

Brand Identity of Montenegro through Verbal and Visual Elements of Its Logo

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Having on mind the great potential of Montenegro for tourism development especially regarding to diversity of tourist offer, competitiveness on global market and natural beauties, trends and perspectives on global tourist market as well as the fact that the government of Montenegro recognized and identified tourism as one on the key milestones of national economy, it is clear why all aspects of Montenegrin tourism represent attractive and actual issues for theoretical and empirical research. It is also well known that, despite great potential, Montenegro is not positioned as attractive, competitive, unique whole-year destination and that there are a lot of challenges that should be overcome in future in order to improve the quality of tourist offer and its position on global market. Having on mind the role of logo in brand image of tourist destination, the main point of interest is put on verbal and visual elements of logo "Montenegro Wild Beauty" and their perception on the market. The results of theoretical and empirical research should provide answers on two important issues regarding to positioning of Montenegro on global tourist market. These are: Does the slogan "Montenegro Wild Beauty" really point out the main competitive advantages of Montenegro on global market as it should be and do its verbal and visual identity differentiate Montenegro from the competition and position it as an attractive, unique, recognizable destination on the global market?

INTRODUCTION

The tourism represents one of three main pillars and a key milestone of future economic development in Montenegro. That fact is recognized in many strategic documents on national level including Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy to 2020 which clearly identifies the key position of tourism sector in the overall economy of Montenegro.

In the same time WTTC predicts the annual growth in visitor exports of around 9.4% which will put Montenegro on the second position on WTTCs Global League Table Rankings and on the first position comparing to its regional competitors. The predictions regarding the contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic products are also very optimistic and by 2019 the increase up to 25.6% is expected. Comparing to 2009, the contribution to employment will rise from 17.8% of total employment in 2009 to 23.0% by 2019. WTTC also predicts that the real GDP growth for travel & tourism economy is expected to rise from 0.7% in 2009 and to average 6.2% per annum by 2019, while the export earnings from

international visitors and tourism goods are expected to grow (nominal terms) to 50.1% of total exports in 2019.

But still, despite great potential for tourism development especially in terms of natural beauties and diversity of tourist offer, positive trends on global tourism market, as well as the fact that the government of Montenegro recognized and identified tourism as one on the key milestones of national economy, the destination itself faces some serious challenges especially in terms of branding, balanced regional development, seasonality, development of new products and markets etc. The successful overcoming of these problems represent necessary precondition for successful positioning of Montenegro as attractive, unique, recognizable, competitive destination on modern tourist market.

In that sense, the creation of brand identity of the destination itself through verbal and visual identity of its logo will be the starting point in new marketing approach and one of the most important pillars of its future positioning on global tourism market.

Branding of Tourist Destination

A brand is defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition” (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Country branding combines visual and verbal communication and different marketing techniques in order to promote particular country. As in the branding of commercial goods and services, specific rules govern the positioning of the brand, the way its reputation is built, how customer preferences are addressed and loyalty is achieved and how the brand is managed (Marazza, Antonio, 2007).

It is clear that branding of tourism destination may significantly contribute to the image that the destination itself have among specific target groups and improve its position on market by emphasizing its main competitive advantages on global market as well as by differentiating it from competition.

By analyzing slogans of the different tourism destinations, it is easy to notice that they are based on different key elements such as feelings, emotions, experiences etc. Some of them are connected with nature (such as Montenegro- Wild Beauty, Switzerland- Get Natural), discovery (Canada- Keep Exploring, Kenya- Experience a Different Safari Every Day), love (Hungary- A Love for Life, Albania- A New Mediterranean Love), weather (Spain- Everything Under the Sun, Ethiopia-13 Months of Sunshine), geographical position (Nigeria- The Hearth of Africa, Andorra- The Pyrenean Country), food (India- We Add Spice to Your Life, Costa Rica- No Artificial Ingredients) etc., but all of them tend to attract the attention using different elements and having on mind the specific characteristics of different target groups.

Except the slogan which plays very important role in creation of image brand, it is also important to analyze the country logos which usually include the country name and some other graphics that range from something abstract (such as The Bahamas, Brazil, Germany, Malta, Seychelles, Islands, Slovenia etc.) to something concrete such as sun (Cyprus, Egypt, Maldives, Spain), water (Argentina, Greece, The British Virgin Islands), landscape (Bosnia Herzegovina, Iceland, San Marino), animal (Australia, Barbados, Slovakia), plant (Albania, Costa Rica, England, Holland, Turkey), heart (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Denmark, Dubai, Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia), flag (Austria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Monaco), country name (Croatia, India, Israel, Italy) and so on. In order to create unique and recognizable brand identity of a destination itself and position it successfully on modern market, it is important to achieve perfect balance and synergy not only between logo and slogan, but also between verbal and visual elements of its logo.

Brand Identity of Montenegro Through Verbal and Visual Elements of its Logo

In order to improve its position and to become more competitive on global tourist market, in 2008 the new tourist brand identity was introduced (figure 1).

FIGURE 1
NEW BRAND IDENTITY OF MONTENEGRO



The name of the destination stayed the integral part of the visual identity and is presented by natural language of colors –different nuances of blue are used in order to represent Adriatic sea, lakes, streams and rocks, green is used in order to present rich vegetation and preserved nature, golden for sandy beaches and dark blue and black for high rocky mountains. Visual elements also include a supporting character in form of underlining which stretches from mountains to bays, from beaches to sea. The idea was to create a visual identity that offers a sense of discovery in a manner that is simultaneously wild, romantic, impressive and personally challenging, but still simple and pleasant.

Although some parts of visual identity are not artfully stylized such as strong expressive supporting character in a form of underlining and logo is not adapted for different kind of media, the fact is that the realization of visual elements of the logo may be characterized as graphically acceptable. This idea was especially successfully realized in implementation of two different forms- graphic and letter, choice of spectrum of colors and their symbolic meaning etc.

On the other side, verbal identity described by slogan “wild beauty”, although clear, effective and impressive, does not provide tourists clear image of destination nor it represents its main competitive advantages on the modern market. Having on mind the initial idea about the identity, it seems that there is a large disharmony between visual and verbal identity of the brand itself.

The main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and treats regarding this issue are analyzed in table below (Table 1)

TABLE 1
SWOT ANALYSES OF VERBAL & VISUAL ELEMENTS OF
TOURIST LOGO OF MONTENEGRO

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Nice design	Some parts of visual identity are not artfully stylized
Visual association to diversity with an accent to the most important elements of tourist offer	Verbal identity does not reflect the key competitive advantages of Montenegro as tourist destination
Clear and effective message	Disharmony between verbal & visual elements of logo
	Inappropriate for different kinds of media
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
The government commitment to future tourist development	The lack of agreement in interpreting and promoting the country's diverse attractions
The increase of the awareness of the importance of marketing management strategies in tourism	Lack of knowledge and unwillingness of different stakeholders in tourism to improve tourist offer
The awareness of the importance of branding process	Lack of innovations and willingness to respond challenges

The Research of Brand Identity of Montenegro

The Main Goal and Objectives of Research

The main goal of the research was to improve the brand image of Montenegro as tourist destination as well as to improve its positioning on modern market as unique, attractive, competitive tourist destination. The main objectives of the survey are:

- To identify the main competitive advantages of Montenegro from tourists' point of view
- To identify beliefs and attitudes of tourists about the brand "wild beauty"
- To point out the main strengths and weakness of the existing brand regarding its visual and verbal elements
- To suggest new ideas and possibilities regarding verbal and visual elements of logo

The Description of the Research and Methodology

The research was carried out from January to March 2017 and it was based on original survey that was created for this research. It consists of 25 questions and is divided into two parts. The first part refers to biological, social and economic characteristics of surveyors, while the second part refers to tourist brand identity of Montenegro from the perspective of the verbal and visual identity of its logo. Three types of question are formulated- open-ended questions, closed questions and so called pivot questions in which answers are ranked according their importance. The surveys were conducted in English, Russian and Montenegrin languages on 150 respondents in six municipalities In Montenegro (Budva, Kotor, Tivat, Žabljak, Kolašin, Podgorica and Cetinje).

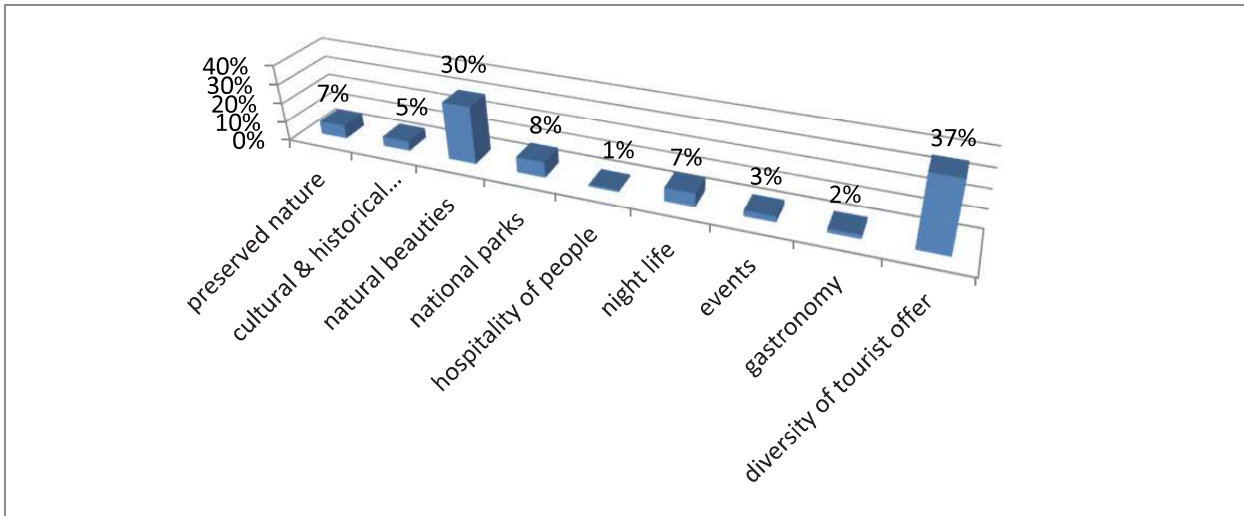
Key Results of the Research

Key results that are obtained in survey are:

- 52 % of respondents are female and 48% male
- 35% of respondents are tourists from neighboring countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia), 40% are from EU, while 25% are from other countries (mostly Russia, but also USA, China etc.). It is clear that the structure of respondents does not match the structure of arrivals in the last years, but it was led by the fact that Montenegro's international arrivals have positive trend, with tendency of future growth. Because of that, special accent in the research is put on the tourists from EU and some other markets such as the USA, China etc.
- 45% of respondents were interviewed in The South, 40% in the North and 15% in Central part of Montenegro. The structure of respondents does not match the share of arrivals in last years, because of the fact that the South region generates more than 95% share of arrivals, but it is based on the fact that future development of tourism should be based on balanced regional development, and diversification of tourist offer. That explains the fact that even 40% of respondents are interviewed in the municipalities in the North. It is also important to point out that 15% of respondents were interviewed in Central part of Montenegro (especially in Cetinje), but these tourists are usually day trippers who are stopping en route to or from the coast and the capital or the mountains.
- 6% of tourists are from 15 to 19, 26% from 20 to 29, 26% from 30 to 39, 20% from 40 to 49, 15% from 50 to 59 and 7% are more than 60 years old. It is evident that in the last year the percentage of young tourists (15-29) is constantly growing as well as tourists from "older generations" (60+) which is completely in accordance to trends and perspectives on international tourists market.
- The majority of tourists have University degree (45%) and high school diploma (35%), 18% have higher school diploma and 1% finished primary school;
- 69% of respondents are employed, 18% are students, 6% are pensioners and 7% are unemployed.
- 66% of tourists have average monthly income, 10% above the average, 5% significantly above the average, 11% below the average and 8% significantly below the average of their country. These data are completely in accordance to the trends and perspectives on international tourist market and point out one significant fact – the tourists with average monthly income have and will have the largest share in tourist movements (Unković, Zečević: 2009), which means that the main attention in strategic approach should be paid on them. But still, the idea that future development of Montenegrin tourism should be based only and exclusively on the concept of "elite tourism" is strongly promoted in Montenegro for so many years. Having on mind the fact that the basic conditions that should be fulfilled in order to develop this type of tourism as well as trends and perspectives on global market it is not difficult to conclude that this idea is in advance doomed to failure. It does not mean that this concept shouldn't be developed at all- it only means that this target group shouldn't be the only one nor the most important one.
- Most of the tourists stay in Montenegro for 5 days or less (47%), 33% stay for 7 days, 12% stay for 10 days, while 8% stay for 14 days or more. These results are also in accordance to trends and perspectives on global tourist market, especially regarding to the constant increase of share of shorter stay in the destination (5 days or less). The longest stays mostly refers to tourist from Russia which is also not unexpected having on mind the fact that there is a large number of them who have own properties in Montenegro.

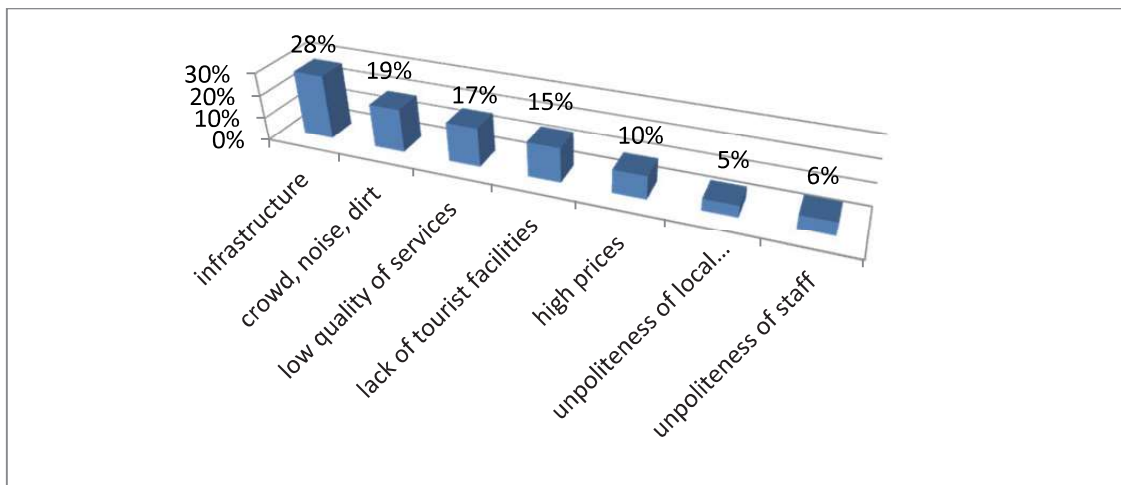
When asked to identify the main advantages of the destination itself, most respondents, identified the diversity of tourist offer (37%), natural beauties (30%), national parks (8%), preserved nature (7%) and nightlife (7%) which is presented in figure 2:

FIGURE 2
KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF MONTENEGRO ON
GLOBAL TOURIST MARKET



It is interesting to mention that all international tourists mostly recognized diversity of tourist offer and natural beauties as key competitive advantages, while tourists from neighboring countries also ranked very well cultural and historical heritage, national parks and nightlife (especially students' population). Having asked to identify the main disadvantages of Montenegrin tourist offer, the respondents mostly identified infrastructure (28%), crowd, noise, **dirty** (19%), low quality of service (17%) and lack of tourist facilities (15%) which is shown in figure 3.

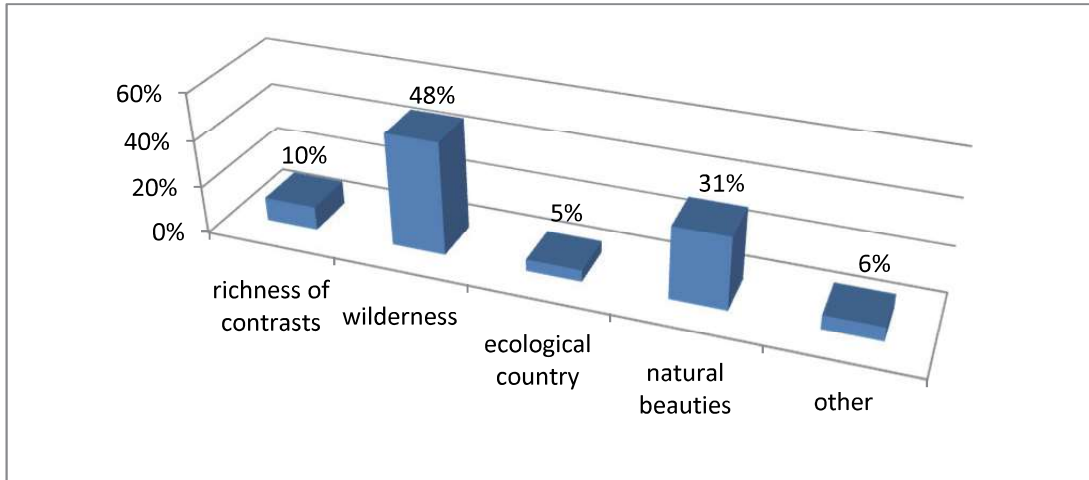
FIGURE 3
MAIN DISADVANTAGES OF MONTENEGRO ON GLOBAL TOURIST MARKET



Having on mind the fact that brand should emphasize the main competitive advantages of the destination, the survey also dealt with the association on slogan “wild beauty” in order to point out if it emphasizes the main competitive advantages of the destination itself. This question was included in a similar survey that was carried out in Montenegro in 2012 by one of the authors of this paper, and the results of that survey were unfavorable.

This time, most of the respondents also declared that the slogan associate them on wilderness and less of them, mostly tourists from neighboring countries, on natural beauties as well which is presented in figure 4:

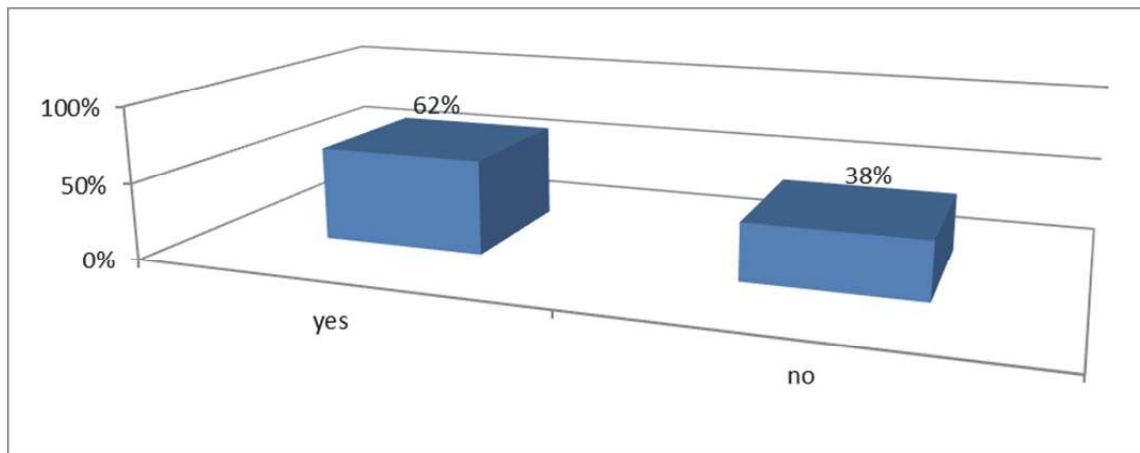
**FIGURE 4
ASSOCIATIONS ON SLOGAN “WILD BEAUTY”**



The results of the survey regarding this question are expected and completely in accordance to our belief that slogan itself doesn't emphasize the main competitive advantages of the destination itself.

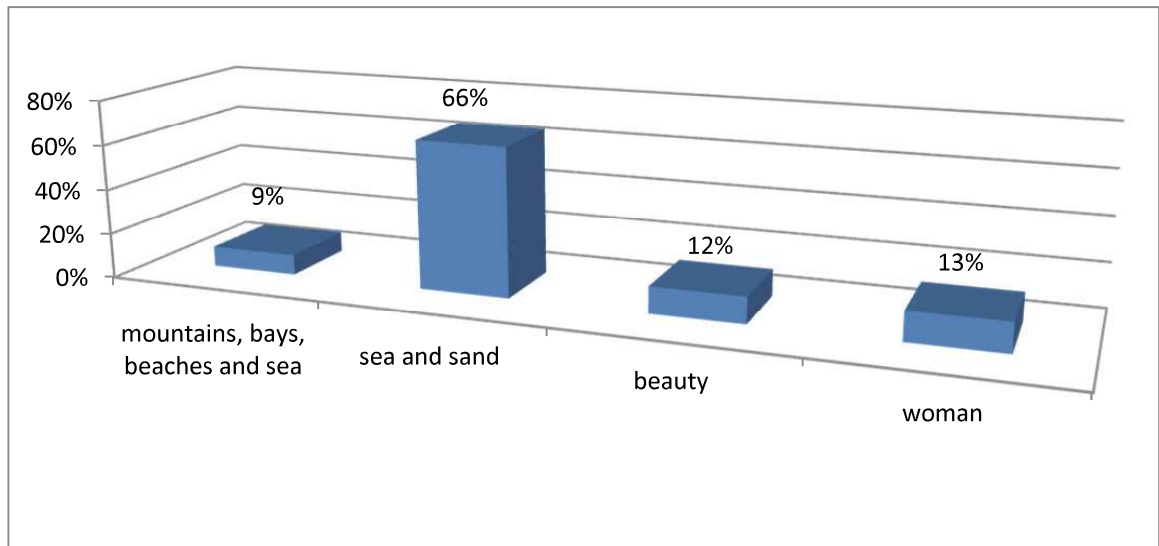
When asked if they like the visual elements of the logo, 62% of respondents answered positively (figure 5)

**FIGURE 5
ATTITUDE ABOUT THE GRAPHIC ELEMENTS OF THE LOGO**



But still, although most of the respondents stated that they like the logo itself, it is evident that even most of them do not understand their symbolic. When asked to associate the supporting character in a form of underlining with some of answers which are offered, even 66% of respondents connected it with sea and sand which is presented in figure 6.

**FIGURE 6
ASSOCIATION OF THE GRAPHIC ELEMENTS OF THE LOGO**



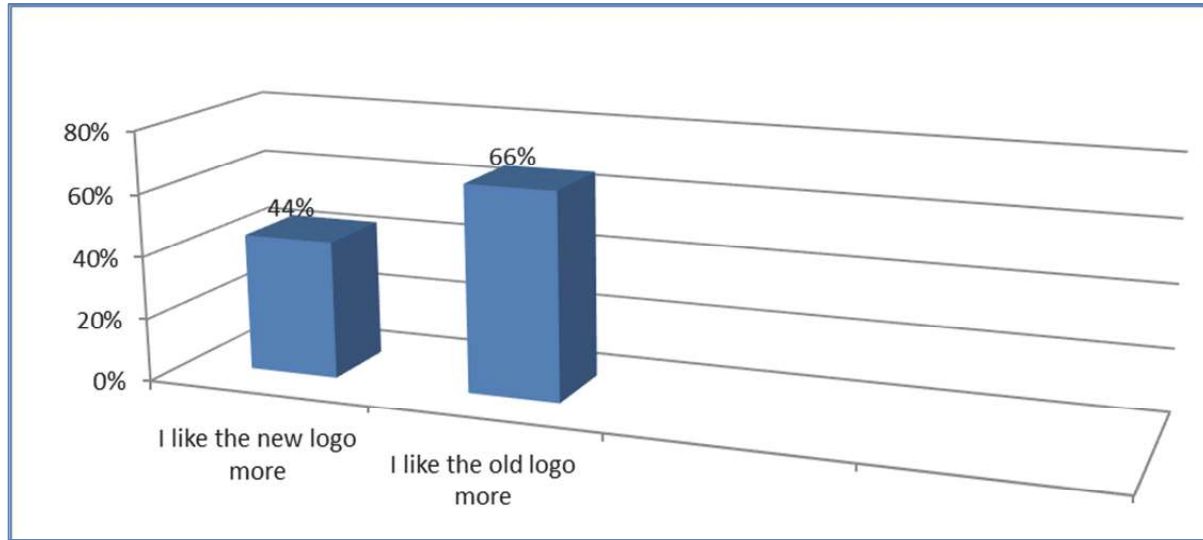
When asked to choose which logo do they like more and which one is more convenient for Montenegro as tourist destination, it is interesting to mention that most of the recipients (66%) find the old logo (Figure 7) more appropriate than the new one.

**FIGURE 7
OLD LOGO OF MONTENEGRO AS TOURIST DESTINATION**



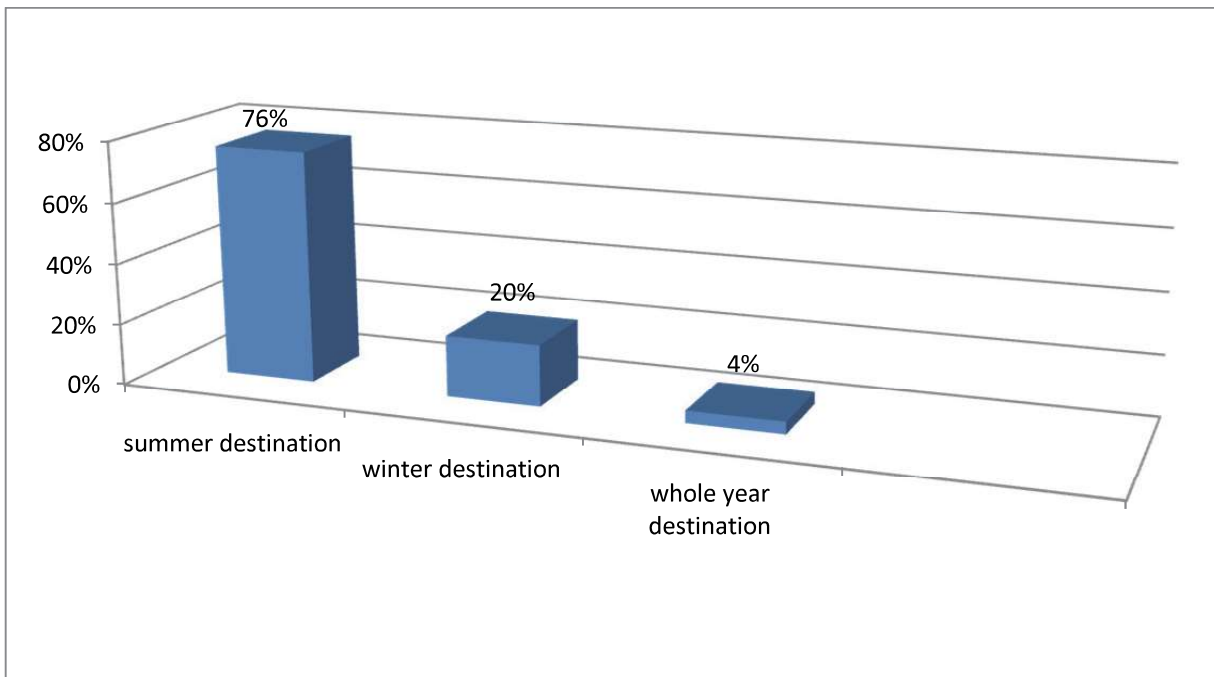
Although this logo has even some more graphic inconveniences than the new one, although it on the other side promotes Montenegro as summer destination with accent on seaside (waves, lemon, sunshade etc.) it is obvious that people like it more- its colors, clear symbolic, effectiveness etc.

FIGURE 8
COMPARISON OF NEW AND OLD ONE LOGO



When talking about promotion of Montenegro as a whole year destination, the results of the survey clearly showed that this logo does not communicate it properly. Its worrying that 76% of tourists believe that Montenegro is destination that should be visited during summer, while only 4% believe that it is destination that provide variety of possibilities during whole year (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9
ATTITUDES ABOUT SEASONALITIES OF TOURIST DESTINATION



The results of survey clearly show that in the future it is necessary to improve and promote the tourist products which are popular on modern market such as religious, mountain, sports, golf, MICE etc. and which, on the other side, may significantly expand the duration of tourist season.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the verbal and visual elements of logo play important role in creation of brand image and positioning Montenegro as attractive, unique, competitive, whole-year destination on modern tourist market which is one of the main strategic goals defined in Montenegro Tourism Development Strategy in 2020.

But still the results of theoretical and empiric research clearly identified key disadvantages and shortcomings of logo "Montenegro Wild Beauty". Respecting the fact that the process of successful branding implies the perfect synergy between verbal and visual elements which will emphasize the main competitive advantages of the destination, as well as the crucial fact that it should create its unique and recognizable image on the global market, it looks like that the brand "wild beauty" does meet mentioned requirements at all.

In that sense, the rebranding of verbal and visual parts of Montenegrin tourist logo should be the starting point and the corner stone of the future strategy of positioning of Montenegro as an attractive, unique, desired, whole year destination with a recognizable image on the global market. So, it is clear that it is necessary to create the verbal and visual elements which are based on main competitive advantages of tourism destination such as the diversity of tourist offer, the richness of contrast etc. In that sense, we believe that slogans "experience diversity", "enjoy diversity", "pearl of Mediterranean", "the place where beauty lives" or simply "the land of contrasts" would be more appropriate and more in accordance with the nature of tourism products of Montenegro, especially when supported by adequate visual elements which are in balance with the verbal ones.

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