination personality was measured using 27 items of Aaker's (1997) BPS. The study suggested that Australia's destination personality constitutes of four dimensions that are excitement, sincerity, sophistication, and ruggedness. The findings revealed that tourists' ascribe destination personality traits to tourism destinations. The dimension of sincerity emerged as the strongest predictor of destination awareness and attractiveness. On the contrary, other dimensions failed to show any effect on destination attractiveness and awareness.

Chen and Phou (2013) investigated the relationships between destination image, destination personality, and tourist–destination relationship (i.e. satisfaction, trust, attachment, and loyalty). The study used a convenience sampling technique to collect a sample of 428 foreign tourists who visited Angkor temple in Cambodia. To measure destination personality 37 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS were used. The structural equation modeling results revealed that both destination image and destination personality positively influence tourist–destination relationship, which in turn influences tourist behavior. Moreover, the study supported Bagozzi's (1992) reformulation of attitude theory with regard to the cognitive, affective, and behavior sequence.

Kim and Lehto (2013) examined the relationship between projected and perceived destination personalities associated with South Korea. To measure the projected destination personality, the contents of the official tourism website of South Korea were used, and the perceived destination personality was assessed using a sample of 480 U.S. travelers to South Korea. The findings suggested that there are significant discrepancies between projected and perceived destination personalities of South Korea. Furthermore, the results proposed a research framework for tourism marketing organizations to determine and eliminate potential destination personality incongruence.

Li and Kaplanidou (2013) investigated the effects of 2008 Beijing Games held in China on the Americans' overall perceptions of China's destination personality. The study used 11 items from Ekinci and Hosany's (2006) study for measuring China as a perceived destination among Americans. Interestingly, the study found no effect of the 2008 Beijing games on Americans' overall perceptions of China's destination personality. De Moya and Jain (2013) studied the

difference between projected destination personality of Mexico and Brazil through their social websites such as Facebook. In the first stage, the study employed content analysis for scrutinizing the Facebook page content. Afterward, the dimensions of Aaker's (1997) BPS were employed for finding out the destination personality traits promoted by both the countries. The results of the study revealed that both the countries emphasize different personality traits in their promotional messages. Furthermore, it was observed that Mexico was more successful in transferring the projected personality than Brazil.

Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) examined the destination personality of U.S. from China's perspective and developed a nation BPS. A sample of 477 respondents from Shanghai and Beijing was collected. The findings revealed three main dimensions of U.S. personality that are amicableness, resourcefulness, and self-centeredness. In addition, the study demonstrated the effect of U.S. personality dimensions for influencing 'product purchase intentions', 'travel intentions', 'intention to develop ties' and 'overall attitude' of Chinese people. The findings suggested that among Chinese U.S. exhibits a bipolar personality where resourceful and amicable traits seemingly battle with self–centered personality traits.

Xie and Lee (2013) investigated the effect of destination personality dimensions in influencing tourists' behavioral intentions. The study employed a sample of 500 foreign tourists visiting Beijing. To measure the destination personality, 42 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS were used. The findings revealed that destination personality of Beijing comprises of four dimensions that are excitement, sophistication, ruggedness, and competence. Furthermore, the results established that competence, excitement, and sophistication drive the behavioral intentions of tourists. Papadimitriou et al. (2014) examined the relationships between destination personality, affective image, and behavioral intentions in Athens, Greece. The study collected a sample of 361urban tourists consisting of past visitors and non-visitors. By using structural equation modeling technique, the results revealed that both destination personality and affective image positively influence tourists' behavioral intentions (i.e., intention to revisit and intention to recommend). More specifically, the two destination personality dimensions—sincerity and excitement—emerged as significant predictors of destination image perceptions for both visitors and non-visitors.

Gómez Aguilar et al. (2014) explored the application of destination brand personality to Spanish tourism destinations. The study employed 26 items from Aaker's (1997) BPS for measuring destination personality of Spain. In total, a sample of 329 UK tourists visiting Andalusia

region of Spain was collected. The study revealed a five dimensional structure of Spain destination brand personality, which constitutes of sincerity, excitement, sophistication, competence, and ruggedness. The findings suggested that second-order type I model best explains the existing theory regarding destination brand personality. Moreover, the destination personality dimensions established in the study helped in evaluating the tourism destinations favorably.

2.7. Self–Concept

Self–concept has proven its importance in understanding and evaluating consumer choice behavior. The literature review suggests that it has been hypothesized that people prefer the products or brands having a match with their own self–concept. Based on this notion, various studies have analyzed the ways in which brand personality helps the consumers to convey his or her own self (Dolich, 1969; Belk, 1988). Sirgy (1982) stated that precise conceptualization of self–concept has been always avoided in the consumer behaviour literature. Nevertheless, various studies have used definition of self–concept (also referred to as self-image) given by Rosenberg in 1979, according to which it is "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (p. 7).

Researchers have always debated on the issue of dimensionality of self–concept. Some researchers argue that it is unidimensional (Belk, 1988), while others consider it as a multidimensional (Sirgy, 1982; Malhotra, 1988). The earlier studies considered self–concept as a unidimensional construct and called it as the actual self–concept, whereas the later studies viewed it as two dimensional construct constituting of the actual self–concept and ideal self–concept (Malhotra, 1988). Some studies have extended this duality dimension and conceptualized self–concept to be multidimensional. Sirgy (1982) added social aspect to self–concept in accordance to which self–concept consists of four dimensions that are actual self–concept, ideal self–concept, social self–concept and ideal social self–concept. Actual self–concept is defined as how a person actually perceives himself or herself, whereas ideal self–concept refers to the manner in which a person would like to perceive his or her own self. Social self-concept refers to an individual's thought regarding other's perception about him or her own self, whereas ideal self-concept refers to the way the individual desires to be perceived by others (Sirgy, 1982). Out of the four dimensions of self–concept, actual self–concept and ideal self–concept have received major theoretical and empirical support. These two constructs have shown their significance in explaining consumer behavior.

Schenk and Holman (1980) introduced the concept of situational self–concept, which refers to the feelings, perceptions and attitudes that an individual desires others associate with him or her. Situational self–concept may also be defined as the tendency of an individual to differently perceive one's own self in different situations resulting in a change of his or her behavior. Furthermore, Sirgy (1982) argued that once an individual decides which self has to express, he or she looks for varied ways to express it. Thus, the individual may use products or brands to express the self–concept in that situation. Later on, Markus and Kunda (1986) introduced a new type of self–concept termed as malleable self–concept which means that the self is malleable rather than stable across situations. The term malleable self–concept is defined as any number of self–concepts that can be accessed at a given point of time, such as good self, bad self, feared self, ought self, ideal self.

The measurement of self–concept is another important issue in consumer behavior research. In the earlier studies, researchers exercised Q-sort methodology for measuring self–concept. Q-sort methodology groups products on the basis of dimensions such as 'most like me' to 'least like me'. Many researchers have modified Q-sort technique by using a rating scale (Sirgy, 1982). For example, Landon (1974) investigated the relationship between actual self–concept, ideal self–concept and purchase intentions by using a measurement approach which is quite similar to the Q-sort method. The study measured actual self–concept on a nine-point scale ranging from 'very strongly unlike me' to 'very strongly like me'. In addition, ideal self-concept was measured on a similar scale ranging from 'very strongly unlike I want to be' to 'very strongly like I want to be'.

Some studies have measured self–concept by using semantic differential (Sirgy, 1982). In this method, respondents are required to rate the specific type of self–concept along a number of bipolar adjectives. Sirgy (1982) criticized the application of semantic differential scales for measuring self–concept because these scales are susceptible to halo effect bias and social desirability bias. Later on, Malhotra (1981) constructed a scale for measuring self–concepts, product concepts, and person concepts. The scale uses the semantic differential method and consists of 15 bipolar adjectives. Malhotra (1988) employed this scale for examining the relationship between self–concept and house preferences, and suggested that ideal self–concept has the strongest effect on house preferences rather than actual self–concept.

Although consumer behavior studies have extensively explored the role of self–concept in influencing consumer preferences, only a few researchers have studied its applications in the tourism context (Todd, 2001). In order to fill this void in the literature, Todd (2001) explored the

applicability of self–concept as a segmentation variable in the tourism context. The study has used Hoelter's (1985) validated scale of self–concept. The respondents were asked to rate their perception about the holiday on five-point Likert scale. The findings of the study suggested three different clusters based on the perceptions of travelers about their holiday. The clusters found were striving, happy holidaymakers, and holiday partners. For example, the striving group showed more willingness to visit foreign destinations. Happy holidaymakers were found to be more relaxed, happy, and confident in contrast to holiday partners who perceived themselves as unimportant, passive, and powerless. In addition, happy holidaymakers were more likely to visit domestic destinations and engage in fewer activities. The author suggested that self–concept not only provide an opportunity to find out people's perception about themselves, but also a segmentation base for categorizing themselves.

2.8. Self–congruity

Self–congruity refers to the extent to which the product or brand image is congruent to consumers' self–concept (Sirgy, 1982). Actually, self–congruity is the natural extension of self–concept. Todd (2001) suggested that researchers have always shown more interest towards unraveling the relationship between product or brand image and consumers' self–concept, as it is hypothesized that consumers tend to achieve a match between their way of perceiving themselves and the images of products or brands they use. Furthermore, consumer behavior literature revealed that the match between consumer's self-concept and product or brand image positively influences the consumer's attitude toward a product or brand (Sirgy, 1982). Consumer behavior researchers assume that products also have images like human beings. A number of factors, such as advertising, price, packaging, or stereotypes of the typical user contribute in the formation of the product image (Sirgy, 1982). As a generalized user of the product, the consumer's self–concept interacts with a corresponding product–image perception, and thereby, this interaction engenders a subjective experience known as self-image congruity or self–congruity (Sirgy, 1982).

Sirgy et al. (1991) mentioned that self–congruity theory explains the effect of self–congruity for determining consumer behavior towards a product by understanding a consumer's self–concept and value–expressive attributes of a product or brand. Self–congruity theory proposes that greater the match between product or brand image and consumer's self–concept, it is more likely that the consumer will develop a favorable attitude towards that product or brand. On the basis of this notion, several researchers have explained the different aspects of consumer behavior, such as

product or brand use, purchase intention, behavior, product or brand attitude, and loyalty by studying the congruence between product or brand image and consumer's self–concept (Sirgy, 1982; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy et al., 1997).

Researchers have treated self–congruity as a multidimensional construct based on the multidimensional nature of self–concept. Self–congruity has been categorized into four types in the existing literature, namely, actual self–congruity, ideal self–congruity, social self–congruity and ideal social self–congruity (Sirgy, 1982). Actual self–congruity is defined as the congruity between product or brand image and actual self-concept. Ideal self–congruity is defined as the congruity between product or brand image and ideal self–concept. Social self–congruity is the congruity between product or brand image and social self–concept, whereas ideal social self–congruity is the congruity between product or brand image and ideal social self–concept (Sirgy, 1985b).

The discussion on product image congruity and self–concept started since 1950s. Gardner and Levy (1955) and Levy (1959) started the discussion of product image congruity and self–concept (Landon, 1974; Sirgy, 1982). Levy (1959) argued that consumers are not only functionally oriented, but they also use products for their symbolic meaning besides functional benefits. Sirgy (1982) stated that though Levy's (1959) arguments lacked theoretical support, it still got the attention of the consumer behavior researchers for studying self–concept and its impact on consumer behavior. Earlier studies focused on the projected images of the product, and consumers were assumed to prefer products whose images were congruent with their self–concept (Landon, 1974). The most utilized product to study the relationship between self–congruity and consumer behavior is automobile. For instance, Birdwell (1968) investigated the congruity between self–image and purchasing of cars and observed that there was a high congruity between the respondents' perception about cars and themselves. Furthermore, the study found that income was the deciding factor in enabling the consumer to make a purchase compatible with their self–image.

Many researchers have provided empirical support to the relationship between self–concept and congruence with product or brand preference (Dolich, 1969; Landon, 1974; Malhotra, 1988). Dolich (1969) studied the most and least preferred brands within four product categories to explore the congruence between self–concept and product images. The findings of the study revealed that there is a high congruity between self-images and most preferred brand over all four product categories. Later on, Landon (1974) established a positive relationship between actual self–concept and purchase intention and ideal self–concept and purchase intention. Similarly, Malhotra (1988) found that both ideal and actual self–concepts are congruent with house preference. Ericksen

(1996) investigated the congruence between product image and self-image among Ford Escort consumers. The findings suggested that there is a positive relationship between self–image or product image congruity and intention to purchase.

Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) compared brand personality and self–congruity both empirically and conceptually to find out whether they are conceptually dissimilar. The study was conducted among Swedish female consumers, and the findings revealed that the two concepts are empirically discriminant. Thus, the authors suggested that both concepts should be used separately and for different purposes. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that both self–congruity and brand personality have different and positive effects on brand attitudes.

Self–-congruity refers to the cognitive matching between consumer self–concept and value expressive attributes of a product or brand. On the other hand, functional congruity is based on the perceived utilitarian aspects of a product or brand (Sirgy et al., 1991). Sirgy et al. (1991) conducted four studies to test the hypothesis that consumer behavior is more influenced by functional congruity than self–congruity. The results suggested that consumer behavior is a function of both self and functional congruity. Moreover, the findings suggested that functional congruity is a better predictor of consumer behavior than self–congruity. However, the study also found that self–congruity biases functional congruity. Thus, the authors suggested that self–congruity indirectly influences favorable attitude of a consumer towards a product or brand by inducing motivational bias to process the functional attributes in a positive way.

2.9. Destination Self–Congruity Empirical Studies

Although self–congruity theory is often ignored in consumer behavior (Kastenholz, 2004; Beerli, Meneses & Gil, 2007), some researchers have studied the impact of self–congruity on tourist behavior within the tourism context. Some of the empirical studies related to self–congruity till date has been discussed below.

Chon and Olsen (1991) investigated the combined effect of both self–congruity and functional congruity on satisfaction in the context of tourism destinations. Self–congruity refers to the symbolic congruence between destination's personality image and tourist's self–concept. On the other hand, functional congruity is defined as congruence between tourists' expectations and his or her perceptions of performance outcome on destination's functional attributes. The results of the study revealed that tourist's satisfaction is a function of both self–congruity and functional

congruity. However, the study found that functional congruity is a better predictor of tourist's satisfaction rather than self–congruity.

Chon (1992) was the first researcher to apply self–congruity theory to tourism. He investigated the relationship between destination image or self–image congruity on the tourists' satisfaction. In the study, tourists' satisfaction was considered as a function of symbolic evaluative congruity between a tourist's self–image and destination's image. The sample for the study was visitors to Norfolk, Virginia. For measuring self–congruity, a five-point Likert type scale was used, whereas, destination image was operationalized by studying the typical visitors to Norfolk city. The results revealed that self–image or destination image congruity is positively correlated to tourists' satisfaction. Moreover, the findings suggested that tourists who perceive high congruity between their self–concept and destination's user image were most satisfied. On the contrary, tourists who perceive low congruity between their self–concept and a destination's user image were least satisfied with the destination.

With the application of self–congruity theory to tourism field, Sirgy and Su (2000) developed an integrative model to explain the interrelationships between destination image, tourist's self–concept, functional congruity, self–congruity, and travel behavior. Although this is not an empirical study, it has made a major contribution to tourism literature. The authors applied the symbolic attributes of the product to the destination and suggested that tourists perceive destinations differently by considering the typical visitors to the destination. Thus, the authors described self–congruity as the match between tourists' self–concept (actual, ideal, social and ideal social self–image) and destination visitor image. Destination visitor image refers to the stereotypical image of the kind of people who typically visit a destination. Sirgy and Su (2000) proposed that greater the match between tourist's self–concept and destination visitor image, higher the chances that a tourist would develop favorable attitudes toward that destination. Furthermore, the authors suggested that tourists not only use symbolic attributes to evaluate destination, but also utilize destination's functional attributes, such as service quality, accessibility, price, aesthetics of destination, and a variety of activities. On the basis of this view, the authors defined functional congruity as the match between the tourists' expectations of utilitarian attributes and the destination's utilitarian attributes. Sirgy and Su (2000) suggested that functional congruity influence the travel behavior. They also proposed that self–congruity influences the functional congruity and a number of moderators affect the predictive effects of self–congruity versus functional congruity. These moderators include involvement, time pressure, prior experience, and

knowledge. The authors argued that tourists with less knowledge, less involvement and less experience will have greater influence of self–congruity on their behavior. In addition, the tourists who experience greater time pressure will have greater influence of self–congruity on travel behavior. Moreover, Sirgy and Su (2000) suggested that self–congruity influences functional congruity and proposed that tourists would process the utilitarian attribute in a favorable way if they feel destination self–congruity.

Later on, Litvin and Goh (2002) examined the applicability of self–congruity to tourism destinations by borrowing Chon's (1992) five–item Likert type scale and Malhotra's (1988) scale. In the study, three locations were studied (Japan, New Zealand, and India) using Singapore as the test location. Using convenience sampling method, a usable sample of 139 respondents from Singapore was collected. The findings of the study revealed that self–congruity and visiting intentions for the three destinations were significant with the application of Chon's (1992) method to determine congruence. On the contrary, the results obtained using Malhotra's (1998) were not very robust.

Kastenholz (2004) conceptualized destination self–congruity as an outcome of a direct comparison between affective destination image and actual self–-image and investigated the influence of destination self–congruity on tourists' future travel behavior. In order to measure affective destination image and self–image, the author employed semantic differential scale based on instrument developed by Malhotra (1981). This scale was actually developed for measuring product concepts, person concepts, and self–concepts. In the first study, the author used the scale to a rural destination using a student sample via an exploratory research design. Subsequently, the scale was tested for its adequateness on a sample of international tourists. Finally, a one year survey was conducted in Portugal, and a sample of 2280 respondents was collected. Kastenholz (2004) used the traditional method to measure the self–congruity in which first the respondent's perceptions of destination's effective image was calculated. In the following step, the respondent's perceptions about his or her self–image along a set of attributes were calculated. After that, the difference between the scores of affective destination image and self–image was calculated. Kastenholz (2004) criticized the use of scale by scale comparisons to calculate the self–congruity, and hence, measured self–congruity by using single scale comparison. The findings of the study suggested the applicability of self–congruity theory to the rural destinations. The results revealed that destination self–congruity influences the intention to revisit, but interestingly found no effect

on intention to recommend. Furthermore, the findings suggested that researchers should follow a holistic and global approach to measure the self–congruity.

Beerli et al. (2007) examined the applicability of self–congruity in tourism using a modified version of Malhotra's (1981) scale. The study was conducted in Gran Canaria, Spain, among the residents who are living over 18 years at the destination. Using stratified random sampling method, a sample of 532 respondents was collected. The authors measured self–concept on a seven–point differential scale. Destination image was conceptualized as the stereotypical image that a typical visitor of a destination would convey. The respondents were asked to rate the images of tourists visiting Dominican Republic, Kenya, Paris on a seven–point differential scale. The findings of the study suggested that greater the match between one's actual and ideal self–concept and destination image, it is more likely that the tourists would visit the destination. On the contrary, a tourist who had earlier visited the destination would have less effect on both actual and ideal self–congruity on his or her destination choice behavior. Furthermore, the results revealed that greater the tourist's involvement with leisure travel, the greater the power of self–congruity for determining the destination choice behavior.

Hung and Petrick (2011) investigated the role of self and functional congruity in evaluating cruising intentions. This study employed online panel survey to collect the data and a sample of 990 panel members was collected. Self–congruity was measured using the gap score method on a 7-point rating scale. The findings of the study revealed that ideal self–congruity emerged as the most significant predictor of cruising intentions. In addition, the results also observed that self–congruity positively influenced functional congruity. Although, there were some limitations, such as use of online panel survey, which limited the access to all potential respondents, the study contributed to the existing tourism literature.

2.10. Measurement of Self–congruity

The significance of self–congruity has grown enormously in consumer behavior, it becomes imperative to develop the valid measures for self–congruity. In literature, there are two primary methods of measuring self–congruity; one is the traditional method (also known as gap score formula), and the other is the new method (also known as direct score formula) (Sirgy et al., 1997; Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Helgeson & Suphellen, 2004).

The traditional method is based on assessing the subject's perception of his or her self–concept in relation to the product or brand image as well as the perception of the product or brand

image (Sirgy et al., 1997). This method consists of two steps. First, respondents are asked to rate a product or brand using a set of predetermined image characteristics. In other words, respondents rate the product or brand vicariously through the image characteristics of brand's typical user because the image of the typical user of the brand is assumed to be reflective of the product or brand image. Next, the respondents are asked to rate their self–concepts on the same predetermined image characteristics. Subsequent to this, a discrepancy score is calculated for each characteristic of the image, and the discrepancy scores are summed up across all characteristics. In literature, there are a number of mathematical models that exist for measuring the self--congruity (Sirgy et al., 1991; Sirgy et al., 1997), the most common model is the absolute discrepancy scores (Sirgy et al., 1997; Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Helgeson & Suphellen, 2004). The sum of absolute discrepancy scores is mathematically calculated as:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} |Pi - S_i$$

In this model, P_i = rating of product or brand image on characteristic i or along image dimension i. S_i= rating of self–concept on characteristic i or along image dimension i. The absolute discrepancy score being used, the lower the score, the higher the congruity.

Sirgy et al. (1997) stated that there are some problems with the traditional method of measuring self–congruity. The first issue is the possible use of irrelevant images; the second is the use of discrepancy scores; and the last is the use of compensatory rule. The pre-determined image characteristics force the subjects to indicate their perceptions regarding themselves and a product or brand. However, the subjects may not attach the predetermined attribute to the product or brand under examination. Moreover, there may not be valid attributes in the mind of subjects. The discrepancy scores have been criticized because of its limitations such as having questionable construct validity, having systematic correlations with their components and having potential unreliability Compensatory decision rule adds the self-congruity scores across all characteristics or dimensions. However, according to Sirgy et al. (1997) the value–expressive benefits of brands are processed holistically, not analytically. In addition, Sirgy et al. (1997) argued that assuming self–congruity as a piecemeal process creates problems. However, self–congruity is a holistic process; gestalt–like perception rather than a piecemeal process. Thus, Sirgy et al. (1997) argued that measurement methods based on piecemeal process may have predictive limited validity and may

not capture the self–congruity thoroughly. Hence, to overcome all these issues, Sirgy et al. (1997) proposed a new method of measuring self–congruity which is known as direct score method.

The direct score method is based on assessing the psychological experience of self–congruity directly and globally. This method overcomes the issue of discrepancy scores by measuring self–congruity directly rather than measuring self–concept and product or brand image separately. In addition, this method doesn't have any predetermined attributes; hence it avoids the issue of irrelevant attributes. This method also deals with the use of compensatory decision rule by measuring self–congruity holistically (Sirgy et al., 1997). Sirgy and Su (2000) applied the direct score method in their study, which is illustrated as follows:

"Take a moment to think about [destination x]. Think about the kind of person who typically visits [destination x]. Imagine this tourist in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as sexy, old, masculine, athletic, classy, poor, stylish or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical visitor of [destination x]" (p. 350). After this, please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

"This [destination x] is consistent with how I see myself" (actual self–-image).

"This [destination x] is consistent with how I would like to see myself" (ideal self–image).

"This [destination x] is consistent with how I believe others see me" (social self–image).'

 "This [destination x] is consistent with how I would like others see me" (ideal social self–image) (p. 350).

This method employs Likert–type scale for capturing the responses of the subjects to the four self–image statements. Sirgy et al. (1997) argued that this method has a merit of allowing subjects to indicate their congruity between their means of viewing themselves and the product or brand user image (for destinations, typical visitor image) rather than forcing them for indicating their perceptions of congruity with predetermined image characteristics. Sirgy et al. (1997) assessed the predictive validity of direct score method by conducting six studies. The study compared the predictive validity of gap scoring method (also known as traditional method) and direct score method (also referred as new method) using different products, populations, and dependent variables. The results found evidence for the higher predictive validity of direct score method than gap score method. In addition, the findings suggested that gap score method may contain more measurement error than direct score method because of the use of predetermined images.

2.11. Hypotheses and model development

Although, numerous researchers have studied brand image, brand personality, brand loyalty, and brand relationship in the context of generic consumer products (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), the application of brand personality and brand relationship theory in the context of tourism destinations is relatively new. In this study, we employed Bagozzi's (1992) reformulation of attitude theory to build up our conceptual model. Bagozzi's attitude theory posits that appraisal precipitates emotions which then influence an individual's behavior and depicts cognitive, appraisal, and emotional response and behavior as occurring in a sequential process. The conceptual model for this study is shown in Figure 2.

2.11.1. Destination personality and self–congruity

Destination personality and self–congruity are the two cognitive constructs in consumer marketing. Destination personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a destination (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006), while self–congruity refers to the match between tourist's self–concept and destination personality (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Self–congruity has been categorized into four types, namely, actual, ideal, social, and ideal social (Sirgy et al., 1997). Our study considered only actual and ideal self–congruity because these two types of self–congruity have received the strongest empirical support and are most commonly used (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). In this study, we conceptualized the cognitive stage by including both destination personality and self–congruity in our model. It has been suggested that consumers prefer products or brands that are similar to their perception of themselves or the manner in which they would like to perceive themselves (Landon, 1974; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). In addition, Aaker (1999) argued that consumers select brands with personalities that are acceptable to them. Murphy et al. (2007) investigated the role of brand personality in differentiating the regional tourism destinations and observed that favorable destination brand personality ratings were associated with favorable self–congruity ratings. Furthermore, Usakli and Baloglu (2013) examined the effects destination personality and self–congruity (actual and ideal self-congruity) play in influencing the tourist's behavioral intentions and observed that destination personality significantly influences self–congruity. In addition, the study revealed that self–congruity mediates the relationship between destination personality and tourist's behavioral intentions. Although as discussed above, some studies have attempted to explore the relationship between destination personality and self–congruity (Murphy et al., 2007; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), still both of these constructs are under

investigated in the context of tourism destinations. Thus, to fill this gap in the literature, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Destination personality positively influences on self–congruity.
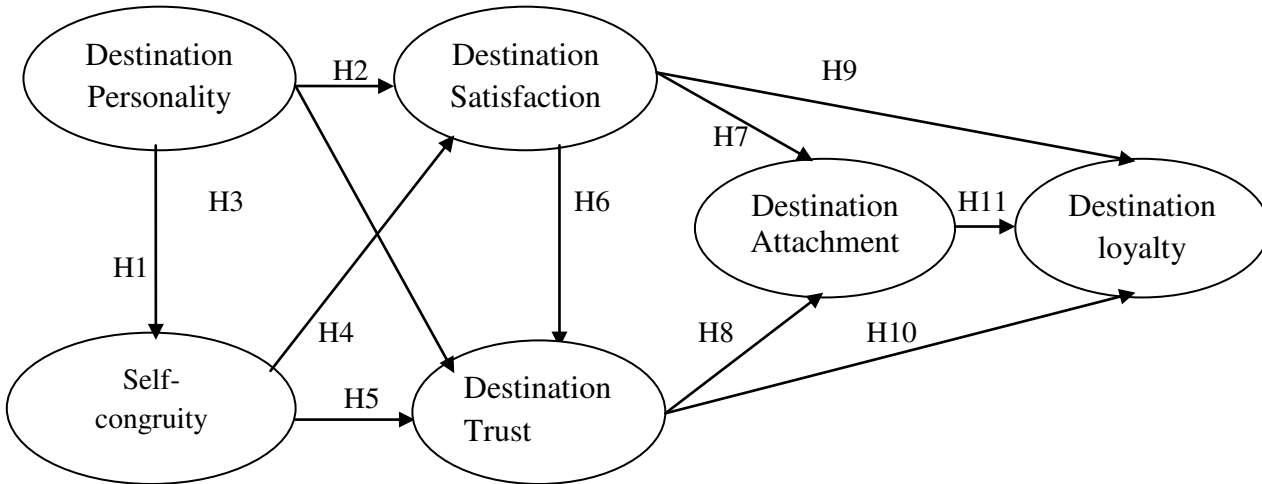
Figure 2: Conceptual model

2.11.2. Destination Personality, Self–congruity and Tourist–destination Relationship

The literature review reveals that some studies have shown significant effect of cognitive images on affective responses (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Martin & Bosque, 2008), and affective evaluations are formed as a function of cognitive ones (Baloglu, 1999). The affect theory also states that an individual's prior knowledge structure, such as expectations, personality factors, and goals, determines their affective responses (Besser & Shackelford, 2007). Thus, this study employed the relationship theory for developing the affective stage by presenting the concept of tourist–destination relationship similar to the concept used by Chen and Phou (2013).

Similar to consumers who develop relationships with products, services (Dall'Olmo Riley & de Chernatony, 2000), and brands (Thomson, McInnis, & Park, 2005), tourists are expected to establish strong relationships or bonds with certain destinations, given the human trait–like features that are assigned as the destination personality (Chen & Phou, 2013; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Fournier (1998) argued that a well-established brand personality may engender strong emotional bonds between consumers and brand. Similarly, Delgado–Ballester (2004) stated that consumers not only perceive brands, but also develop emotional relationships

with them, as they can be personalized. Brand relationship is considered as a multidimensional construct consisting of commitment, immediacy, self–commitment and satisfaction (Aaker, Susan, & Brasel, 2004). Esch et al. (2006) measured brand relationship using three dimensions, namely, satisfaction, trust, and attachment. In addition, this study considered satisfaction, trust, and attachment, as the three components of tourist–destination relationship.

Brand satisfaction refers to the cognitive evaluation of whether or not the exchange relationship with the brand is rewarding and an affective condition resulting from an evaluation of all the aspects that make up a relationship (Esch et al., 2006). Kozak and Rimmington (2000) stated the importance of tourist satisfaction by explaining the manner in which it influences the consumption of products and services, choice of destination, and the decision to return. Chen and Chen (2010) defined tourist satisfaction as a function of pre-travel expectation and post-travel experience. For this study, we defined destination satisfaction as the tourists' response to the destination's ability in meeting their travel needs and expectations.

Brand trust refers to a feeling that is the outcome of a communal relationship with a brand (Esch et al., 2006). Rousseau et al. (1998) defined brand trust as the consumers' willingness to rely upon their expectations about an organization's future behavior. The role of trust in marketing to build long term relationship has received considerable attention in the literature. Trust is considered as a critical component in building successful relationship (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), and is the outcome of one party's belief and confidence on another's integrity and reliability (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Roodurmun and Juwaheer (2010) argued that a destination that inculcates trust in travelers' mind can be easily branded. Moreover, brand trust assures the tourists that the destination they choose to visit would be reliable, risk free, and hassle free. Thus, we defined destination trust as the willingness of tourists' to rely upon the ability of destination to fulfill its stated functions.

Brand attachment is considered as long lasting and commitment–inclusive bond between the consumer and the brand (Esch et al., 2006). Tourism researchers define place attachment as an emotional linkage or the affective bond of an individual to the environment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Some other definitions for place attachment include ''the extent to which an individual values and identifies with a particular environmental setting'' (Moore &Graefe, 1994, p. 17); an emotional investment with a place (Hummon, 1992); a set of emotions and positive beliefs formed by a person about a place that has been given meaning through interaction (Milligan, 1998). According to Rubinstein and Parmelee (1992), people attach meaning to a space based on

their social interaction and personal experience with the destination. Brocato (2006) argued that people form emotional bonds to places based on their relationships over time with the particular setting. Esch et al. (2006) stated that an individual attached to a particular place or object may develop a feeling of sorrow or regret in the absence of that place or object. Lee and Allen (1999) argued that individual's emotional attachment to a place usually starts developing after one or two visits; however, one may develop strong feelings for a place without visiting it. Hence, based on the above discussion, we defined place attachment as the emotional linkage or the affective bond which a tourist may develop with a particular destination.

A unique and distinctive brand personality affects consumer preferences and attitudes (Sirgy, 1982; Helgeson & Suphellen, 2004: Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou & Apostolopoulou, 2015), increases the brand trust (Sung & Kim, 2010), leads to emotional attachment to the brand (Aaker et al., 2004), as well as arouses greater satisfaction and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Furthermore, a well-established brand personality helps in the differentiation of a particular brand from those of its competitors (Aaker, 1996). Similarly, destination personality being an extension of brand personality to tourism destination influences preferences and attitudes (Murphy et al., 2007) and leads to emotional attachment and loyalty towards a particular destination (Chen & Phou, 2013; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Ekinci and Hosany (2006) found three dimensions of destination personality, namely, sincerity, excitement, and conviviality that were closely related to the hedonic characteristics of fun, satisfaction, and enjoyment, as given by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). Chen and Phou (2013) examined the effect of destination personality on satisfaction and trust and demonstrated that destination personality leads to greater satisfaction and trust towards a particular destination. Furthermore, a unique brand personality builds a sense of affection among tourists (Capara et al., 2001) and decreases the emotional risk that is involved in the brand purchase process, which ultimately engenders greater satisfaction and trust (Blackston, 1993). However, a few researchers have focused on the relationship among destination personality, satisfaction, and trust; so there is a lack of strong empirical support for this relationship. Hence, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H2: Destination personality positively influences destination satisfaction.

H3: Destination personality positively influences destination trust.

Self–congruity theory states that if a destination is positioned in such way that its personality is congruent to the visitor's personality, it is likely that tourist behavior towards the destination

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would get positively influenced (e.g., satisfaction, trust, destination preference, loyalty, etc.) (Chon, 1992; Beerli et al., 2007; Litvin & Kar, 2003; Sirgy et al., 2000). Several consumer behavior studies have examined the influence of self–congruity on satisfaction (Sirgy et al., 1997; He & Mukherjee, 2007). Similarly, some researchers have explored the relationship between self–congruity and satisfaction in tourism context (Chon, 1992; Litvin & Kar, 2003). Chon (1992) was the first researcher to apply self–congruity theory in tourism context, and the study findings suggested that there is a significant correlation between self–congruity and satisfaction. Later on, Litvin and Kar (2003) examined the applicability of self–congruity theory on tourism and demonstrated that self–congruity is a significant and strong predictor of satisfaction. Furthermore, Kumar and Nayak (2014b) empirically investigated a model of tourists' post visit behavior and observed that self–congruity positively influenced destination satisfaction. Destination trust is a function of various points of reference, such as prior knowledge or the information acquired from family, friends, or media sources or overall image, which includes both functional and symbolic images of destination (Ekinci, 2003). Hence, it can be argued that a tourist would develop a feeling of trust toward the destination if his or her personality is consistent with the destination personality. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study in the literature has yet evaluated the role of self–congruity in influencing brand trust or destination trust in tourism context. Moreover, previous tourism studies have avoided the inclusion of these two variables in the same study. Thus, to bridge this gap in the literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H4: Self–congruity positively influences destination satisfaction.

H5: Self–congruity positively influences destination trust.

Consumer satisfaction with a brand may result in developing trust (Lee & Back, 2008) and overall satisfaction engenders trust (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Several researchers have investigated the relationship between satisfaction and trust (Delgado–Ballester & Munuera–Aleman, 2001; Walse, Henning-Thurau, Sassenberg, & Bordenmann, 2001; Jain et al., 2011; Chen & Phou, 2013; Han & Hyun, 2015; Akamavi, Mohamed, Pellmann, & Xu, 2015).Tourists attach trust to the destination based on their satisfaction with the destination's symbolic attributes (Chen & Phou, 2013). Han and Hyun (2015) examined the relationship between satisfaction and trust in medical tourism and observed that satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on trust which in turn influences intention to revisit. Akamavi et al. (2015) investigated the role of satisfaction in

generating trust among passengers in low-cost airline industry and found that satisfaction of passenger is the significant predictor of passenger's trust with the airline.

Consumers may develop an emotional attachment to a brand, if they are satisfied with it (Thomson et al., 2005). Esch et al. (2006) stated that a sense of place attachment may occur for an individual if he or she is satisfied with a particular setting. For example, Lee, Kyle and Scott (2012) found that tourists' satisfaction related to the festivals of a destination is a significant predictor of place attachment and encourages tourists visit to the destination. Similarly, Halpenny (2006) found that satisfaction with a park's social, natural, and activity–conducive environment positively influences overall place attachment. Zenker and Rutter (2014) examined the role played by a tourist's place of birth, length of residence, and satisfaction attached to a place and observed that place satisfaction is the most significant predictor of place attachment. Hiscock (2001) argued that the fundamental goal of marketing is to create a favorable bond or relationship between brand and consumer, and the main critical component of this is trust. Esch et al. (2006) confirmed that brand trust evokes consumer's attachment toward the brand, which ultimately leads to his or her commitment or loyalty to it (Thomson et al., 2005). In tourism context, Chen and Phou (2013) examined the relationship between trust and attachment and observed that trust positively influences tourist's attachment toward a particular destination. Thus, based on the above discussion, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H6: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination trust.

H7: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination attachment.

H8: Destination trust positively influences destination attachment.

2.11.3. Tourist–destination relationship and destination loyalty

An extensive review of the consumer–brand relationship literature suggests that the tourist–destination relationship has three relevant specific dimensions that are destination satisfaction, destination trust, and destination attachment (Chen & Phou, 2013; Esch et al., 2006; Jani & Han, 2014; Lee et al., 2012; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010: Aksu, İçigen, & Ehtiyar, 2010). Chen and Tsai (2007) explored the factors that affect the visitors' behavioral intentions, and the study findings suggested that the satisfied visitors are more likely to revisit and recommend the destination to others. Prayag and Ryan (2012) examined the antecedents of tourist's loyalty toward Mauritius, an international holiday destination which offers variety of tourism such as golf, culture and adventure tourism. The authors observed that tourists' loyalty is

positively affected by their overall satisfaction with the destination. Lee et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between tourist's satisfaction and loyalty and found that the highly satisfied tourists are more likely to revisit the same place in the nearby future and would recommend the particular destination to others. Chen and Phou (2013) examined the influence of satisfaction on destination loyalty and observed that satisfaction is the significant predictor of tourists' intentions to revisit and willingness to recommend the destination. Several other studies have additionally found a significant and positive relationship between tourist's satisfaction and loyalty (del Bosque & Martín, 2008; Poria, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011; Srivastava & Sharma, 2013; Wang, Wu, & Yuan, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yuan, Wu, Zhang, Goh, & Stout, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010)

Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) argued that building brand trust is necessary for enhancing consumers' loyalty because trust generates exchange relationships that are highly valued. Trust is considered as the most valuable marketing tool for enhancing both loyalty and relationship quality (Berry, 1995; Ganguly, Dash, & Cyr, 2009). Kramer and Tyler (1996) argued that trust is a critical component in customer relationship because of several reasons, such as its ability to reduce the perceived risk associated with the purchase of product or service. Moreover, the agency theory states that trust is likely to generate loyalty, irrespective of the magnitude of the relationship between an organization and its customers (Agustin & Singh, 2005). For example, Chiu, Hsu, Lai, & Chang (2012) examined the impact of trust on online repurchase behavior and observed that the customers who express trust on a particular brand are also interested towards repurchasing that particular brand in nearby future. In tourism context, Roodurmun and Juwaheer (2010) and Chen and Phou (2013) examined the relationship between trust and destination loyalty, and the findings of both the studies suggested that the trust that tourists show towards the destination affect the destination loyalty. Furthermore, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) suggested that the tourists' are more likely to visit or revisit the destinations that they perceive as trustworthy and dependable.

Several tourism researchers have examined the relationship between attachment and loyalty (Chen & Phou, 2013; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007; Lee et al., 2012; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuksel et al., 2010). Hsu and Liping (2009) argued that only branded destinations can develop an emotional bond between travelers and destination that may further lead to greater loyalty. Yuksel et al. (2010)examined the influence of tourists' emotional associations with the destination on destination loyalty, and the study findings revealed that positive place attachment could affect the individual's assessment of the destination favorably and his or her loyalty toward the destination.

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Lee et al. (2012) verified that tourists' emotional attachment to the destination lead to their loyalty toward the destination. Similarly, Prayag and Ryan (2012) explored the antecedents of tourists' loyalty towards a holiday destination in Mauritius, and the study findings revealed that place attachment positively and significantly influence tourists' revisit and recommendation intentions. Chen and Phou (2013) further strengthened the relationship between destination attachment and destination loyalty by providing empirical evidence in their study about foreign visitors of Angkor temple in Cambodia. They found that destination attachment would likely influence tourists' intentions to revisit and intention to recommend the destination. Hence, based on the above discussion, we proposed following hypotheses:

H9: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty.

H10: Destination trust positively influences destination loyalty.

H11: Destination attachment positively influences destination loyalty.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The study used a survey research design for gathering data, wherein a self–administered questionnaire was developed based on scale development, literature review, and previously developed scales. The questionnaire was divided in two parts; the first part had statements related to the collection of data for the constructs used in the study; and the second part constituted of questions related to demographics and trip characteristics. Destination personality was measured by developing a DPS based on qualitative and quantitative research.

3.1. DPS Development

Although some researchers have developed instruments for measuring the brand personality of destinations (e.g., Aaker, 1997; d'Astous & Boujbel, 2007), there is a dearth of a valid and reliable instrument that is specifically developed to measure their brand personality. Aaker (1997), and Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2006) suggested in their studies that for measuring the brand personality of a destination, one must recognize and incorporate the distinctive personality traits which are specific to that particular destination. Hence, for ensuring that all personality traits pertinent to India are included in the study, an extensive scale development process was followed. For the purpose of developing a more comprehensive scale, both the exploratory (qualitative) and descriptive (quantitative) studies were considered. The measures and procedures recommended by Churchill (1979) for the development and validation of a scale were followed in the study. The steps involved in the construction and development of the scale are discussed in the next section and are depicted in Figure 3.

3.1.1. Generation of Personality Traits

For the generation of traits, a list of adjectives, which can be used to define the personality of a destination, was prepared. To achieve this objective, 12 English–speaking foreign tourists, six male and six female, aged between 22 and 47 years, were interviewed. Out of the 12 respondents, five belong to the United Kingdom, four to the United States, and three to Australia. These respondents were selected on the basis of three criteria: (1) duration of stay, (2) number of visits to different destinations, and (3) familiarity with different destinations of India. The respondents must have a

stay of at least 30 days and must have visited different destinations of India minimum 10 times. To assess the familiarity with the destinations, they were asked some questions on subjects like geographical location, language, and significance of the destination (e.g., famous landscapes, places, etc.). Subsequently, they were asked to personify different destinations of India by associating human traits to them. For example, they were told that a destination can be welcoming, diverse, or calm. A total of 22 diverse destinations of India were included for increasing the representativeness and scope of the study. Altogether, two main criteria guided the selection of destinations; one is the number of foreigners visiting the destination, and the other is the different types of tourists, who are attracted to the destination. The tourists found the interviews to be quite interesting and spontaneously came up with some unique traits. This process elicited 42 unique traits related to India's personality. This was followed by the task of finding the sources of inferences. Using a self-administered questionnaire, the participants were asked to rate their familiarity with the above-listed destinations on a bipolar scale with end points not at all familiar and totally familiar and to tell the sources of inferences of the traits. The main sources of inferring destination personality were the media, friends, family, and personal experiences.
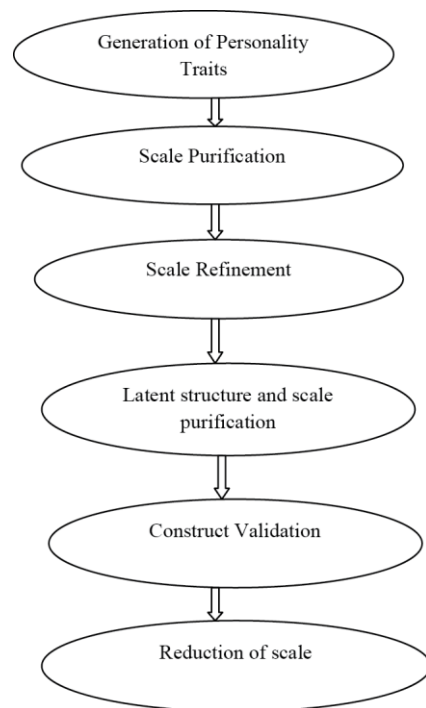
Figure 3: Major Steps Involved in the Development of the DPS

To increase the number of traits, some other scales, developed by researchers in this field, were included. Aaker's (1997) BPS (42 items) and d'Astous and Boujbel's (2007) country personality scale (29 items) were added to the 42 items generated in the exploratory study. After eliminating the repetitions, a list of 96 traits was prepared. Aaker's (1997) BPS has been used in this study because the scale is the most comprehensive instrument for measuring brand personality and has been widely used in destination personality context. Furthermore, d'Astous and Boujbel's (2007) scale was adopted because it includes the negative personality traits that are essential for defining a destination or location. In a pilot study, 22 foreign tourists (12 female, 10 male) were asked to rate the probability of using each adjectives in the list for defining the personality of different destinations of India. Of the 22 respondents, eight were from United Kingdom, six from the United States, five from France, and three from Germany. The ratings were obtained on a five–point bipolar scale with end points *improbable* and *probable*. The adjectives with a score of three or more were retained. This process resulted in the elimination of 26 traits. Thus, a comprehensive list of 70 adjectives was obtained.

3.1.2. *Scale Purification*

The objective of this stage was to find out the factor structure of the adjectives and to purify the scale. To achieve this, a survey was conducted in Agra city, which is famous for the Taj Mahal. In total, 343 questionnaires were distributed among the international tourists visiting the Taj Mahal. The sample was collected using self-administered questionnaire method. After intimidating the respondents about the significance of the study, the majority of the respondents expressed willingness to participate in the study. A total of 212 usable questionnaires were collected, which exhibited a good response rate of 61.8 percent. The average age of the respondents was 40 years, and the sample included 44.64 percent males and 55.36 percent females. The respondents belong to the following countries: United Kingdom (19 percent), United States (16 percent), Germany (13 percent), France (12 percent), Scotland (9 percent), and others (31 percent). Similar studies were conducted using seven well-known destinations of India as stimuli. These destinations are Agra (north India), Dharamsala (north India), Jaipur (west India), Goa (west India), Puri (east India), Khajuraho (central India), and Pondicherry (now called Puducherry; south India). To select the relevant sample for the study, only those foreigners were targeted who have either visited or have a fair idea about the aforementioned destinations. For accomplishing relevance of the sample related to the study, the visitors were asked some questions regarding different aspects about the above

mentioned destinations (e.g., famous landscapes, places, etc.), and the questions constituted of geographical location, significance, and culture of the place. The main sources of destination personality inferences were family, friends, media, travels, and products. The participants were asked to rate two destinations using 70 personality traits on a five–point numerical bipolar scale with end points *does not describe at all and describes perfectly*. One of the destinations was Agra, whereas the others were any of the remaining destinations. So, six different versions of questionnaire were prepared. The order of destination (Agra) was reversed in half of the questionnaires.

The scale data were analyzed using principal component analysis (PCA). The varimax rotation method generated six–factor solution where the eigenvalues of each and every factor were more than one. All the synonyms and antonyms within each factor were identified with the help of Oxford dictionary, and the traits having factor loadings more than 0.50 were retained for further study. In continuation to this step, 19 traits were eliminated from the study. Following this a subsequent PCA with varimax rotation was conducted on the remaining traits and an elimination of additional 16 traits was achieved by removing the traits having factor loadings less than 0.5. The six factors explained 52.56 percent of the total variance.

Table 4: Factor Structure of Personality Items

Scale Dimension	Eigen value	Variance (%)	Cronbach's α	Adjectives
Courteousness	9.23	21.40	0.86	Polite, sincere, welcoming, respectful, generous, romantic, accommodating, friendly, mannered, smooth
Vibrancy	4.64	10.82	0.87	Adventurous, vibrant, alive, fascinating, unique, diverse, incredible
Conformity	2.39	7.64	0.83	Religious, spiritual, traditionalist, mysterious
Creativity	2.08	4.93	0.71	Enthusiastic, passionate, exciting, energetic, creative
Viciousness	1.94	4.31	0.65	Vulgar, violent, obscure, depraved
Tranquility	1.51	3.46	0.70	Peaceful, down to earth, good, agreeable, cool

Thus, the six factors that emerged after these steps were labeled as follows: courteousness (10 items), vibrancy (7 items), conformity (4 items), creativity (5 items), viciousness (4 items), and tranquility (5 items). Table 4 shows the factors with their items as well as the corresponding eigenvalues, explained variance, and the reliability values. To check the stability of the factor structure, separate PCAs among male and female, and among respondents younger than 40 years and those older than 40 years were conducted. The results revealed that the factor structure was stable across gender and age group.

3.1.3. Scale Refinement

The main purpose of this phase was to confirm the factor structure of the DPS, to purify the scale and to assess the stability and psychometric properties of the scale. To achieve this objective, another survey was conducted among the foreign tourists in Agra. The respondents were approached at the Taj Mahal during their leisure time. The sample was collected using self-administered questionnaire method. The average time taken by the participants to fill the questionnaire was about 15 minutes. The study has attempted to achieve random sampling by randomly choosing weeks, days, and the locations over a period of three months from October to December 2013. The participants were told about the implications of the study, and appropriate instructions were given to them regarding the questionnaire. Most of the participants were anxious about the study, and hence, showed interest towards participating in the study. In total, 383 foreigners were targeted, and a sample of 264 respondents was collected. Out of the 264 questionnaires, eight were found incomplete; thus, only 256 were retained for the next part of the study.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. In the first part, three destinations of India had to be evaluated on the basis of 35 personality traits, using five–point bipolar numerical scale with end points *doesn't describe the destination at all and describes the destination perfectly*. One of the evaluated destinations was Agra, whereas the other two were selected from the following list: Shimla (north India), Banaras (also called Varanasi; north India), Dharamsala (north India), Jaipur (west India), Goa (west India), Puri (east India), Darjeeling (east India), Khajuraho (central India), Hyderabad (south India), and Pondicherry (south India). Three criteria were kept in mind while choosing the stimulus destinations and these criteria were (1) economic and cultural diversity, (2) geographical diversity, and (3) familiarity. Three destinations were combined in five groups which resulted in the formation of five different versions of the questionnaire. In order to

formulate these groups, Agra coupled with (1) Shimla and Hyderabad, (2) Dharamsala and Puri, (3) Goa and Khajuraho, (4) Jaipur and Pondicherry, and (5) Banaras and Darjeeling. These groups were structured for ensuring cultural, geographical, and economic diversity. We assumed that while comparing different destinations keeping in mind the bipolar scale will make the respondents to indulge in thinking about the destinations for a different perspective while filling the questionnaire.

The questions in the second part of the questionnaire were used to assess tourists' attitude towards the destinations' products, evaluation of the destination as a tourist's spot, and overall attitude towards the destination. The items used for measuring these constructs were borrowed from the work of Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) and are shown in Table 5. This was followed by the destination assessment using the six dimensions of the DPS (e.g., "Agra is vibrant" five–point not at all/totally bipolar scale). Therefore, the respondents were asked to position themselves on the above mentioned six dimensions (courteous/discourteous, vibrant/spiritless, conformist/open, creative/uncreative, vicious/right, and tranquil/agitated). The last part of the questionnaire constituted of sociodemographic questions (age, sex, occupation, home country, level of education, and total income). The results obtained at this stage are discussed in the next section of the article.

Table 5: Attitude Toward the Destination

Product-destination Attitude ($\mu = 3.82$, $\alpha = .88$)
It is very likely that I will buy products from this destination
I would recommend the products of this destination to others
I will definitely try products of this location
A trip to this destination is fun
Travel-destination Attitude ($\mu = 4.03$, $\alpha = .81$)
This destination is very popular with travelers
I would recommend this destination to others
I would like to revisit this destination
I admire this destination
Overall Attitude ($\mu = 3.98$, $\alpha = .86$)
I admire this destination
I have very good image of this destination
Overall, I like this destination

3.1.4. Results

3.1.4.1. Sample Description

The proportion of male participants was slightly higher (53.7 percent) than the female participants. The average age of the sample was 35 years, and it varied between 19 and 76 years. The participants' level of education was fairly high, as 54.6 percent among them were graduates and the remaining 36.7 percent were either post graduates or had other professional degree. The total monthly household income of the participants varied from USD 3000 to USD 25000, and the average income was approximately USD 8400. The respondents were from the following countries: the United Kingdom (22 percent), the United States (18 percent), Australia (16 percent), France (14 percent), Ireland (11 percent) and others (19 percent). So, the overall sample was a good mix of younger, more educated, and financially sound people.

3.1.4.2. Latent Structure and Scale Purification

The purpose of this phase of research was to find out the latent structure and to further purify the scale. To achieve this, several PCAs with varimax rotation were performed on the scale data. Exploratory factor analysis was preferred over confirmatory analysis because of the lack of strong theoretical justification for the destination personality dimensions (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 1998). Three traits—smooth, mysterious, and spirited—failed to load properly on the predetermined factors, and hence, were removed from further analysis. Subsequently, another PCA was performed on the reduced data (32 traits). The results displayed no issue of cross loading, and hence, a stable factor solution was obtained. The results are shown in Table 6. All the factors have eigenvalues more than 1, which explain a total variance of 67.12 percent. The reliability of the factors was measured using Cronbach's alpha, and all the values were found satisfactory.

3.1.4.3. Stability Checks

To check the stability of the factor structure, a series of PCAs with varimax rotation were conducted among various subgroups in the sample. These subgroups are younger (<35 years) versus older participants, males versus females, and less educated (undergraduates) versus higher educated participants. The factor structure changed a bit for male subgroups because few items such as romantic and mannered shifted from "courteousness" factor to "vibrancy." The factor solution of female subgroup was more consistent than the male subgroup. There were no major differences among the factor structures of age and level of education subgroups. The consistency

of factor structure was further examined by running a stability check on a randomly selected sample of 50 percent of respondents. With regard to our expectation, the factor structure was very much consistent with the factor structure obtained from using the entire sample.

3.1.5. *Construct Validation*

The objective of this section was to assess the validity of the dimensions of the constructs. The validity of the scale's construct can be assessed by examining whether it exhibits predictable behavior as per the widely accepted theoretical framework (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 6: Factor Structure of DPS

	Factor 1: Courteousness	Factor 2: Vibrancy	Factor 3: Conformity	Factor 4: Creativity	Factor 5: Viciousness	Factor 6: Tranquility
Polite	**.751**	.162	.109	.009	−.081	.039
Sincere	**.740**	.018	.099	.125	−.300	.198
Welcoming	**.736**	.008	−.150	.116	.053	.216
Respectful	**.721**	.097	.372	−.022	−.242	.229
Generous	**.687**	−.179	−.004	.183	−.074	.314
Romantic	**.644**	.320	.196	.158	−.008	.134
Accommodating	**.629**	.151	.152	.123	−.107	.329
Friendly	**.597**	.376	.328	.059	−.141	.200
Mannered	**.535**	.243	.393	.008	.274	−.092
Diverse	.006	**.803**	.201	.196	−.040	.024
Adventurous	.148	**.747**	.137	.051	.035	.056
Vibrant	.093	**.713**	.131	.282	.029	.178
Alive	.065	**.605**	−.038	.426	−.025	.252
Unique	.118	**.581**	.292	.208	−.207	.236
Incredible	.247	**.550**	.388	.218	−.017	.154
Fascinating	.174	**.545**	.451	.205	−.055	.083
Religious	.115	.285	**.821**	.161	−.018	.080
Spiritual	.219	.236	**.815**	.152	−.027	−.006
Traditionalist	.032	.203	**.777**	.225	.098	.265

Enthusiastic	.229	.130	.132	**.801**	−.090	.085
Passionate	.052	.223	.158	**.784**	.026	−.031
Exciting	−.014	.481	.216	**.659**	.020	.124
Energetic	.133	.258	.146	**.646**	−.063	.041
Vulgar	−.166	−.075	.074	.020	**.854**	−.108
Violent	−.203	−.059	.099	−.069	**.829**	−.038
Obscure	.145	.072	−.100	−.151	**.767**	.114
Depraved	−.296	−.087	−.056	.179	**.585**	−.333
Peaceful	.347	.186	.082	.065	−.083	**.740**
Down to earth	.499	.237	−.022	−.019	−.109	**.670**
Good	.249	.046	.438	.159	.070	**.577**
Agreeable	.396	.405	.239	−.058	−.252	**.561**
Cool	.334	.408	.134	.230	−.047	**.540**
Eigenvalue	10.96	3.90	2.37	1.67	1.49	1.06
% of variance	34.27	12.19	7.43	5.23	4.68	3.30
Cronbach's α	.89	.87	.81	.88	.80	.83

Note: The strongest loadings are in bold.

To predict the scale's construct validity, the self-image congruence theory was selected as the theoretical framework because of its wide applications in the consumer behavior (see e.g., Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004; Solomon, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato, 2005). This theory states that people prefer objects whose psychological characteristics seem to be congruent with their self-image. This theory has been predicted in this research with the data collected from the participants in which they were asked to rate the destination and themselves on various personality dimensions. The PCA with varimax rotation was performed on the scale items related to the product–destination attitudes, travel–destination attitudes, and overall attitudes toward the destination. The resulting three factor structure was consistent with the expected factor structure, which includes product–destination attitude (four items, mean factor loading = 0.85; α = .88), travel–destination attitude (four items, mean factor loading = 0.87; α = .81), and overall destination attitude (three items, mean factor loading = 0.82; α = .86; refer Table 5).

The absolute distance between the mean score of destination personality dimension and respondent's self-assessment on the corresponding dimensions was calculated and averaged across all the six dimensions. These scores corresponding to the self-image or destination incongruence were

correlated with the mean of product–destination attitude, travel–destination attitude, and overall destination attitude items. Self-image or destination incongruence refers to the mismatch between the tourists' self-image and destination personality. The results of the analysis followed the self-image congruence theory as all the correlations were negative and statistically significant. The correlation values for different attitudes toward destination were negative as is evident in the following:

The correlation values for product–destination attitude are $r = -0.15$ and $p = -0.05$.

The corelation values for travel–destination attitude are $r = -0.22$ and $p = -0.05$.

The correlation values for overall destination attitude are $r = -0.18$ and $p = -0.05$.

These negative correlations signify that greater the mismatch between tourists' self-image and destination personality, lower is the probability that tourists would develop a positive attitude toward the destination in relation to the products of the destination, the attitude towards visiting the destination again, and the overall image of the destination. Hence, these results proved empirically the construct validity of the proposed DPS.

3.1.6. *Assessment of Reduced Scale*

The DPS developed in this study may be relevant to position the personality of one or more destinations, but the burden on the respondents will increase as the number of destination stimuli increases. Hence, it becomes relevant to check the feasibility of constructing a DPS with lesser number of items.

We proposed a 23-item scale by selecting four traits from each personality construct, except the conformity construct as it constituted of only three traits. The traits were selected based on two criteria: (1) factor loadings value (preferred higher value) and (2) mean correlation value of each item with other factors (preferred lower value). Subsequently, a PCA was run on the reduced scale data, and a six-factor structure was obtained with the expected factor loadings. All the six factors contributed to 72.6 percent of the total variance. The results are presented in Table 7 along with the reliability estimates for each dimension of destination scale. It can be seen that even after eliminating 12 traits from the scale, the reliability values of the scale were comparable to the original scale. A series of stability checks were performed, and the results revealed that the factor structure of reduced scale was more stable than that of the original scale. In sum, the 23-item scale proved to be a better scale than the 35-item scale based on the stability results and its smaller size.

3.1.7. *Destination Positioning on the DPS*

All the destinations covered in this research for exploring the destination personality of India were positioned at 23-item DPS, and the results are shown in Table 8. The destinations with extreme values on each dimension are given in boldface. The results show that Dharamsala is perceived as the most courteous destination of India, because most of the residents here are the followers of Buddha religion, and hence, are very humble and accommodating by nature. In the vibrancy dimension, Jaipur topped the list, and it is not at all surprising because Jaipur, also known as the pink city, is full of diversity and joy. Khajuraho received the highest rating in creativity dimension and it is appropriate because the place is known for its ancient temples and erotic sculptures. On creativity dimensions, Khajuraho is followed by Jaipur and Banaras as they also received high on this dimension.

Table 7: Final Factor Structure and Reliability Results of 23-Item DPS

	Factor 1: Courteousness	Factor 2: Vibrancy	Factor 3: Creativity	Factor 4: Conformity	Factor 5: Viciousness	Factor 6: Tranquility
Welcoming	**.820**	−.004	.132	−.118	.076	.190
Polite	**.758**	.163	.038	.164	−.073	.102
Sincere	**.714**	−.017	.153	.126	−.298	.266
Respectful	**.699**	.061	.024	.398	−.232	.317
Diverse	−.038	**.774**	.236	.233	−.061	.062
Adventurous	.118	**.756**	.070	.191	.010	.074
Vibrant	.069	**.728**	.299	.169	.018	.191
Alive	.086	**.671**	.397	−.001	−.026	.161
Enthusiastic	.151	.116	**.817**	.116	−.100	.135
Passionate	.010	.207	**.787**	.159	.020	−.029
Energetic	.112	.192	**.693**	.117	−.072	.058
Exciting	−.015	.468	**.679**	.205	.024	.116
Religious	.134	.274	.170	**.868**	.001	.062
Spiritual	.205	.203	.168	**.852**	−.016	.023
Traditionalist	−.052	.170	.255	**.763**	.085	.327
Vulgar	−.142	−.076	.019	.061	**.871**	−.111

Violent	−.201	−.013	−.104	.110	**.827**	−.077
Obscure	.174	.094	−.137	−.093	**.772**	.130
Depraved	−.305	−.106	.160	−.073	**.586**	−.336
Peaceful	.283	.159	.113	.027	−.093	**.779**
Down to earth	.096	.008	.218	.359	.056	**.724**
Good	.437	.255	−.004	−.040	−.132	**.702**
Agreeable	.344	.415	−.033	.253	−.268	**.588**
Eigenvalue	7.24	3.41	2.09	1.56	1.35	1.04
% of variance	31.48	14.82	9.10	6.79	5.87	4.24
Cronbach's α	.83	.75	.88	.81	.80	.77

Note: The strongest loadings are in bold.

It is not surprising that Banaras has been ranked highest on the conformity dimension because this place offers a religious and spiritual experience to visitors. Some other destinations such as Puri and Dharamsala are also well positioned on this dimension. The most vicious destination revealed in the study is Agra.

Table 8: Destination Positioning on 23-Item DPS

	Courteousness	Vibrancy	Creativity	Conformity	Viciousness	Tranquility
Agra	2.81	3.73	3.13	3.25	**2.67**	1.45
Banaras	3.72	3.23	3.45	**4.33**	1.32	2.83
Darjeeling	3.23	3.46	2.92	2.84	2.04	3.42
Dharamsala	**3.91**	3.67	3.31	3.91	1.13	3.93
Goa	3.46	3.74	3.14	1.82	1.72	1.66
Hyderabad	2.93	3.48	2.84	2.67	1.93	1.92
Jaipur	3.51	**3.93**	3.68	3.21	1.74	2.54
Khajuraho	2.74	2.51	**3.86**	3.16	1.58	**4.15**
Pondicherry	2.42	2.82	3.15	1.89	1.72	3.64
Puri	3.64	2.43	2.78	3.92	1.57	2.56
Shimla	3.84	3.68	3.13	2.64	1.83	2.92
All destinations	3.31	3.33	3.22	3.05	1.75	2.82

Note: Destinations with extreme values on each dimension are in bold.

It may be because of the fact that data were collected at a time when a significant number of cases of misconduct with foreigners were reported in the media. The most tranquil destination revealed in the study is Khajuraho and other destinations following it are Dharamsala, Pondicherry, and Darjeeling. The results presented in Table 8 should be understood with care as the sample size used in the calculation of personality means ranges between 38 and 47 (except Agra, which has been evaluated by every respondent). Higher sample size may change the value of mean scores of different personality dimensions obtained by various destinations, and hence, it may have different managerial and theoretical implications.

3.1.8. *Predictive Validity*

To test the predictive validity of the proposed DPS, the three constructs that comprised the product–destination attitude, travel–destination attitude, and overall destination attitude have been considered. The number of items used for measuring each of the construct means, and the corresponding Cronbach's alpha values are given in Table 5. In total, three structural equation modeling analyses were performed, and each model used one of the three constructs as the dependent variable, and the destination personality dimensions are considered as the independent variables. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 9. It is seen that all the dimensions have explained a significant portion of variance ranging from 0.41 to 0.51 with acceptable fit indices for each analysis.

All the dimensions of the proposed scale except creativity are the important predictors of the respondent's attitude with conformity and tranquility being two strong predictors in all cases. The results reveal that 12 out of the 18 relationships, which have been tested, are significant. Hence, we can propose that the results are logical and strongly support the predictive validity of the proposed scale. The results obtained in this research were compared with the available works of Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) and d'Astous and Boujbel (2007). The study conducted by Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) is directly comparable to our study because they have used structural equation modeling analyses for testing the predictive validity. In their study, they reported the explained variance to be 0.32 for "product purchase attitude," 0.56 for "intention to travel," and 0.57 for "overall attitude." The respective equivalents in our study are an explained variance of 0.41 for "product purchase attitude," 0.48 for "intention to travel," and 0.51 for "overall attitude."

Table 9: SEM Analyses: Verifying the Predictive Validity of the Scale

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Product-Destination Attitudes	Travel-Destination Attitudes	Overall Attitudes
Standardized coefficients			
Courteousness	**0.39****	0.21*	0.37**
Vibrancy	0.11	0.16*	0.14
Creativity	0.03	0.06	0.05
Conformity	0.23*	**0.42****	0.38**
Viciousness	−0.04	−0.23*	−0.18*
Tranquility	0.22*	0.36**	**0.41****
AVE	0.41	0.48	0.51
CR	0.79	0.84	0.81
Model fit indices			
RMSEA	0.05	0.03	0.05
GFI	0.94	0.96	0.95
AGFI	0.87	0.89	0.88
NFI	0.90	0.91	0.93
CFI	0.93	0.96	0.95

Note: SEM = structural equation modeling; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; RMSEA =root mean square error of approximation; GFI = goodness of fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit index; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index. The coefficients with the maximum value for each dependent variable are in bold.

*Significant at p ≤.05. **Significant at p ≤.01.

3.2. The Measurement

All other constructs of the conceptualized model except destination personality were apoted from various previously developed scales. There are two methods in the literature to measure self-congruity; one is gap score formula (traditional method) and the other is direct score formula (new method) (Sirgy & Su, 2000). This research applied direct score formula because of its merits over gap score method which include more predictive power, less measurement error, and capability of capturing the self-congruity more holisticly (Sirgy et al., 1997). Hence, self-congruity was

measured directly using six statements developed by Sirgy and Su (2000) and Sirgy et al. (1997). In this method, the respondents were first asked to imagine the destination as if it were a person and think about its personality traits. Subsequent to this, the respondents were asked to state the consistency between the personality traits of destination and their self-concept based on the six statements of actual and ideal self-congruity. The brand personality of the destination is used to state the consistency between destination and tourist's self-concept because brand personality is a broader and more inclusive concept compared to brand image (Helgeson & Suphellen, 2004; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Brand personality can be formed and influenced by any direct or indirect contact between consumer and brand, whereas the image of a typical user of brand is believed to be reflective of the image of brand. The actual self-congruity was measured using the following statements: "This destination is consistent with how I see myself"; "I am quite similar to the personality of this destination"; "The personality of this destination is congruent with how I see myself". On the other hand, the ideal self-congruity were measured using the statements as follows: "This destination is consistent with how I would like to see myself"; "I would like to be perceived as similar to the personality of this destination"; "The personality of this destination is congruent with how I would like to see myself". All these self-congruity statements were measured using a five point bipolar scale with endpoints (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Destination satisfaction was measured using four items adapted from the work of Chen and Phou (2013). The four items were as followed: "My visit to this destination is worth my time and effort"; "Compared to other destinations, this destination is a much better one"; "My experiences with this destination are excellent"; "Overall, I am satisfied with the travel experience in this destination". Destination trust was measured using Delgado–Ballester's (2004) brand trust scale because of the non-availability of destination trust scale. Moreover, Delgado–Ballester's (2004) brand trust scale is validated by Chen and Phou (2013) in their study that was conducted among foreigners visiting Angkor temple in Cambodia. The destination trust items are shown in Table 16. Destination attachment was measured using three items adapted from Yuksel et al. (2010); these items are "This destination means a lot to me," "I feel a strong sense of belonging to this destination," and "I am very much attached to this destination".

Destination loyalty was measured using three items adopted from Chen and Phou (2013) and Yuksel et al. (2010); these items are "It's likely that I will revisit this destination in the future"; "It's likely that I will recommend this destination to my family and friends"; "I would consider this

destination to be my first destination choice in future". All these items were measured on the five point bipolar scale with endpoints (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

The demographic questions asked in the questionnaire include age, gender, marital status, level of education, country or state of residence, and household income. Trip characteristics were measured using different statements such as how long the visitor had been at the destination, companions in the trip, visitation status, main purpose of the trip and information sources used in selecting holiday destination.

3.3. Research site

The sample for this study was collected in Shimla and Dharamsala, famous holiday destinations among domestic and foreign tourists. International tourists visiting Shimla and Dharamsala were targeted in this study. Shimla is located in northern India and is the summer capital of British India. Shimla is known as a hub for tourism sector and is one of the top 10 preferred entrepreneurial locations in India among foreign and domestic tourists. The famous places in Shimla among tourists include Christ Church, Jakhu Hill, The Mall, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, State Museum, Summer Hill, etc. Dharamsala is also located in northern India and is the current hometown of Tibetan holy guru Dalai Lama and the headquarters of Central Tibetan Administration (the Tibetan government in exile). The famous places to visit in Dharamsala include Tibetan Monastery, Mcleodgunj, Bhagsunag temple, waterfall etc. This place is also famous among the trekking and cricket lovers as it offers a number of beautiful trekking trails to the trekkers and has one of the most attractive cricket stadiums in India.

3.4. Pilot study

In order to check the potential ambiguity and reliability of the proposed questionnaire, a pilot study within a sample of 25 foreigners visiting Shimla was conducted. The result of pilot study revealed that there are no issues regarding the format and the language of the questions. Thus, all the items were retained for the main study. The average time taken by the respondents to complete the questionnaire was 15 minutes.

3.5. Sample

Shimla and Dharamsala were selected for data collection because of three reasons. First, Shimla and Dharamsala are among the world's famous tourist destinations those offers natural, cultural, and other attractions to the visitors. Second, these are the popular holiday destinations

among foreigners with hundreds of foreigners visiting each day. Third, both places offer a wide range of tourist spots, and hence, a varied range of international tourists is always available for conducting empirical studies which require large representativeness of the international visitors. The respondents were approached at different locations such as restaurants, malls, railway station and relaxing spots (i.e., terraces, benches and outer walls). The researchers explained the significance to the respondents and informed them that the participation was voluntary, and all the information related to them would be kept confidential. The respondents were very much interested and participated willingly in the study. Using a convenience sampling technique, a total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and 356 usable questionnaires were collected, which yielded a response rate of 79.1 percent. The data were collected over four months from July to October 2014.

3.6. Data Analysis

SPSS 20 and AMOS 20 statistical packages were used for analyzing the collected data. As the samples were collected from two different locations, t-test was performed to check whether significant differences occur between the two samples or not. The results displayed insignificant differences in the samples collected for this study. Hence, both the samples were appropriate to be included in the study. The analysis of data was performed in various stages. First, the data was checked for any possible entry error and outliers, and the descriptive statistics were reported. Second, the exploratory factor analysis was performed to check the factor structure of personality dimensions, self-congruity statements, and trust scale items. Subsequent to this, the reliability values of all constructs used in the study were checked. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed in continuation to this for checking the goodness of fit of measurement model and validity of the constructs. Finally, the structural equation modeling was conducted to check the goodness of fit of the structural model and the various interrelationships among the constructs of conceptualized model. The results obtained during the analysis of data are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4
Results and Analysis

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of respondents is shown in Table 10. The strength of male respondents (186 respondents = 52.24 percent) was more than female ones. Fifty three percent respondents were single followed by married (39 percent) and others (8 percent).

Table 10: Demographic profile of respondents (n= 356)

Demographic Characteristics		Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	186	52.2
	Female	170	47.8
Marital status	Married	139	39.1
	Single	188	52.8
	Other	29	8.1
Education level	High School or Less	65	18.3
	University	167	46.9
	Master or PhD	71	19.9
	Other professional degree	53	14.9
Household income (annual)	Less than $30,000	68	19.1
	$30,000-$59,999	63	17.7
	$60,000-$89,999	94	26.4
	$90,000-$119,999	45	12.6
	$120,000 or more	86	24.2
Occupation	Salaried	184	51.7
	Business	42	11.8
	Student	76	21.3
	Retired	21	5.9
	Other	33	9.3
Origin	Europe	164	46.1
	North America	74	20.8
	South America	49	13.7
	Asia	43	12.1
	Other	26	7.3

The respondents' age varied from 16 to 72 years, with a mean age of 41.6 years. Among the respondents, 67 percent respondents held university or higher degree and 63.5 percent of respondents were employed or had their own businesses. In case of respondents' annual household income, 26.4 percent belonged to $60,000–$89,999 income group, followed by 24.2 percent with income approximately $120,000 or more. Following this, 19.1 percent belonged $30,000 or less income group, 17.7 percent belonged to $30,000–$59,999 and 12.6 percent belonged to $90,000–$119,999. The respondents were from 26 countries, out of which 46 percent were from Europe, 21 percent from North America, 14 percent from South America, 12 percent from Asia and 7 percent from other remaining continents.

4.2. Trip characteristics

Table 11 and Table 12 display the trip characteristics of the respondents. Most of the respondents were the first time visitors (85.4 percent) to Shimla and Dharamsala. This was followed by 14.6 percent respondents who were the repeat visitors to Shimla and Dharamsala, and the mean number of visits within the past three years was less than two (mean = 1.93; median = 2).

Table 11: Trip Characteristics

Characteristic		n	%
Visitation status	First time	304	85.4
	Repeat visitors	52	14.6
Travel Companion	Alone	21	5.9
	Family/relatives	110	30.9
	Friends	152	42.7
	Tour Group	44	12.4
	Other	29	8.1

Most of the respondents were travelling with their friends (42.7 percent). This was followed by family and relatives (30.9 percent), tour group (12.4 percent), alone (5.9 percent) and others (8.1 percent). The respondents' average duration of stay in Shimla was five days (median = 6), and the average group size was 5.5 (median = 7).

Table 12: Trip Characteristics - Average scores

Characteristics	Mean	Median
Number of previous visits (n=52)	1.9	2
Group size (N=356)	5.5	7
Duration of stay (N=356)	5	6

4.3. Information Sources

The sources of information which the travelers exercised for their decision making to visit Shimla and Dharamsala are exhibited in Table 13. As the table 13 displays, the most crucial source of information that influenced the tourists' decision to visit Shimla is the available information on internet (30 percent). This finding suggests the importance of online media to influence the decision making process of the travelers.

Table 13: Sources of Information

Information sources	n	%
Internet	107	30
Friends, family and relatives	71	19.9
Magazines, newspapers and other print media	59	16.6
Prior visit	52	14.6
Travel agency	44	12.4
Movies/TV shows	23	6.5

Online media is followed by the word of mouth from friends, family and relatives (19.9 percent), which depicts its importance in the decision making process. The third vital sources of information are magazines, newspapers and other print media (16.6 percent). Others information sources include prior visits (14.6 percent), travel agencies (12.4 percent) and movies/TV shows (6.5 percent). Prior visits plays an important role on emphasizing decision making process as it satisfies the need of the visitors of Shimla and influence their decision of revisiting the place again in nearby future.

4.4. Dimensionality of Destination Personality, Self-congruity and Trust

4.4.1. Exploratory Factor analysis of DPS

This step of data analysis examined the dimensionality of developed DPS. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the items of DPS developed in this study. The findings of this step revealed the value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) to be 0.879 and additionally reveal the significance of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (p < 0.000, Chi square = 2652.612, df = 253). These results confirm the applicability of factor analysis on DPS that reflects significant correlations existing among the variables (Nayak, Sinha, & Guin, 2007: Singh & Prashar). The cut-off value for factor loadings was set at 0.5 as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). All the items had factor loadings greater than 0.5, but one item "vibrant" was cross loaded. The analysis revealed a shift in the factor structure of DPS. The DPS developed in the research consisted of six factors that are labeled as: courteousness (4 items), vibrancy (4items), conformity (3 items), creativity (4 items), viciousness (4 items), and tranquility (4items). But the factor structure that emerged on the application of DPS in our study of conceptualized model consisted of only five factors. The items of factor labeled as "tranquility" merged into the "courteousness" factor. All other items remained in their original factors. This might have happened because of the close resemblance of the factors tranquility and courteousness. The five factor solution accounted for 69.98 percent of the total variance and the value of communalities varied in between 0.52 and 0.81. The reliability values for all the factors were checked using Cronbach's alpha and these varied between 0.77 and 0.91. Table14 shows the factor loadings, eigenvalues, percent of explained variance and Cronbach's alpha reliability values.

Table 14: Exploratory factor analysis of DPS[a]

Factors	Factor loading[b]	Eigenvalue	% of Explained Variance	Reliability[c]
DP1:Well-mannered		8.610	37.391	.914
Agreeable	.795			
Sincere	.757			
Welcoming	.756			
Peaceful	.745			
Good	.732			
Respectful	.717			
Down to earth	.662			
Polite	.641			

DP2: Vibrancy		3.031	13.178	.772
Diverse	.827			
Alive	.762			
Vibrant	.620			
Adventuorous	.617			
DP3: Creativity		1.7477	7.593	.848
Passionate	.790			
Energetic	.744			
Enthusiatic	.712			
Exciting	.588			
DP4: Conformity		1.649	7.168	.856
Religious	.849			
Spiritual	.838			
Traditional	.759			
DP5: Viciousness		1.069	4.650	.871
Violent	.858			
Depraved	.853			
Obscure	.813			
Vulgar	.795			

[a]*Extraction method: Principal component Analysis; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization*
[b] *Loadings less than 0.5 were removed.*
[c]*Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used for calculating relability values.*

The name of the all the factors were kept same as mentioned in the developed DPS except for the first factor 'courteousness' which now also comprised the items of the factor known as 'tranquility' was labeled as 'well-mannered' based on the nature of items. The 'well-mannered' factor consisted of the following eight items: agreeable, sincere, welcoming, peaceful, good, respectful, down to earth, and polite. The second factor labeled as "vibrancy" consisted of four items: diverse, adventurous, alive, and vibrant. The third factor "conformity" comprised of three items: religious, spiritual, and traditional. The factor four "creativity" consisted of four items: enthusiastic, passionate, energetic, and exciting.

Finally, the fifth factor labeled as "viciousness" comprised of four items: vulgar, violent, obscure, and depraved. As can be seen in Table 14, most of the items of all the factors are different from Aaker's (1997) BPS, which justified the need of destination specific scale that is consistent with the findings of Usakli and Baloglu (2011) and Hosany et al. (2006) which recommend that

some of the items of Aaker's (1997) BPS are superfluous and may not be appropriate for tourism destinations. To calculate the factor scores, Anderson and Rubin method was used since it proved to be unbiased and better than other methods (Lastovicka & Thamodaran, 1991; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Furthermore, this method is a typical used when the factors are utilized as input in the subsequent analysis (structural equation modeling in this study) (Sirakaya, Uysal & Yoshioka, 2003).

4.4.2. Exploratory Factor analysis of Self-Congruity Measures

In this step, the six statements related to self-congruity were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. The findings of this step revealed the value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) to be 0.859 and additionally reveal the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.000$, Chi square = 696.007, df = 15). Thus, it confirms the applicability of factor analysis on the six statements related to self-congruity which exhibits significant correlations that exist among these statements.

Table 15: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Self-congruity Measures[a]

Factor	Factor loading[b]	Eigenvalue	% of Explained Variance	Reliability[c]
SC1: Actual self-congruity		7.463	37.793	.818
"This destination is consistent with *how I see* myself."	.875			
"I am quite similar to the personality of this destination."	.861			
"The personality of this destination is congruent with how I see myself."	.845			
SC2: Ideal self-congruity		3.128	30.931	.886
"This destination is consistent with how I would like to see myself."	.814			
"I would like to be perceived as similar to the personality of this destination."	.783			
"The personality of this destination is congruent with how I would like to see myself."	.714			

[a]*Extraction method: Principal component Analysis; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization*
[b] *Loadings less than 0.5 were removed.*
[c]*Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used for calculating relability values.*

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The minimum value for selection of factor loading was set at 0.5 as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). This resulted in a two-factor solution which accounted for 68.72 percent of total variance and communalities ranged from 0.51 to 0.77. These two factors were labeled as actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity. As can be seen in Table 15, there was no change in the structure of actual and ideal self-congruity factors compared to the adapted self-congruity scale. All the items were having factor loadings more than 0.5, and hence were retained for further analysis. The Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability values and the results suggested that reliability values varied from 0.82 to 0.89.

4.4.3. *Exploratory Factor analysis of Trust scale*

In order to assess the dimensionality and applicability of trust scale, another exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed.

Table 16: Exploratory factor analysis of destination trust scale[a]

Factors	Factor loading[b]	Eigenvalue	% of explained Variance	Reliablity[c]
DT1: Reliability		5.674	41.324	.851
"I feel confident that this destination is a good tourist destination."	.804			
"This destination is destination that meets my expectations."	.793			
"This destination guarantees tourist satisfaction."	.789			
"This destination is a destination that never disappoints me."	.764			
DT2: Intentions		3.843	25.476	.814
"This destination would compensate me in some ways for the problems with the trip."	.782			
"This destination would make any effort to satisfy tourists."	.774			
"I could rely on this destination to solve any problems with the trip."	.761			

| "This destination would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns." | .753 |

The findings of this step revealed the value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) to be 0.895 and additionally reveal the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity (p < 0.000, Chi square = 761.584, df = 28).The cut-off value of factor loading was set at 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Two-factor solution accounted for 66.28 percent of the total variance extracted. As can be seen in Table 16, the first factor labeled as "reliability" comprised of four items and the second factor "intentions" consisted of four items. The reliability values were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the values ranged from 0.81 to 0.85.

4.5. Measurement model

As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1998), the confirmatory factor analysis with the maximum likelihood estimation was performed to check the reliability and validity of the constructs of our conceptual model. For assessing the model adequacy, the fit indices were used as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Two items were eliminated from further analysis as the standardized factor loadings of those were less than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). One item belonged to "destination personality" and the other one was from "loyalty" construct. After eliminating these two items, confirmatory factor analysis was again conducted and the goodness-of-fit was acceptable. The model fit indices were as follows: χ^2= 184.773, df= 103, $\chi2$/df = 1.794, GFI= 0.923, CFI= 0.954, NFI= 0.912, IFI= 0.955, RMR=0.046, RMSEA= 0.066. This suggested a good model fit (Hair et al., 2010; Nayak, Sinha, & Guin, 2011). As can be seen in Table 17, the factor loading of each factor was greater than 0.5, and the reliability values were more than the critical value of 0.7. The values for the average variance extracted by each and every construct was more than the minimum suggested value of 0.5. All these findings suggested a good convergent validity for the measurement model.

In addition, the discriminant validity was also examined by comparing the correlation between constructs with the variance extracted. As can be seen in Table18, the values of all the squared correlation between each construct were lesser than the variance extracted from each construct, meaning that each construct is different from the others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Hence, as the measurement model was valid and reliable, the structural relationships among the constructs could be tested.

Table 17: Confirmatory factor analysis

Constructs	Factor loadings	Error variance	t-value	AVE	Construct reliablity
Destination Personality(DP)				0.54	0.825
Well-mannered	.816	.334	_		
Vibrancy	.671	.550	8.240		
Creativity	.684	.532	8.321		
Conformity	.764	.416	9.548		
Self-congruity(SC)				0.770	.868
Actual self-congruity	.829	.313	10.478		
Ideal self-congruity	.920	154	_		
Destination Satisfaction (SAT)				0.62	0.867
SAT 1	.771	.406	_		
SAT 2	.726	.473	10.181		
SAT 3	.837	.299	12.052		
SAT 4	.813	.339	14.353		
Destination Trust (DT)				0.72	0.835
DT1	.782	.388	_		
DT2	.907	.177	13.720		
Destination Attachment (DAT)				0.63	0.840
DAT1	.689	.525	9.900		
DAT2	.845	.286	12.589		
DAT3	.853	.272	_		
Destination Loyalty (DL)				0.640	.780
DL1	.723	.477	_		
DL2	.871	.241	5.575		

Table 18: Discriminant validity

Constructs	Mean	S.D.	DP	SC	SAT	DT	DAT	DL
DP	3.89	0.79	**0.736**					
SC	3.02	0.81	0.535**	**0.876**				
SAT	4.03	0.86	0.724**	0.583**	**0.788**			
DT	3.64	0.78	0.713**	0.511**	0.742**	**0.847**		
DAT	3.16	0.94	0.604**	0.569**	0.617**	0.733**	**0.799**	
DL	3.33	0.89	0.681**	0.508**	0.783**	0.779**	0.571**	**0.800**

Note: The diagonal row with bold numers represents the average variance extracted (AVE) and values shown off the diagnal are the inter-construct correlation; p <0.01.

4.6. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

A structural model with maximum likelihood estimation was used to examine the various relationships among constructs in the proposed model. AMOS 20 was used to analyze the structural model.
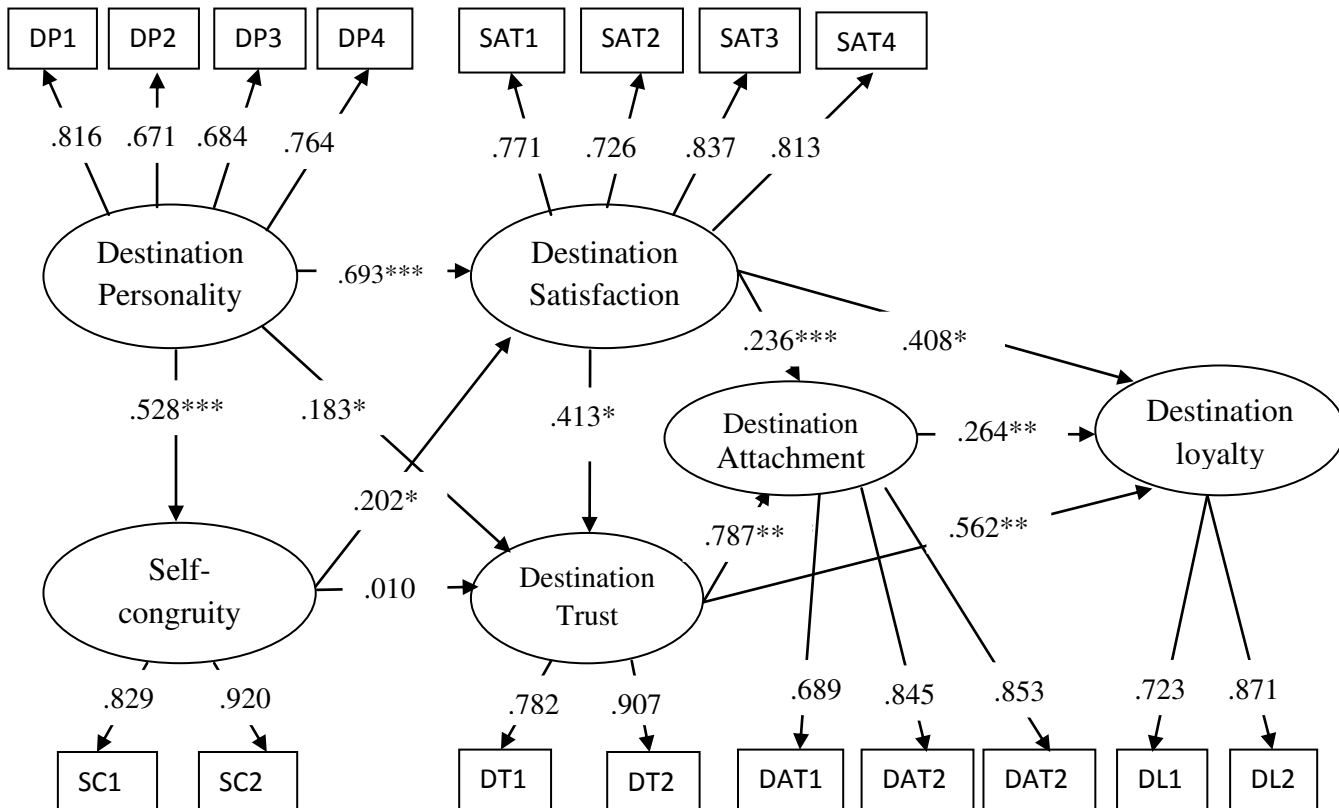
(*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001)

Figure 4. Estimated model

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The findings revealed a good model fit with following fit indices: χ^2 = 200.944, df = 107, χ^2/df = 1.878, GFI = 0.916 ,CFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.897, IFI = 0.948, RMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.07). This suggested that the hypothesized model fitted the empirical data well. Figure 4 presents the hypothesized model with the standardized path coefficients.

As can be seen in Figure 4, all the hypotheses except H5 (hypothesis related to the path between self-congruity and destination trust), were supported. Destination personality positively influenced self-congruity (0.528, t= 5.990); destination satisfaction (0.693, t = 6.503) and destination trust (0.183, t = 2.086), thus support the hyptheses H1, H2, and H3. Self-congruity significantly and positively influenced destination satisfaction (0.202, t = 2.435), but failed to influence the destination trust (0.010, t = 0.153), thus supporting hypothesis H4, while rejecting H5.

Among the constucts of tourist–destination relationship, destination satisfaction positively and significantly influenced destination trust (0.813, t = 8.421), destination attachment (0.236, t = 2.765), thus supporting hypotheses H6 and H7. In addition, destination trust positively and significantly influenced destination attachment (0.787, t = 7.638), thus lending support to H8. The findings of structural equation modelling analysis also revealed that all the three components of tourist–destination relationship positively and significantly influenced destination loyalty. Destination satisfaction (0.408, t = 3.682), destination trust (0.562, t = 4.125) and destination attachment (0.264, t = 3.048), are thus supporting H9, H10 and H11. Therefore, this study supported the path of cognitive knowledge (i.e. destination personality, destination trust) to affective outcomes (i.e. destination satisfaction, destination trust and attachment) to behavioral oucomes (i.e. destination loyalty).

The direct and indirect effects of all the constructs have been shown in Table 19. Destination personality has a direct effect on self-congruity and both directly and indirectly affect destination satisfaction and destination trust. Self-congruity has a direct effect on destination satisfaction and indirect effect on destination trust. Among the constructs of tourist–destination relationship, destination satisfaction has both direct and indirect effect on destination attachment and destination loyalty, but it only directly affects destination trust. Destination trust has a direct effect on destination attachment and both direct and indirect effect on destination loyalty.

Furthermore, destination attachment also has a direct effect on destination loyalty. Considering the direct effect on destination loyalty, destination trust exhibits greater effect (0.562)

compared to destination satisfaction (0.408) and destination attachment (0.264). However, in terms of total effects, destination satisfaction has greater effect (0.742) compared to destination trust (0.718) and destination attachment (0.264).

Table 19: Hypotheses Testing

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	Result
H1: Destination personality ⟶ Self-congruity	.528	_	.528	Accept
H2: Destination personality ⟶ Destination satisfaction	.693	.132	.825	Accept
H3: Destination personality ⟶ Destination trust	.183	.352	.535	Accept
H4: Self-congruity ⟶ Destination satisfaction	.202	_	.202	Accept
H5: Self-congruity ⟶ Destination trust	_	.216	.216	Reject
H6: Destination satisfaction ⟶ Destination trust	.413	_	.413	Accept
H7: Destination satisfaction ⟶ Destination attachment	.236	.468	.704	Accept
H8: Destination trust ⟶ Destination attachment	.787	_	.787	Accept
H9: Destination satisfaction ⟶ Destination loyalty	.408	.342	.742	Accept
H10: Destination trust ⟶ Destination loyalty	.562	.196	.758	Accept
H11: Destination attachment ⟶ Destination loyalty	.264	_	.264	Accept

Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of this study was to examine the role of destination personality in predicting the tourist'postst visit behavior withithe Indian contextxt. More specifically, this study investigated the relationships among destination personality, self-congruity, tourist–destination relationship and destination loyalty. This study used brand relationship theory and Bagozzi's (1992) reformulation of attitude theory (i.e. cognitive ➝ affective ➝ behavior) for examining the antecedents and consequences of tourist–destination relationship in tourism research. To achieve this, foreigners visiting Shimla, a famous hill station were interviewed and 356 usable questionnaires were collected. The results of the study help the academicians and practitioners to understand the importance of destination personality and self-congruity to build a tourist–destination relationship which further lead to the behavioral outcome (i.e. destination loyalty).

This study focussed solely on the foreigners visiting Shimla during their visit to India. The findings of the study revealed that most of the visitors were from Europe (46.1 percent), followed by North Americans (20.8 percent). The majority of the visitors were accompanied by their friends (42.7 percent), and followed by family and relatives (30.9 percent). First time visitors constituted 85.4 percent of respondents. The main sources that the visitors used for deciding their visiting destination were internet (30 percent), family, friends and relatives (19.9 percent), magazines, newspapers and other print media (16.6 percent) and prior visit experience (14.6 percent).

A scale was developed to measure the destination personality of India by following the recommendations suggested by Churchil (1979). In total, six dimensions of destination personality of India emerged. These include courteousness, vibrancy, creativity, conformity, viciousness, and tranquility. Although these six dimensions were different from the Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale (BPS) dimensions, some of the items of the Aaker's (1997) scale were part of DPS developed in this study (e.g. energetic, vibrant, exciting, etc.). The results of exploratory factor analysis of DPS showed that all the items of tranquility factor merged with courteousness factor. All other items loaded properly only on their relevant factors. The courteousness factor having eight items that were renamed based on the nature of its items and labelled as "well-mannered". Similarly, self-congruity and destination trust scale were checked for their factor

structure using exploratory factor analyses. The results revealed that there was no change in the underlying factor structure of both the original scales. The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for checking the reliability and validity of the conceptual model. Two items, one from destination personality and the other from destination loyalty, didn't load well to their factors (loadings <0.5), and so were removed from further analysis. The reliability values of all the constructs were very high which ranged from 0.78 to 0.86. All the constructs displayed a good convergent and discriminant validity. Subsequent to this, structural equation modeling was conducted to test the hypotheses proposed in this study.

The results of structural equation modeling revealed that destination personality plays an important role in building a destination brand and influences self-congruity significantly and positively. This result confirmed the findings of Usakli and Baloglu (2011), which found that destination personality has a direct and significant influence on self-congruity. In addition, destination personality influenced tourist-destination relationship (i.e. destination satisfaction and destination trust). These findings are in line with the results of some previous research (Chen & Phou, 2013). Destination personality has an indirect effect on tourist–destination relationship through self-congruity. This finding is consistent with the arguments of Sirgy and Su (2000) which stated that a perceived congruity between tourist's self-concept and destination personality may influence the relationship a tourist develop with a destination over time. Our findings also revealed similar view by demonstrating that self-congruity has a significant and positive influence on the tourist–destination relationship (e.g., destination satisfaction and destination trust). These results also complemented the findings of Baloglu (1999) and Chen and Phou (2013), who stated that cognitive images may have a significant influence on affective responses.

This study supported the self-congruity theory (the match between tourist's self-concept and destination personality) in the context of tourism destinations. Self-congruity directly influenced the destination satisfaction which confirmed the findings of Chon (1992). Chon (1992) was the first researcher who applied the concept of self-congruity in tourism and found that self-congruity significantly influence tourist's satisfaction toward the destination. Moreover, self-congruity has no direct effect on destination trust, but has an indirect influence on destination trust. This finding suggested that even if the visitors find a greater match between their self-concept and destination personality, a sense of trust development towards that destination is not guaranteed. However, if tourists are satisfied with the destination, a destination trust may develop among them. Thus, destination satisfaction emerged as a mediator between the self-congruity and destination trust. As

the effect of self-congruity on trust was examined for the first time in consumer research, this finding couldn't be compared with any previous study.

Destination satisfaction has a significant positive influence on destination trust. This result confirmed the findings of Chen and Phou (2013) and Morgan and Hunt (1994) which stated that that consumer satisfaction with a brand is likely to result in trust between consumer and particular brand. In addition, destination satisfaction has direct and indirect effect on both destination attachment and destination loyalty. The findings also revealed that trust strongly mediated the relationship between destination satisfaction and destination attachment. In other words, tourists are likely to develop an emotional link or attachment with a destination if they trust it. Destination trust has a direct influence on destination attachment and has both direct and indirect effects on destination loyalty. In addition, destination attachment also has a significant positive influence on destination loyalty. Among all the three constructs of tourist-destination relationship, destination trust has the direct and total effect on destination loyalty. Destination trust not only mediates the relationships between destination satisfaction and destination attachment, but also between destination satisfaction and destination loyalty. This finding complements the studies of the consumer–brand relationship by Garbarino and Johnson (1999) and Morgan and Hunt (1994), which suggested that trust is the most important element of relationship variables, and plays a significant role in building emotional bond or relationship between consumer and brand. Similarly, in a tourism context, this study proved that tourists develop an emotional bond or relationship with a destination provided they trust that particular destination. Moreover, the findings of this study suggested that the emotional bond or relationship between tourists and destination significantly influence their behavioral outcomes.

The destination marketers and tourism researchers have not explored the importance of positive tourist–destination relationship in the context of destination branding. Hence, this study made an attempt to explore the mechanism by which destination personality and self-congruity influences the tourist–destination relationship, which in turn can have a positive effect on tourist's behavior. In other words, this study lends full support to the path of cognitive knowledge to affective response to the behavioral outcome framework in the context of tourism research. In line with the brand relationship theory which states that consumer usually develop relationship or bonds with specific brands, forms, objects, and places (Thomson et al., 2005), the findings of this study acknowledge that tourist develop emotional relationships or bonds with destinations. The results of our study also confirm the findings of Chen and Phou's (2013) study, according to which

tourists develop an emotional bond or relationship with the destinations that further positively affect the tourist's behavior.

5.1. Implications of the Study

The findings of this study offer both theoretical and practical implications for academicians and practitioners. From a theoretical point of view, the results confirm the notion that tourists attribute personality traits to the destinations as suggested by numerous tourism researchers (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007b; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Furthermore, this study contributed to the tourism literature by developing a DPS to capture the brand personality of the destinations. Unlike Aaker's (1997) BPS, the DPS developed in this study has both context specific and negative personality traits. This study partially replicates d'Astous and Boujbel's (2007) six dimensions of country personality scale. The comparison of the DPS developed in this study is related to the personality dimensions of d'Astous and Boujbel (2007) and Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) rather than Aaker's (1997) BPS. This comparison is valid and justified as d'Astous and Boujbel's (2007) and Rojas–Méndez et al. (2013) constructed the scales by considering the destination specific traits while Aaker's (1997) specifically developed a scale to study the personality of brands. The factors labelled as courteousness, vibrancy, creativity, and tranquility in our study are more or less similar to Rojas–Méndez et al.'s (2013) "cordiality", "vibrant", "inventive", and "thoughtfulness" dimensions, respectively. On the hand, the remaining factors of our study labelled as conformity and viciousness are alike to the dimensions "conformity" and "wickedness" given by d'Astous and Boujbel's (2007).

Furthermore, the six dimensions of destinations personality scale developed in this study are unique and specific to Indian tourism destinations. The destination personality has been found to have a positive influence on tourist–destination relationship, especially satisfaction and trust, are in line with the previous studies (Chen & Phou, 2013). The findings of the study also support the self-congruity theory (i.e. the match between tourists's self-concept and destination personality) in context of tourism destinations. Indeed, a number of studies on self-congruity are available in consumer behavior, but there are only limited studies on it in the context of tourism research. The Thus, this study makes an imperative theoretical contribution to the tourism literature by supporting the self-congruity theory. Moreover, the findings suggest that self-congruity influences both satisfaction and trust directly and indirectly. In other words, higher the similarity between

destination personality and tourists's self-concept, chances of tourist getting satisfied with destination are more and this may further develop a tourist's trust toward the destination.

The final theoretical contribution of this study is methodological. The study displayed that destination personality should be measured using both qualitative and quantitative approaches consistent with Usakli and Baloglu' (2011) study. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) studied the relationship between destination personality, self-congruity, and destination loyalty intentions. In their study, using open ended questions, the authors found some unique and different traits associated with Las Vegas that are quite dissimilar to the traits emerged in Aaker's (1997) study. The outcomes of this study also provide a number of managerial implications for destination marketers. Destination images and personalities of most of the destinations of India are underexploited. Hence, it may lead to an obstacle for the destination marketers to promote the distinctive attributes of the destinations for the development of a successful destination brand. The results of this research present various implications for positioning the different destinations of India and affecting the intentions and attitudes of foreigners toward it as a travelling destination. Understanding the ways in which the destination personality dimensions affect the perceptions and attitudes of foreigners visiting India is of vast importance to the destination marketers. The results also reveal that the positioning of a DPS should consider cultural attributes and the context (destination) specific values while targeting specific population segments. Hence, the destination marketing organizations should position the destinations keeping in mind the target tourist's profile.

The importance of destinations has abruptly increased in the lives of people because of different means like social media, products, and travel experiences. Thus, it becomes necessary for the destination marketing organizations to promote and position the destinations in a unique and efficient manner. Promoting the destinations on the basis of their functional attributes is no longer successful because of the increase in similar kind of destinations worldwide and growing substitutability. The findings of the study suggest that symbolic benefits of a destination sought by the tourists help in assessing the tourist's post visit behavior. Moreover, a unique and distinctive destination personality helps in building tourist–destination relationship which further lead to positive behavioral intentions. Thus, destination marketers are advised to highlight the distinctive and unique personality traits of their destinations in the marketing and branding campaigns.

The study also offers particular practical implications for the Indian destination marketers. The findings suggest that destination personality of India has five dimensions: well-mannered,

vibrancy, creativity, conformity, and viciousness. All these dimensions except viciousness were found to have a significant effect on tourist–destination relationship. Thus, destination marketers of India should use these dimensions to differentiate and position India in the mind of current and potential travelers. Specifically, well-mannered and conformity were found to have the highest effect on tourist–destination relationship compared to vibrancy and creativity. This finding is not at all surprising because well-mannered and conformity dimensions include those traits which are very unique and specific to India, such as welcoming, peaceful, spiritual etc. Moreover, these two personality dimensions provide the travelers with an opportunity to connect with the destination and feel like home. Thus, destination marketers should concentrate more on these two dimensions (i.e., well-mannered and conformity).

Another practical implication offered by this study is that tourists who find a similarity between their perception about destinations and themselves or their views related to others perception about themselves are more likely to get satisfied with the destination. Tourists may also develop a sense of trust toward that destination provided they have destination satisfaction. Thus, destination marketers are required to put greater emphasis on creating a sense of connection between tourist's self-concept and destination personality. For example, the destination marketers should portray a destination as a place where visitors can perform the things they find relaxing and happy. The promotional campaigns should state what visitors want themselves to be and the ways in which the destination can facilitate them in achieving their ideal-self. Overall, this study has highlighted the importance of the combination of destination personality and self-congruity in determining the tourist's post visit behavior.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

The results of this study should be considered while keeping in mind some of its limitations. First, the findings of the study are limited to only two tourism destinations (Shimla and Dharamsala), and hence may not be generalizable to other destinations around the world. Second, the time period of the data collection adds to another limitation. The data were collected in the months of August, September, and October 2014. Hence, to overcome any seasonal bias, the data should be collected throughout the whole year. Third, this study has focused only on the visitors to Shimla and Dharamsala, and hence, the results may not be generalized to those who have not visited Shimla and Dharamsala. Furthermore, because of time and financial constraints, the study

could not collect a sample representing all the nationalities in equal number visiting Shimla and Dharamsala.

Fourth, this study employed direct score method to calculate self-congruity as suggested by Sirgy et al. (1997). However, some researchers have criticized the use of this method (Malhotra, 1988). Hence, the future research may use gap score method (self-concept and brand personality separately are measured separately) or use both direct score method and gap score method and compare the results.

Finally, the use of convenience sampling in our study adds to one more limitation. The study targeted the respondents in a non-random manner in which available and accessible visitors were chosen for data collection. Hence, there may be some issues related to the coverage of the whole population of visitors to Shimla. Thus, for decreasing the selection bias and increasing the genearlaiziblity of the findings, the future research should employ random sampling techniques for data collection.

5.3. Future Research Directions

This study offers a lot of future research avenues for the tourism researchers and academicians. The findings suggested that tourism destinations are attributed with personality traits by tourists which is consistent with the previous research. Moreover, the study has also found that destination personality positively and significantly influence tourist–destination relationship variables, such as trust and satisfaction, which further lead to positive behavioral intentions towards the destination. However, the results of this study are limited to one location. Thus, the replication of this study with larger sample size, more number of destinations and with random sampling methods would enhance the current understanding of this crucial research area.

In addition, this study supported the self-congruity theory in tourism research. More specifically, the findings displayed that self-congruity has direct and indirect influence on tourism–destination relationship variables, such as satisfaction and trust. One aspect of this finding can be compared to the results of previous research (Chon, 1992; Litvin & Kar, 2003), which state that self-congruity positively influences destination satisfaction. However, we found no study in tourism research literature related to the relationship between self-congruity influence and trust. Thus, to support this new finding of our study, future research should examine the association between these two variable—self-congruity and trust. Moreover, only two dimensions of self-congruity, namely actual and ideal self-congruity were included, whereas other two dimensions

social and ideal social self-congruity were excluded from the study. Thus, it would be interesting to include these two dimensions of self-congruity because both personal factors and social factors influence the travel behavior.

Finally, this study has employed consumer–brand relationship model for tourism destinations and proved that tourists build an emotional bond or relationship with the destinations. Thus, future research may provide additional support to this finding by examining the concept of tourist–destination relationship in different contexts.

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List of Publication from the Present Research

International journals

1. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K. (2014). The measurement & conceptualization of destination personality. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 12*, 88-93.

2. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K. (2014a). Destination personality: Scale development & validation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research.* Published online doi: 10.1177/1096348014561027

3. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K. (2014b). The role of self-congruity and functional congruity in influencing tourists' post visit behaviour. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research, 2*, 24-44.

4. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K. (2015). Examining the relationship between patterns of emotional responses, satisfaction and loyalty, Anatolia, Taylor & Francis.

International conferences (Full Paper Published in Proceeding)

1. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J.K. (2015). Self-congruity, functional congruity and destination choice: The moderating role of prior experience. GCMRM Conference, organized by MDI Gurgaon on 11th-13th March, 2015.

International conferences (Papers presented)

1. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J.K. (2014). Effect of online service quality dimensions on brand equity within retail banking in India. Listening to consumers of emerging markets, Organized by IIM Lucknow on January 9-11, 2014.

2. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J.K. (2014). Self-congruity, functional congruity and destination loyalty: The moderating role of prior experience. Rethinking Marketing, Organized by IIM Calcutta on December 18-20, 2014.

3. Kumar, V., & Nayak, J.K. (2015). Self-congruity, functional congruity and destination choice: The moderating role of prior experience. GCMRM Conference, organized by MDI Gurgaon on 11th-13th March, 2015.

(To be filled out only by Foreign Visitors)

1. Is this your first visit to this destination?

_____Yes   _____No, I have visited this destination…….. *time(s)* in the past 3 years.

2. With whom are you traveling on this trip?

a) Travel alone b) Family/relatives c) Friend(s) d) Tour group e) Other *(Please specify)*

3. How many people are traveling with you during this destination visit, excluding you?

………………………….*person(s)*

4. What is the length of your stay at this destination?   _____ *day(s)*

5. Listed below are some personality traits that might be associated with this destination. We would like you to **think of this destination as if it were a person.** Please indicate to what extent these personality traits accurately describe this destination. Check the appropriate box for each personality trait.

Personality traits	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Welcoming					
Polite					
Sincere					
Respectful					
Diverse					
Adventurous					
Vibrant					
Alive					
Enthusiastic					
Passionate					

Energetic					
Exciting					
Religious					
Spiritual					
Traditionalist					
Vulgar					
Violent					
Obscure					
Depraved					
Peaceful					
Down to earth					
Good					
Agreeable					

6. First, please think this destination as if it were a person and think about the personality characteristics of this destination. Next, think about how you see yourself and how you would like to see yourself. Then, state directly the congruity or consistency between you and this destination in terms of personality characteristics by indicating your agreement or disagreement to following statements using the scale below:

Rating Scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

"This destination is consistent with *how I see* myself."	1	2	3	4	5
"I *am quite similar* to the personality of this destination."	1	2	3	4	5
"The personality of this destination *is congruent with how I see* myself."	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination is consistent with *how I would like to see* myself."	1	2	3	4	5
"I would like *to be perceived as similar* to the personality of this destination."	1	2	3	4	5
"The personality of this destination *is congruent with how I would like to see* myself."	1	2	3	4	5

7. Please rate the following questions on a 5-point rating scale, where 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree

"My visit to this destination is worth my time and effort"	1	2	3	4	5
"Compared to other destinations, this destination is a much better one"	1	2	3	4	5

"My experiences with this destination are excellent"	1	2	3	4	5
"Overall, I am satisfied with the travel experience in this destination"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination means a lot to me"	1	2	3	4	5
"I feel a strong sense of belonging to this destination"	1	2	3	4	5
"I am very attached to this destination"	1	2	3	4	5
"I feel confident that this destination is a good tourist destination"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination is destination that meets my expectations"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination guarantees tourist satisfaction"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination is a destination that never disappoints me"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination would compensate me in some ways for the problems with the trip"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination would make any effort to satisfy tourists"	1	2	3	4	5
"I could rely on this destination to solve any problems with the trip"	1	2	3	4	5
"This destination would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns"	1	2	3	4	5
"It's likely that I will revisit this destination in the future"	1	2	3	4	5
"It's likely that I will recommend this destination to my family and friends"	1	2	3	4	5
"I would consider this destination to be my first destination choice in future"	1	2	3	4	5

8. Demographics

Age: _____

Gender: _____Male _____Female

Marital Status: _____Single _____ Married _____Other

Country of residence: _____

Household income in US Dollars (yearly):

_____less than $ 30,000 _____ $30,000 - $ 59,999 _____ $60,000 -

$ 89,999 _____$90,000 - $119,999_____ $ 120,000 or more.

Education: _____High School or less _____University

_____ Masters or PhD _____ other professional degree.

Thanking you for your kind cooperation and valuable time.