

# IMIDŽ DESTINACIJE I KLJUČNI ČIMBENICI PERCIPIRANE ATRAKTIVNOSTI DESTINACIJE

## DESTINATION IMAGE AND KEY DRIVERS OF PERCEIVED DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS

UDK 338.48-44(497.5+739.9)  
Prethodno priopćenje  
Preliminary communication

### Prof. dr. sc. Darko Prebežac

Redovni profesor  
Ekonomski fakultet – Zagreb  
Trg J. F. Kennedyja 6, 10000 Zagreb  
Tel.: ++ 385 1 238 3271  
E-mail: [dprebezac@efzg.hr](mailto:dprebezac@efzg.hr)

### Mr. sc. Josip Mikulić

Asistent  
Ekonomski fakultet – Zagreb  
Trg J. F. Kennedyja 6, 10000 Zagreb  
Tel.: ++ 385 1 238 3267  
E-mail: [jmikulic@efzg.hr](mailto:jmikulic@efzg.hr)

### Ključne riječi:

*imidž destinacije, percipirana atraktivnost destinacije, analiza važnosti i percepcije, matrica važnosti*

### Keywords:

*destination image, perceived destination attractiveness, importance-perception analysis, importance grid*

### SAŽETAK

U ovoj eksplorativnoj studiji autori primjenjuju kombinaciju različitih pristupa u mjerenju imidža dviju iznimno atraktivnih turističkih destinacija: Havaja i Hrvatske. U istraživanju su korištena dva prigodna uzorka: imidž Havaja mjeren je među hrvatskim studentima poslovne ekonomije, a imidž Hrvatske među havajskim studentima turizma. Istraživanjem su obuhvaćeni funkcionalni i psihološki elementi imidža, i to na holističkoj razini te na razini atributa. Dodatno je primijenjena analiza važnosti i percepcije kako bi se ustanovilo u kojoj mjeri imidž analiziranih destinacija na razini atributa odgovara studentskoj percepciji optimalne destinacije. Konačno, autori koriste analizu pomoću matrice važnosti da bi

### ABSTRACT

In this exploratory study authors combine several approaches to explore the images of two highly attractive tourist destinations: Hawai'i and Croatia. Two convenience samples were used: the image of Hawai'i was measured among Croatian undergraduate business students, and the image of Croatia was measured among Hawaiian tourism students. Functional and psychological image components were assessed at both a holistic and the attribute level. In addition, an importance-perception analysis was performed to assess the degree to which the destination image at the attribute level coincides with the students' perception of an optimal destination. Finally, the authors conduct

istražili ključne čimbenike percipirane sveukupne atraktivnosti destinacije. Rezultati pružaju detaljan uvid u imidž Hrvatske i Havaja, te upućuju na nekoliko zanimljivih razlika među analiziranim uzorcima.

an importance grid analysis to explore the key drivers of the overall perceived destination attractiveness. The results provide a detailed insight into the images of Croatia and Hawaii, and reveal several interesting differences between the two student samples.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The ever-increasing competition in the global tourism market forces destinations to develop adequate positioning strategies and an effective marketing plan that will clearly differentiate them from competitors in the marketplace. In order to be able to influence the destination selection process, to transmit a favorable image to potential tourists and to create a competitive position, destination managers today are confronted with growing requirements for information about tourist behavior, needs and desires.

Travel and tourism research in the past more than two decades has demonstrated that a destination image among tourists is a valuable and irreplaceable concept in understanding the destination selection process. This topic has been one of the most frequently investigated areas by researchers around the globe.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the concept of destination image is universally acknowledged since it affects the individual's perception, consequent behavior and destination choice.<sup>2</sup>

This paper deals with the issues of destination awareness and image among student travelers. Two successful and highly attractive tourism destinations were chosen – Croatia and Hawai'i. Tourism plays a significant role in the economies of both Croatia and Hawai'i, both destinations have similar tourism life spans and, because of the mass tourism effect, both are currently facing problems relating to future growth and sustainability. The student segment of the leisure travel industry was chosen because not only is this segment vast but also important economically, representing a significant portion of all international travelers and generating multibillion-dollar business.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. DESTINATION IMAGE – CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT

Although the concept of destination image has been a very frequent subject of study by numerous tourism researchers in the past, we can still find in the related

academic literature a lot of discussion and discrepancy regarding the issues such as conceptualization and dimensions of destination image, its assessment and measurement. In studying a conceptual framework of destination image, we can distinguish many different approaches but its fundamental characteristics are multidisciplinary (anthropology, sociology, geography, marketing etc.) and intradisciplinary (destination positioning, destination selection process, consumer behavior etc.). The result of such a study approach led to the absence of an explicit and universally accepted definition of destination image while offering a variety of interpretations, depending on the researcher's interest and viewpoint.

For the purpose of this paper the authors will use the conceptualization proposed by Echtner and Ritchie,<sup>4</sup> according to which the destination image construct consists of two main components; those that are attribute-based and others that are holistic. Moreover, each of these components consists of functional (or more tangible) and psychological (or more abstract) characteristics and images may range from those based on common characteristics to those based on more distinctive or unique characteristics.

The search for a widely accepted measurement approach is another very important area of destination image research which has been of great interest to tourism researchers and practitioners.<sup>5</sup> However, at the same time, the lack of agreement about the conceptualization of perceived destination image has contributed to great heterogeneity in its measurement.<sup>6</sup>

In the tourism marketing literature we can identify either structured (quantitative, positivist) measurement techniques, which involve different image attributes being specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument (scale format, e.g. Likert scales, semantic differential) or unstructured (qualitative) approaches (e.g. focus groups, free elicitation/open-ended survey questions, in-depth interviews/discussions with experts), using free-form descriptions to measure the complex structure of image. The two approaches have various shortcomings; hence, a combination of the both approaches is necessary to ensure proper and comprehensive destination image measurement.

### 3. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA AND HAWAI'I

Today, tourism is one of the strongest global industries and numerous countries worldwide see a chance for their own economic prosperity in tourism develop-

ment. In Croatia and Hawai'i tourism plays a significant role and is among the most important generators of economic growth. In Croatia tourism generates around 20% of GDP; in Hawaii its share is around 30%. The annual tourist count in the 2001-2007 period is shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1:** Tourist arrivals and overnight stays – Croatia 2001-2007

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Tourist arrivals (in million)	7.9	8.3	8.9	9.4	10.0	10.4	11.2
Overnight stays (in million)	43.4	44.7	46.6	47.8	51.4	53.0	56.0

Source: Republic of Croatia - Central Bureau of Statistics

**Table 2:** Tourist arrivals and overnight stays – Hawai'i 2001-2007

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Tourist arrivals (in million)	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.9	7.4	7.5	N/A
Overnight stays (in million)	57.8	58.5	58.8	62.8	67.7	68.5	N/A

Source: State of Hawaii - Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

Whereas seasonality is very high in Croatia, with 87% of its annual tourists arriving between May and October, there is a less seasonal arrival pattern in Hawai'i, where 52% of the annual tourists arrive during the same six month period.<sup>7</sup>

In both tourism destinations we see a domination of a handful generating markets. Tourists from Germany (20%), Slovenia (10%), Italy (10%), the Czech Republic (8%), Austria (8%) and Croatia (7%) represent the largest tourist market to Croatia, and account for 63% of total overnight stays. In the case of Hawai'i, the USA (West Coast, 46%; East Coast, 29%) and Japan (11%) are the largest tourist markets, accounting for 86% of total overnight stays.<sup>8</sup>

A comparison of the average length of stay in Croatia and Hawai'i has shown a significant difference: 5 days is the average length in Croatia and 9 days in Hawaii. Tour operators in both destinations have declined in importance. Nowadays, Croatia and Hawai'i have a more similar structure of tourist arrivals – 65% of visitors to Croatia and 54% of visitors to Hawai'i travel independently.<sup>9</sup>

Tourist satisfaction is an important indicator of tourism industry performance, providing a vital feedback on how well services are delivered and how well the industry meets expectations. It is also a leading indicator of customer retention and loyalty. Both destinations have a high level of visitor satisfaction. Croatia has 81.8% repeat visitors. Hawai'i has similar indicators - 63% repeat visitors, and 89.6% of those who would recommend Hawai'i to their friends and family.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the fact that there are some differences in the geo-political situation, historic background and tourism development between Croatia and Hawai'i, the two destinations have a number of characteristics in common – natural beauty and eco-sensitive environment, international sun and beaches destinations, a similar tourism life cycle and economic success. At the same time, both are also currently facing some problems, such as product repositioning, image creation, destination rebranding, carrying capacity and environmental protection and sustainability.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to explore the destination images of Hawai'i and Croatia among Croatian and Hawaiian student travelers, respectively. To capture the complexity of the destination image concept, the analysis involved three steps:

- (1) Open-ended questions were used to assess the destination images of Croatia and Hawai'i at the holistic level. Answers to the questions were content-analyzed in order to reveal stereotypical, affective, uniqueness and activity-based images as well as unfavorable images and significant image distortions for the two destinations.
- (2) An importance-perception analysis was conducted to evaluate to what degree the perceived destination image at the attribute-level coincides with the students' image of an optimum destination. The aim of this analysis was to identify significant negative discrepancies between attribute-perception levels and attribute-importance levels.
- (3) An importance-grid analysis was used to gain insight into possible asymmetric relationships between the perception-level of particular images at the attribute-level and the level of destination attractiveness. The aim of this analysis was to identify key drivers of perceived destination attractiveness in the analyzed segments, i.e. to identify those image components which have the highest potential to increase and/or reduce the perceived overall attractiveness of a tourist destination.

For the purpose of this study two convenience samples were used. The image of Hawai'i was measured among Croatian undergraduate business students (n=105), and the image of Croatia was measured among Hawaiian undergraduate and graduate business students (n=101). Data collection took place between November 2007 and January 2008 by means of a semi-structured self-administered questionnaire. A paper-and-pencil version of the questionnaire was used to survey Croatian students, and an online version was used to survey Hawaiian students. The web survey was conducted

using LimeSurvey open-source software. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 15.0.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 5.1. Assessing destination image at the holistic level

Four open-ended questions were used to assess the destination images of Croatia and Hawaii at the holistic level. Echtner and Ritchie propose two open-ended questions to capture the holistic component of destination image:<sup>11</sup>

- "What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination?" (functional holistic component)
- "How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX?" (psychological holistic component)

Moreover, the authors propose a third open-ended question to capture uniqueness image components:

- "Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attraction that you can think of in XXX."

According to the classification used by Stepchenkova and Morrison in their recent study of Russia's destination image among US pleasure travelers, 12 images assessed through the three above-mentioned questions will be referred to as "stereotypical", "affective" and "uniqueness" images, respectively.

Furthermore, in this study a fourth open-ended question was added to capture images which are related to tourist activities (i.e. activity-based images):

- "Please list any tourist activity you think XXX offers good possibilities for."

Respondents could give up to three answers to each question. Results are shown in Tables 3-10.

**Table 3:** Stereotypical images of Croatia

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
beautiful (nature/scenery)	39	sun	13
Europe/European	28	Mediterranean	9
history	18	cold/snow	7
beautiful beaches	16	soccer	7

**Table 4:** Stereotypical images of Hawai'i

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
beautiful beaches	39	hot weather	20
clean sea	35	hula dance	18
sun	23	flowers	12
palms	22	volcano	10

**Table 5:** Affective images of Croatia

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
peaceful	35	friendly people	12
culture	22	fun	12
nature	19	interesting	9
exciting	14	European	6

**Table 6:** Affective images of Hawai'i

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
peaceful	45	exotic	17
pleasure	35	excitement	15
excellent mood	27	warm	12
party	18	sympathetic hosts	9

**Table 7:** Uniqueness images of Croatia

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
beach/sea/ocean	25	Krka	8
nature parks/natural attractions	17	historical places/sights	6
historical buildings/churches	14	Plitvice lakes	6
Dubrovnik	12	Split	5

**Table 8:** Uniqueness images of Hawai'i

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
Honolulu	46	Mauna Loa	13
Waikiki	42	flower chain	8
hula dance	17	volcano	6
Maui	15	cocktails	3

**Table 9:** Activity-based images of Croatia

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
sightseeing	29	skiing	14
historical sightseeing	25	yachting/sailing	13
hiking	24	water sports	11
cultural experience	19	dining/food	10

**Table 10:** Activity-based images of Hawai'i

Image variable	Frequency	Image variable	Frequency
surfing	46	nature visits/exploring nature	15
swimming	41	dancing	13
diving/scuba-diving	37	partying/clubbing	9
relaxing/sunbathing	30	jet ski/boat trips	4

A simple content analysis of responses to the open-ended questions revealed predominant images across all four categories (i.e. stereotypical, affective, uniqueness and activity-based images) and absolute numbers of responses were interpreted as indicators of the level of destination awareness. Moreover, since the responses represent top-of-mind associations with the two destinations, they also facilitated a simple identification of possible image distortions.

The high response rates to the open-ended questions in both student samples indicated a high level of awareness of both Croatia and Hawai'i as tourist destinations. However, the level of awareness of Hawai'i as a tourist destination among Croatian students was higher than the level of awareness of Croatia among Hawaiian students, especially with regard to the uniqueness and the activity-based image component. As much as 94% of Croatian students gave at least one response to the uniqueness images question, as opposed to only 70% of Hawaiian students. At least one answer to the activity-based images question was provided by 90% of Croatian students and 77% of Hawaiian students.

A qualitative analysis of responses showed that there were no significant image distortions. However, 7% of Hawaiian students answered "cold/snow" to the stereotypical image question, which could be explained by the recent successes of the Croatian national ski team.

Overall, the prevailing image of Croatia among Hawaiian students could be described as a "European country with beautiful nature and peaceful atmosphere, rich in culture and history, which offers great possibilities for sightseeing" The predominant image of Hawai'i among Croatian students could be described as an "exotic island with beautiful beaches and many volcanoes which offers great possibilities to relax and for all sorts of water sports".

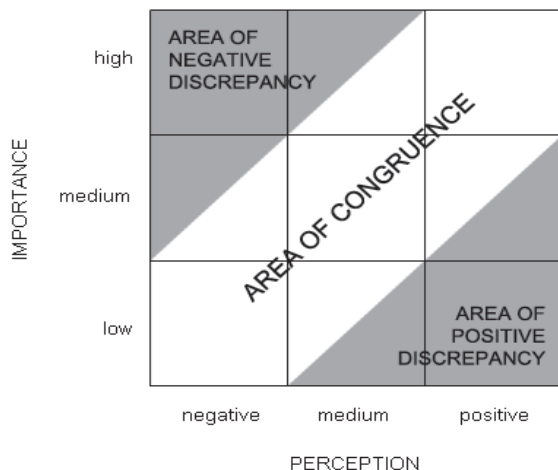
## 5.2. Assessing destination image at the attribute-level

In the next step an importance-perception analysis was performed to evaluate the destination images of Hawai'i and Croatia at the attribute-level. The concept of this analysis is basically identical to the one of importance-performance analysis (IPA), which was introduced by Martilla and James.<sup>13</sup> However, in this case, the primary purpose of IPA was not to derive managerial implications on how to best (re-)allocate an organization's resources, but simply to reveal significant discrepancies between the general importance of destination attributes and the respondents' perceptions along the same attributes for a specific tourist destination. In other words, the analysis revealed to what degree the respondents' perception of the destination matches their image of an "optimal destination".

In this regard, destination marketers in particular need to pay attention to the attributes which fall into the negative discrepancy area because these attributes are

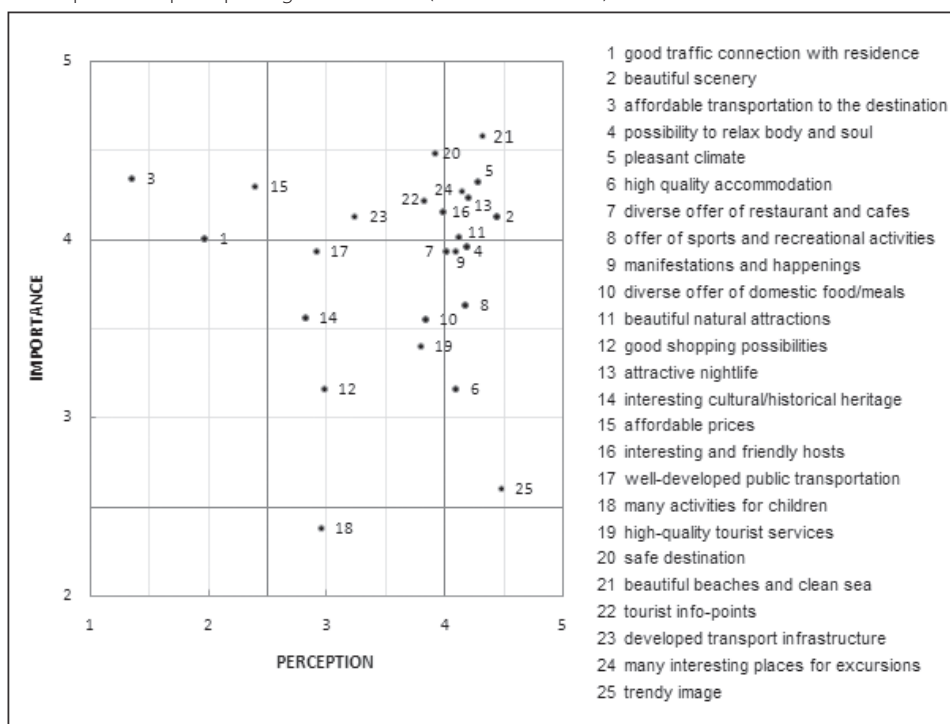
very likely to significantly degrade the overall destination image (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Importance-perception grid



Source: Authors

**Figure 2:** Importance-perception grid for Hawaii (Croatian students)



Source: Research

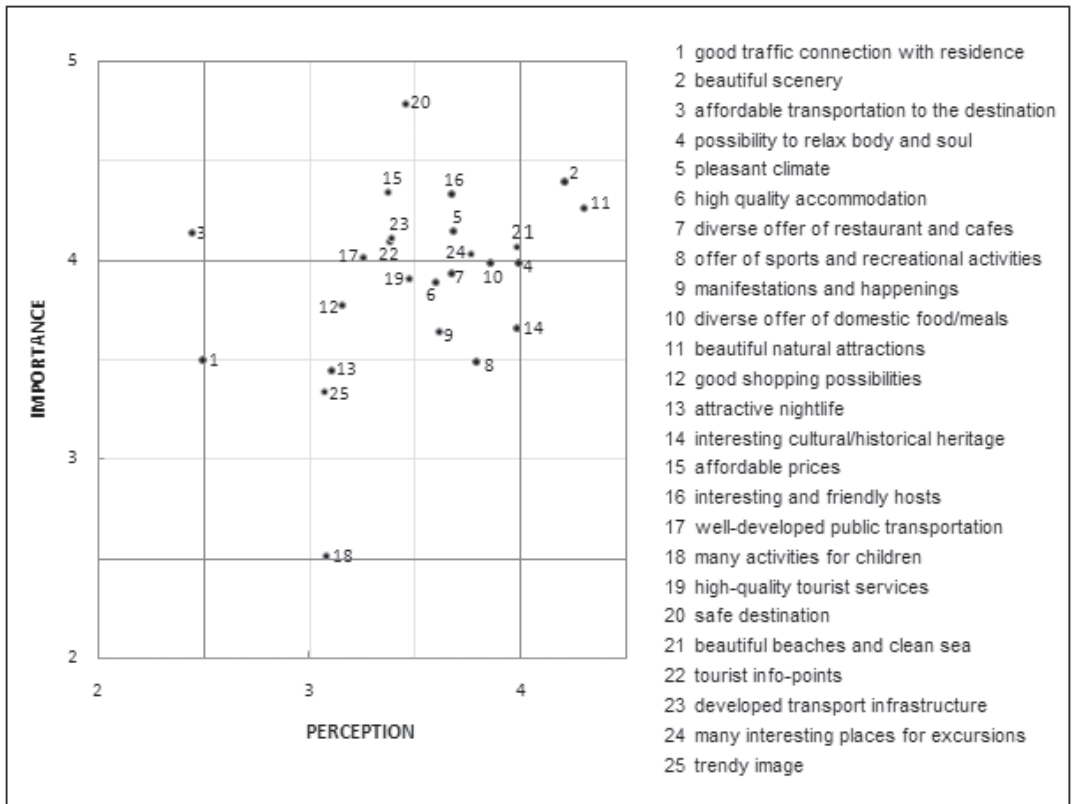


The IP grid for Hawai'i reveals that Croatian students have a highly positive image of Hawai'i as a tourist destination (Figure 2). The majority of destination attributes, i.e. 13 attributes (52%), fall into the right three quadrants, which means that respondents perceive them very positively ( $P=4.0+$ ). However, three attributes (12%) fall into the upper left quadrant ( $P=2.5-$ ;  $I=4.0+$ ), namely: affordable transportation to the destination (3), good traffic connection with the residence (1) and affordable prices (15). As one would expect, these attributes show a significant negative discrepancy between perception and importance scores in the analyzed segment of Croatian undergraduate business students.

The same analysis for Croatia reveals that Hawaiian students do not have an equally positive image of Croatia as do Croatian students of Hawai'i (Figure 3). Only two

destination attributes (8%), namely beautiful scenery (2) and beautiful natural attractions (11), fall into the right three quadrants ( $P=4.0+$ ), whereas the majority of attributes, i.e. 21 (84%), fall into the three medium-perception quadrants ( $2.5 < P < 4.0$ ). However, only one attribute, i.e. affordable transportation to the destination (3), falls into the upper left quadrant, indicating a significant negative discrepancy between perception and importance for this attribute. Despite the fact that this attribute shows a very low perception score among Hawaiian students ( $P=2.44$ ), the score is still much higher compared to the respective score among Croatian students ( $P=1.35$ ). This could be seen as an indicator of lower price-sensitivity of Hawaiian students compared to Croatian ones, which is not surprising, considering the differences in the living standards. Not surprising, either, is the fact that 'many activities for children (18)' represents the least important attribute in both these analyzed student samples.

**Figure 3:** Importance-perception grid for Croatia (Hawaiian students)



Source: Research

### 5.3. Assessing the factor structure of destination attractiveness

The third and last step of the image analysis involved an importance-grid analysis (IGA).<sup>15</sup> The use of IGA is documented in several studies which deal with the issues of destination benchmarking and destination image.<sup>16</sup>

IGA was originally introduced as a tool for exploring the three-factor structure of customer satisfaction or for assessing, respectively, different quality elements according to the Kano model of attractive and must-be quality.<sup>17</sup> In order to explore different factors according to this theory/model, the technique compares the scores of explicit and implicit attribute-importance. Explicit importance scores are obtained directly from the customer/tourist (e.g. through direct rating-, constant-sum- or ranking scales) whereas implicit importance scores are derived by regressing or correlating attribute performance against a global measure of performance or satisfaction (e.g. overall tourist satisfaction - OTS). Accordingly, implicit importance scores can be regarded as indicators of an attribute's impact on e.g. OTS. Most authors use standardized beta coefficients from multiple regression analysis,<sup>18</sup> or correlation coefficients.<sup>19</sup>

To perform the analysis, the scores of both implicit and explicit importance for each attribute are depicted along the horizontal and vertical axis of a two-dimensional grid. In a next step, the grid is divided into four quadrants, most frequently by means of grand means of implicit and explicit importance scores. In the last step, different satisfaction factors are identified by analyzing the attributes' positioning within the grid.

In this study, the authors transferred the basic idea of IGA from the concept of customer satisfaction to the concept of destination attractiveness. Accordingly, IGA was not used to explore possible asymmetric relationships between attribute-level performance and overall customer satisfaction but rather between the level of

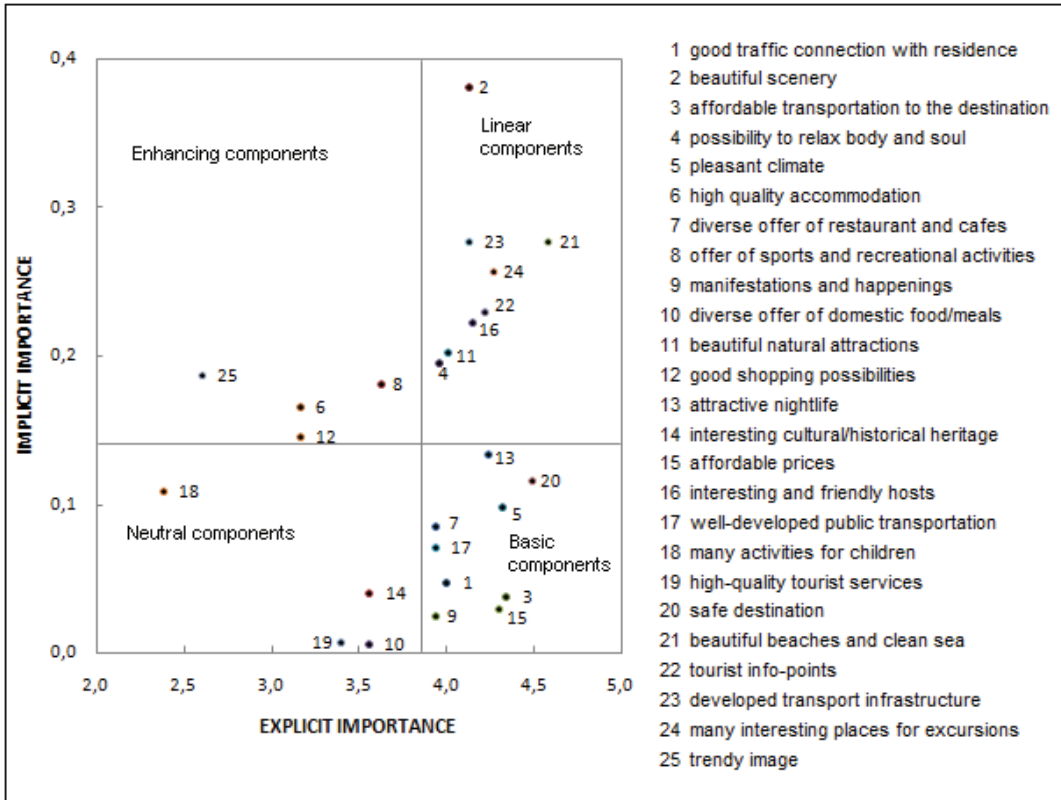
attribute-perception and perceived overall destination attractiveness (PODA). PODA was measured on a 10-point single item rating scale (1-not at all attractive, 10-very attractive). Spearman correlation coefficients between attribute-perception and PODA were used as scores of implicit importance. Grand means of explicit and implicit attribute-importance scores were used to divide the grids into four quadrants.

Analogously to traditional IGA, a comparison of explicit importance (E.I.) and implicit importance (I.I.) enabled the categorization of image components into the following groups:<sup>20</sup>

- Basic image components (high E.I.; low I.I.) – Image components which have a large potential to decrease PODA if they are perceived negatively. However, if they are perceived positively, they do not significantly increase PODA.
- Linear image components (high E.I., low I.I.) – Image components which have an approximately equal potential to increase and decrease PODA, depending on whether they are perceived positively or negatively.
- Enhancing image components (low E.I., high I.I.) – Image components which have a large potential to increase PODA if they are perceived positively. However, if not delivered, or perceived negatively, these components are not likely to significantly decrease PODA.
- Neutral image components (low E.I., low I.I.) – Image components which neither increase nor decrease PODA significantly, regardless of whether they are perceived positively or negatively.

According to the importance-grid for Croatian students (Figure 4), nine attributes (36%) could be categorized as basic image components of Hawai'i (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17 and 20), eight attributes (32%) could be categorized as linear image components (2, 4, 11, 16, 21, 22, 23 and 24), four attributes (16%) could be categorized as enhancing image components (6, 8, 12 and 25) and four attributes (16%) could be categorized as neutral components (10, 14, 18 and 19).

Figure 4: Importance-grid for Croatian students



Source: Research

According to the same analysis for Hawaiian students (Figure 5), six attributes (24%) could be categorized as basic image components of Croatia (3, 10, 15, 16, 17 and 23), ten attributes (40%) could be categorized as linear image components (2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24), four attributes (16%) could be categorized as enhancing image components (6, 9, 14 and 25) and five attributes (20%) could be categorized as neutral components (1, 8, 12, 13 and 18).

The comparison of IGA results revealed some interesting differences between Croatian and Hawaiian students:

- For Croatian students 'attractive nightlife (13)' is close to the border between basic and linear components while representing a neutral component for Hawaiian students. This means that for Hawaiian students 'attractive nightlife' has almost no impact on PODA, regardless of whether they perceive it

positively or negatively, whereas for Croatian students a negative perception of the nightlife in a destination highly degrades PODA.

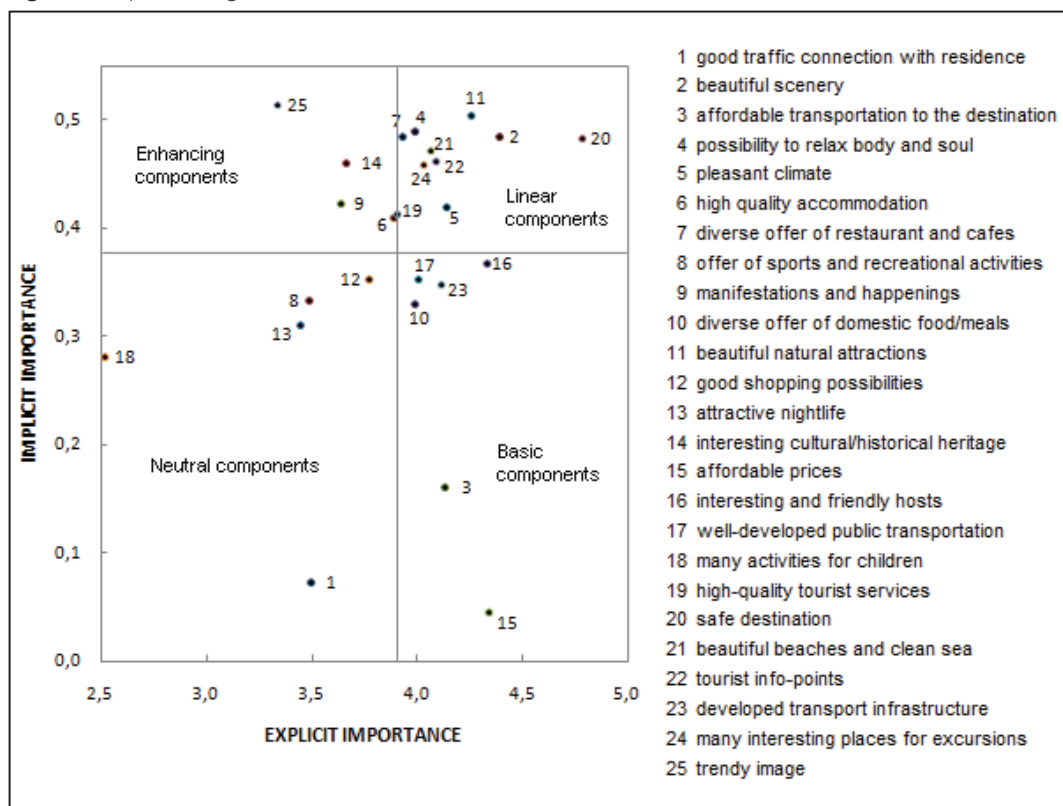
- 'Safe destination (20)' clearly represents a linear component for Hawaiian students while it is a basic component for their Croatian counterparts. This means that a positive perception of safety in a destination has no impact on increasing PODA among Croatian students but a negative perception highly decreases PODA. On the other hand, for Hawaiian students, a positive perception of safety in a destination actually increases PODA and a negative perception decreases PODA.
- 'Interesting cultural/historical heritage (14)' and 'high-quality tourist services (19)' are close to the border between enhancing and linear components for Hawaiian students while they are classified as neutral components for Croatian students. This means that positive perceptions along these

attributes highly increase PODA for Hawaiian students whereas these attributes do not play an important role for Croatian students in the formation of PODA.

However, the comparison of IGA results also revealed many similarities between the two analyzed student samples. As much as 11 out of 25 attributes (44%) were classified the same way (2, 3, 6, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24 and 25):

- Basic components: affordable transportation to the destination (3), affordable prices (15) and well-developed public transportation (17).
- Linear components: beautiful scenery (2), beautiful natural attractions (11), beautiful beaches and clean sea (21), tourist info-points (22) and many interesting places for excursions (24).
- Enhancing components: high quality accommodation (6) and trendy image (25).
- Neutral components: many activities for children (18).

Figure 5: Importance-grid for Hawaiian students



Source: Research

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In this exploratory study, several approaches were combined to measure the images of Croatia and Hawai'i as tourist destinations, as perceived by Hawaiian and Croatian students respectively.

In the first step, the destination image was measured at the holistic level using four open-ended questions. This facilitated the identification of stereotypical, affective, uniqueness and activity-based images. Results showed that Croatian students are highly aware of Hawai'i as a tourist destination, whereas Hawaiian students showed a lower level of awareness of Croatia,

especially with regard to the uniqueness and activity-based image component. A qualitative analysis of responses showed that there were no significant image distortions.

In the second step, an importance-perception analysis (IPA) was performed to measure the destination image at the attribute-level, and to evaluate to what degree the destination image coincides with the general importance of destination attributes. Results from IPA enabled the identification of significant deviations between attribute-perception and attribute-importance. As one would expect, the attribute 'affordable transportation to the destination' showed the highest negative discrepancy between perception and importance in both samples. However, IPA results also indicated a lower price-sensitivity of Hawaiian students compared to their Croatian counterparts. Furthermore, overall, the results showed that Croatian students have a more positive image of Hawai'i as a tourist destination than do Hawaiian students of Croatia.

In the third and last step, an importance-grid analysis (IGA) was performed as a commonly used empirical method for assessing the three-factor structure of customer satisfaction. In this study, the basic idea of IGA was transferred from the concept of customer satisfaction to the concept of destination attractiveness in order to explore image components at the attribute-level (i.e. destination attributes), which are key-drivers of perceived overall destination attractiveness. The analysis revealed the existence of basic, linear, enhancing and neutral image components. The results also showed several interesting differences between Croatian and Hawaiian students. However, 11 out of 25 destination attributes were classified the same way across the two samples.

This exploratory study on the images of Hawai'i and Croatia demonstrated the applicability and usefulness of this combination of measurement approaches (open-ended questions, IPA and IGA). The methodology could also be applied to other destinations and, thus, represents a valuable tool for destination marketers who are involved in image management. However, it is not possible to generalize the individual findings

of this study to other destinations, or to other tourist segments.

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. Despite the common use of IGA in studies on the three-factor structure of customer satisfaction, there is no theory which explains why different factors of satisfaction (or in this study – factors of destination attractiveness) can be derived by comparing implicit and explicit attribute-importance. Moreover, authors who have compared different methods for exploring the three-factor structure of customer satisfaction did not report convergent validity between IGA and other methods.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, future studies should address the question of reliability and validity of IGA results. Furthermore, the use of Spearman correlation coefficients as an impact-measure is not ideal since correlation coefficients only provide information about the direction and strength of a linear relationship while providing no information about causality. In this regard, multiple regression analysis seems to be a better solution but, statistically, it cannot be applied to ordinal data. Even if one is to neglect this fact, multiple regression analysis has a serious shortcoming: when large numbers of variables (i.e. attributes) are included in the analysis, the risk of intercorrelations among predictor variables highly increases and is likely to cause problems in the interpretation of results. Thus, future studies should also address the question of which implicit importance (i.e. impact) measure to use in IGA. Another limitation of this study is that the scale used to measure destination image at the attribute-level was neither tested for content validity nor internal consistency. The choice of destination attributes was based on a literature review but there still appears to be a lack of agreement on dimensions and attributes of the destination image concept. Finally, the use of convenience samples and the small sample size represent another limitation of this study.

## LITERATURE

1. Bartikowski, B., Llosa, S.: Customer Satisfaction Measurement: Comparing four Methods of Attribute Categorisations, **The Service Industries Journal**, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2004, pp. 67-82.
2. Beerli, A., Martin, J.D.: Tourists' Characteristics and the Perceived Image of Tourist Destinations: a Quantitative Analysis – a Case Study of Lanzarote, Spain, **Tourism Management**, Vol. 25, No. 5, 2004, pp. 623-636.
3. Busacca, B., Padula, G.: Understanding the Relationship between Attribute Performance and Overall Satisfaction: Theory, Measurement and Implications, **Marketing Intelligence & Planning**, Vol. 23, No. 6, 2005, pp. 543-561.
4. Bywater, M.: Market Segments in the Youth and Student Travel Market, **EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst**, Vol. 3, 1993, pp. 35-50.
5. Chadee, D.D., Cutler, J.: Insights into International Travel by Students, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1996, pp. 75-80.
6. Chon, K.S.: The Role of Destination Image in Tourism: An Extension, **Revue du Tourisme**, Vol. 1, 1992, pp. 2-8.
7. Chon, K.S.: Tourism Destination Image Modification Process – Marketing Implications, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1991, pp. 68-72.
8. Chon, K.S.: Traveler Destination Image Modification Process and its Marketing Implications, **Developments in Marketing Science**, Vol. 13, 1990, pp. 480-482.
9. Crompton, J.L.: An Assessment of the Image of Mexico as a Vacation Destination and the Influence of Geographical Location upon that Image, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1979, pp. 18-23.
10. Dann, G.M.S.: Tourist's Images of a Destination – an Alternative Analysis, **Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing**, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, 1996, pp. 41-45.
11. Driscoll, A., Lawson, R., Niven, B.: Measuring Tourist Destination Perceptions, **Annals of Tourism Research**, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1994, pp. 499-511.
12. Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B.: The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image, **The Journal of Tourism Studies**, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1991, pp. 2-12.
13. Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B.: The Measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 31, 1993, pp. 3-13.
14. Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K.: Destination Benchmarking: An Indicator-System's Potential for Exploring Guest Satisfaction, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 42, No. 3, 2004, pp. 212-225.
15. Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K.: New Perspectives on Satisfaction Research, **Tourism Review**, Vol. 58, No. 3, 2003, pp. 6-14.
16. Fuchs, M.: Benchmarking Indicator-Systems and their Potential for Tracking Guest Satisfaction, **Tourism**, Vol. 50, No. 2, 2002, pp. 141-155.
17. Fuchs, M.: Pilotprojekt DESTINOMETER – Benchmarkingsystem des Tiroler Tourismus, **Tourismus Journal**, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2004, pp. 65-76.
18. Gartner, W.C.: Image Formation Process, **Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing**, Vol. 2, No. 2/3, 1993, pp. 191-215.
19. Goodall, B., Ashworth, G. (eds.): **Marketing in the Tourism Industry: The promotion of Destination Regions**, Croom Helm, London, 1988.
20. Goodrich, J.N.: The Relationship between Preferences for and Perceptions of Vacation Destinations, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1978, pp. 2-7.
21. Hinterhuber, H.H., Matzler, K. (eds.): **Kundenorientierte Unternehmensführung: Kundenorientierung – Kundenzufriedenheit – Kundenbindung**, Gabler Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2002.
22. Hunt, J.D.: Image as a Factor in Tourism Development, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1975, pp. 1-7.

23. Kano, N., Seraku, N., Takahashi, F., Tsuji, S.: Attractive Quality and Must-be Quality, **Hinshitsu (The Journal of the Japanese Society for Quality Control)**, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1984, pp. 39-48.
24. Martilla, J.A., James, J.C.: Importance-Performance Analysis, **Journal of Marketing**, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1977, pp. 77-99.
25. Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E., Heischmidt, K.A.: Importance-Performance Analysis Revisited: The Role of the Factor Structure of Customer Satisfaction, **The Service Industries Journal**, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2003, pp. 112-129.
26. Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E.: The Factor Structure of Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Test of the Importance Grid and the Penalty-Reward-Contrast Analysis, **International Journal of Service Industry Management**, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2002, pp. 314-332.
27. Mayo, E.J.: Regional Images and Regional Travel Destination, **Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference of Travel and Tourism Research Association**, Salt Lake City, 1973, pp. 211-217.
28. Milman, A., Pizam, A.: The Role of Awareness and Familiarity with Destination: The Central Florida Case, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1995, pp. 21-27.
29. Peters, M.: Entrepreneurial Skills in Leadership and Human Resource Management Evaluated by Apprentices in Small Tourism Businesses, **Education + Training**, Vol. 47, No. 8/9, 2005, pp. 575-591.
30. Pikkemaat, B.: The Measurement of Destination Image: The Case of Austria, **The Poznan University of Economics Review**, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2004, pp. 87-102.
31. Stepchenkova, S., Morrison, A.M.: Russia's Destination Image among American Pleasure Travelers: Revisiting Echtner and Ritchie, **Tourism Management**, Vol. 29, 2008, pp. 548-560.
32. Vavra, T.G.: **Improving your Measurement of Customer Satisfaction: A Guide to Creating, Conducting, Analyzing and Reporting Customer Satisfaction Measurement Program**, ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI, 1997.
33. Witt, S.F., Moutinho, L. (eds.): **Tourism Marketing and Management Handbooks**, Prentice Hall, Cambridge, 1989.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Mayo, E.J.: Regional Images and Regional Travel Destination, **Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference of Travel and Tourism Research Association**, Salt Lake City, 1973, pp. 211-217; Hunt, J.D.: Image as a Factor in Tourism Development, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1975, pp. 1-7; Goodrich, J.N.: The Relationship between Preferences for and Perceptions of Vacation Destinations, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1978, pp. 2-7; Chon, K.S.: Tourism Destination Image Modification Process – Marketing Implications, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1991, pp. 68-72; Gartner, W.C.: Image Formation Process, **Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing**, Vol. 2, No. 2/3, 1993, pp. 191-215; Milman, A., Pizam, A.: The Role of Awareness and Familiarity with Destination: The Central Florida Case, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1995, pp. 21-27; Dann, G.M.S.: Tourist's Images of a Destination – an Alternative Analysis, **Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing**, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, 1996, pp. 41-45.
- <sup>2</sup> Chon, K.S. (a): Traveler Destination Image Modification Process and its Marketing Implications, **Developments in Marketing Science**, Vol. 13, 1990, pp. 480-482; Chon, K.S. (b): The Role of Destination Image in Tourism: An Extension, **Revue du Tourisme**, Vol. 1, 1992, pp. 2-8; Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B. (a): The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image, **The Journal of Tourism Studies**, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1991, pp. 2-12; Stabler, M.J.: The Image of Destination Regions: Theoretical and Empirical Aspects – In: Goodall, B., Ashworth, G. (eds.): **Marketing in the Tourism Industry: The promotion of Destination Regions**, Croom Helm, London, 1988, pp. 133-161; Telisman-Kosuta, N.: Tourism Destination Image – In: Witt, S.F., Moutinho, L. (eds.), **Tourism Marketing and Management Handbooks**, Prentice Hall, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 557-561.
- <sup>3</sup> Chadee, D.D., Cutler, J.: Insights into International Travel by Students, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1996, pp. 75-80; Bywater, M.: Market Segments in the Youth and Student Travel Market, **EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst**, Vol. 3, 1993, pp. 35-50.

- <sup>4</sup> Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B (a): op. cit., pp. 11.
- <sup>5</sup> Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B. (b): The Measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 31, 1993, pp. 3-13; Driscoll, A., Lawson, R., Niven, B.: Measuring Tourist Destination Perceptions, **Annals of Tourism Research**, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1994, pp. 499-511.
- <sup>6</sup> Beerli, A., Martin, J.D.: Tourists' Characteristics and the Perceived Image of Tourist Destinations: a Quantitative Analysis – a Case Study of Lanzarote, Spain, **Tourism Management**, Vol. 25, No. 5, 2004, pp. 623-636.
- <sup>7</sup> Based on data published by the Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Business, Economic & Tourism of the State of Hawaii.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Echtner, C.M., Ritchie, J.R.B (a): op. cit., pp. 11.
- <sup>12</sup> Stepchenkova, S., Morrison, A.M.: Russia's Destination Image among American Pleasure Travelers: Revisiting Echtner and Ritchie, **Tourism Management**, Vol. 29, 2008, pp. 548-560.
- <sup>13</sup> Martilla, J.A., James, J.C.: Importance-Performance Analysis, **Journal of Marketing**, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1977, pp. 77-99.
- <sup>14</sup> The choice of thresholds was based on the subjective judgement of the authors.
- <sup>15</sup> Vavra, T.G.: **Improving your Measurement of Customer Satisfaction: A Guide to Creating, Conducting, Analyzing and Reporting Customer Satisfaction Measurement Program**, ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI, 1997, pp. 385.
- <sup>16</sup> Fuchs, M. (a): Benchmarking Indicator-Systems and their Potential for Tracking Guest Satisfaction, **Tourism**, Vol. 50, No. 2, 2002, pp. 141-155; Fuchs, M. (b): Pilotprojekt DESTINOMETER – Benchmarkingsystem des Tiroler Tourismus, **Tourismus Journal**, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2004, pp. 65-76; Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K. (a): New Perspectives on Satisfaction Research, **Tourism Review**, Vol. 58, No. 3, 2003, pp. 6-14; Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K. (b): Destination Benchmarking: An Indicator-System's Potential for Exploring Guest Satisfaction, **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 42, No. 3, 2004, pp. 212-225; Pikkemaat, B.: The Measurement of Destination Image: The Case of Austria, **The Poznan University of Economics Review**, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2004, pp. 87-102.
- <sup>17</sup> Kano, N., Seraku, N., Takahashi, F., Tsuji, S.: Attractive Quality and Must-be Quality, **Hinshitsu (The Journal of the Japanese Society for Quality Control)**, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1984, pp. 39-48.
- <sup>18</sup> Fuchs, M. (a): op. cit.; Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E. (a): The Factor Structure of Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Test of the Importance Grid and the Penalty-Reward-Contrast Analysis, **International Journal of Service Industry Management**, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2002, pp. 314-332; Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E., Stark, C.: Methoden zur Identifikation von Basis-, Leistungs- und Begeisterungsfaktoren – In: Hinterhuber, H.H., Matzler, K. (eds.): **Kundenorientierte Unternehmensführung: Kundenorientierung–Kundenzufriedenheit–Kundenbindung**, Gabler Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2002, pp. 265-289; Peters, M.: Entrepreneurial Skills in Leadership and Human Resource Management Evaluated by Apprentices in Small Tourism Businesses, **Education + Training**, Vol. 47, No. 8/9, 2005, pp. 575-591; Busacca, B., Padula, G.: Understanding the Relationship between Attribute Performance and Overall Satisfaction: Theory, Measurement and Implications, **Marketing Intelligence & Planning**, Vol. 23, No. 6, 2005, pp. 543-561.
- <sup>19</sup> Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E., Stark, C.: op. cit.; Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E., Heischmidt, K.A.: Importance-Performance Analysis Revisited: The Role of the Factor Structure of Customer Satisfaction, **The Service Industries Journal**, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2003, pp. 112-129; Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K. (a): op. cit.; Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K. (b): op. cit.; Bartikowski, B., Llosa, S.: Customer Satisfaction Measurement: Comparing four Methods of Attribute Categorisations, **The Service Industries Journal**, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2004, pp. 67-82.
- <sup>20</sup> At this point, it has to be emphasized that a too strict classification of attributes should generally be avoided when interpreting IGA results. Since the use of grand means of importance-scores as gridlines is a very arbitrary method to divide the grid into four quadrants, relative attribute-positioning should be analyzed rather than absolute attribute-positionings.
- <sup>21</sup> e.g. Matzler, K., Sauerwein, E. (a): op. cit.; Fuchs, M., Weiermair, K. (a): op. cit.; Busacca, B., Padula, G.: op. cit.