



# Tourists' destination image through regional tourism: From supply and demand sides perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

As an outcome of the phenomenal development of place branding in the travel industry, scrutinizing its potential influences on tourism and travelers' destinations is of supreme importance. This study aims to identify how branding of places influences both supply and demand sides' perspectives and leads to changes in travelers' behavior towards Tatarstan, Russia. Based on 78 interviews with tourists (22), managers (34) and 3 focus groups (22), a conceptual model was designed which illustrates that the tangible and intangible factors of place identity influence the archetypical nation trait and regional place brand, which further results in a positive place image, authentic lifestyle, and entrepreneurship. Implications for tourism planning and management are provided.

## 1. Introduction

Place image is one of the most critical components for selecting a place to visit and is also a challenge for destination management organizations. Place image and identity have developed as a domain of research to address a rapidly rising global competition of places (cities, regions, countries) for tourists, companies, investors, and highly-educated residents, and to assist practitioners in developing efficient tourism strategies (Gertner, 2011; Hanna & Rowley, 2015; So, King, Hudson, & Meng, 2017; Zavattaro, Daspit, & Adams, 2015; Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017). Places are aiming to improve their image to enhance tourist visitation, increase business activities and investment (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Kotler, Asplund, Rein, & Heider, 1999; Papadopoulos, 2004; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). The way to construct a strong and favorable place brand has been a recent point of discussion in marketing (i.e., Foroudi, Gupta, Kitchen, Foroudi, & Nguyen, 2016) and tourism literature (i.e., So et al., 2017; Zenker et al., 2017).

Marketing and tourism scholars (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Liu & Chou, 2016; Lumsdon, 1997; Pike, 2005) stated that strategic brand development can assist destinations to attract tourists. Place/destination branding is an effective way to increase awareness and to construct the positive image of the place by using brand associations and brand image which relates to any brand-related information that holds in the consumers' memory (Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011). Authors (Liu & Chou,

2016; Pike, 2005) noted that it is important to address brand management of places in a strategic way, as it is a significant factor to attract tourist. Liu and Chou (2016) stated that the marketing strategy related to place branding and image should include promotions that require the promotion of tourist buying behavior and communication with tourism. As 4P's of marketing strategy include product, place, price, and promotion (Ryan, 1991), in relation to tourism, the tourism destination which is like an entity product, demands considerations of factors such as high-quality tourism products, efficient communication to the tourists and local tourism image (Liu & Chou, 2016). Also, that price of the tourism activities should be within acceptable range for consumers (Lumsdon, 1997) and marketing the tourism agencies could be beneficial for improving the place brand image and increasing sales (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001).

Furthermore, as part of the promotion of the place, sports events can be effectively adopted as a way to enhance the place image. As Rein and Shields (2007) noted: "an effective place branding strategy requires a platform that can communicate its identity and assets to its target markets" (p. 73). Thus, the authors (Rein & Shields, 2007) highlighted that sports events such as the FIFA World Cup, are highly beneficial to improve their image for the emerging and transition places. Thus, the hosting of big sporting events highly beneficial destination strategy to improve the image of the place. Additionally, Dey and Sarma (2010) in their findings from North-East India highlighted that in emerging places the most effective way to spread the information about the destination

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was through friends/relatives/colleagues. Therefore, in their research, they noted “also, since most visitors rely on their friends and relatives for their information search on travel destinations. Thus, utmost care needs to be taken by the destination marketers to ensure a high level of satisfaction among visitors to generate positive word-of-mouth” (p. 344).

Moreover, So et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of brand identity, emphasizing the significance of “projecting a brand identity that is attractive to target consumers to achieve customer brand identification” (p. 640). Based on the above, the importance of place branding, place identity, authenticity and place image has been identified; however, there is limited literature on the relationships between place branding, place identity, authenticity and place image (Foroudi et al., 2018; Jiang, Ramkissoon, & Mavondo, 2016; Jiang, Ramkissoon, Mavondo, & Feng, 2017). Moreover, Jiang et al. (2017) highlight that there is a lack of research about authenticity and there is a need for attention to the place in authenticity scholarship, in particular, there should be more research on the connection between destination image and authenticity.

To date, there is a particular lack of research on place branding concerning place image (Bose, Roy, & Tiwari, 2016; Foroudi et al., 2016; So et al., 2017; Zenker et al., 2017). Furthermore, scholars (Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Hultman, Yeboah-Banin, & Formaniuk, 2016; Martinez, 2016) have identified a gap in the literature tackling the notion of place brand from both supply (tourism organizations, visitor and conference bureaux, local authorities, and local advertising/branding agencies) and demand sides (residents and tourists). Jiang et al. (2016) stated that in the tourism sector “there is a lack of a holistic approach that incorporates both the supply and demand sides; hence the need to think conceptually of integrating” (p. 654).

Lastly, there is a notable lack of research in the context of emerging destinations (Dinnie, Melewar, Seidenfuss, & Musa, 2010; Foroudi et al., 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Sinha and Sheth (2018) highlighted “Emerging Markets (EMs) have become the growth engines of the World” (p. 217). Atadil, Sirakaya-Turk, and Altintas (2017) stated that it is now the era of intense competition for visitors among places, where “emerging markets play a critical role in the development of the national tourism industry” (p. 37). Scholars emphasize the critical research of place brand and place identity in the emerging context (Dinnie et al., 2010; Foroudi et al., 2016; Sinha & Sheth, 2018).

To address these gaps, this study aims to investigate the main elements of regional place identity, evaluate the impact of regional place identity on regional place brand, and identify the primary outcomes of a regional place brand. The study context is the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia. Tatarstan is one of the most attractive regions for investors in Russia (Glebova & Khamidulina, 2015), it leads the list of the top 30 regions in Russia for business (Forbes rating, 2012) and tourism is a priority of the Republic of Tatarstan (tourism.tatarstan.ru, 2015). This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between place identity, place brand and place image (Foroudi et al., 2016; Kavartzis & Hatch, 2013) and develops a place brand framework focusing on the concepts of place identity, place brand visual identity, place image, authentic lifestyle, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, it adds to the discussion of the phenomenon from both supply (brand administrators) and demands sides (brand targets) (Bramwell & Rawding, 1994; Braun, 2012; Hultman et al., 2016). This perspective is in line with scholars' (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Zenker et al., 2017) opinion that place brand conceptually required aligned multiple stakeholders' views; nevertheless, little research has looked beyond the tourists' perspective (i.e., Hankinson, 2004; Kotsi, Balakrishnan, Michael, & Ramsay, 2016) and more studies of this kind are needed (Hultman et al., 2016; Martinez, 2016). Furthermore, this study adds to the literature on emerging countries (as stated by Dinnie et al., 2010; Foroudi et al., 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009) especially at the regional level (Eidelman, Fakhrutdinova, Gabdrakhmanov, & Nayda, 2016). Finally, this study is of great importance to the practitioners and

government who aim to build a robust favorable place brand and improve the perception of the place by the key stakeholders (residents and visitors).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Place brand and multiple stakeholders

Academics have well recognized the significance of place brands, as an intangible resource that contributes to the growth of a place (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Baker & Cameron, 2008; Hankinson, 2007; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Qu et al., 2011), a unique asset for tourism (Balakrishnan, 2009; Che-Ha, Nguyen, Yahya, Melewar, & Chen, 2016) and a source of competitive advantage (Aureli & Forlani, 2016). This study adopts the definition of place brand from Zenker and Braun (2010) and Zenker et al. (2017) which is rooted in Keller's (1993) notion of brand knowledge. Place brand is defined as “a network of associations in the place consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design” (Zenker & Braun, 2010, p. 4). A place is a complex phenomenon that represents a large entity consisting of a variety of tangible and intangible components (Florek, 2005). Tangible components of place include its heritage sites, infrastructure, architecture, whereas intangible components consist of culture, traditions, practices (Hanna & Rowley, 2011).

A place brand refers to the particular geographical area which contains a promise to all of the current and potential stakeholders, including citizens, public bodies, companies, investors, and tourists (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Kavartzis, 2004). Scholars (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Zenker et al., 2017) suggest that the development of a place brand requires the incorporation and involvement of multiple stakeholders' views (i.e., residents, companies, and tourists), however, in reality very few studies have focused beyond the tourists' perspective (Hankinson, 2004; Kotsi et al., 2016). As Jiang et al. (2016) and Pike and Page (2014) mentioned, there is a need for a holistic view of the tourism industry of the supply and demand sides. Moreover, researchers (McCabe, Sharples, & Foster, 2012; Mistilis, Buhalis, & Gretzel, 2014; Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013) place paramount importance on effective stakeholder engagements in tourism. McCabe et al. (2012) stated that high importance should be placed on stakeholder collaboration in tourism and future research is needed, as “stakeholder theory suggests that anyone with a legitimate interest in the organization or its activities (often the case in tourism where one organization's activities can impact other people's or organization's views) can be considered a stakeholder, and that all stakeholders should merit consideration regardless of the functional value they can bring to the organization” (p. 38). Mistilis et al. (2014) indicated that “Department of Tourism needs to function as a catalyst for bringing together all stakeholder networks and disseminate knowledge and support the coordination of the entire network using agile and adaptable technologies. The government should take on a coordinating role, assigning strategy to their stakeholder networks and supporting the coherent engagement with its public at large” (p. 9). Waligo et al. (2013) mentioned that ineffective stakeholder participation is a significant obstacle to tourism.

Researchers (Kotsi et al., 2016; Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2002) consider place brand to be distinct from destination brand, which places more emphasis on attracting tourists (Kotsi et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2002), whereas place brand holds broader goals including but not limited to attracting tourism. Zenker et al. (2017) noted that place brand includes a destination brand where it is crucial to target both residents and tourist simultaneously.

## 2.2. Place brand, place identity, and place image

A successful place brand needs to be anchored in the identity (Cai, 2002; Go, Lee, & Russ, 2004; Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007; Van Rekom & Go, 2003) and authenticity (staged or real) of the place (Cohen, 1988; Cohen-Hattab & Kerber, 2004; Govers et al., 2007). Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) studied the relationship between place identity and place brand, and argued that there could be a static view of place identity which is something to be tapped, defined, and manipulated, whereas branding is the way to communicate place identity. As Govers and Go (2009) noted: “place identities are constructed through historical, political, religious and cultural discourses; through local knowledge, and influenced by power struggles” (p.17). In line with this view, if place brand is not deeply rooted in place identity, then it can have negative results, especially for the internal stakeholders (Houghton & Stevens, 2010; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

The term identity has been adopted in a variety of contexts and represents a multifaceted phenomenon (Balmer, 1995, 1998), which requires a multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary approach (Balmer, 2001, 2008; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Place identity can be referred to as ‘what the place is’. As highlighted by Florek (2005) and Qu et al. (2011), the place is a complex phenomenon that represents a large entity consisting of a variety of tangible (heritage sites, infrastructure, and architecture) and intangible (culture, traditions, and practices) components. Little however is known about: (1) the relationship between place identity, place brand and place image (Foroudi et al., 2016; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013); (2) entrepreneurship as a determinate of success of the place/destination life-cycle (Keller, 2012; Ryan, Mottiar, & Quinn, 2012; Weiermair, 2010); (3) importance of the place brand visual identity (Foroudi, Melewar, & Gupta, 2014, 2016); and (4) investigation of identity from multiple stakeholders' perceptions (Hultman et al., 2016; Martinez, 2016).

Martinez (2016) noted that “partnerships between stakeholders can lead to favorable associations, consistency and brand strength. We need a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of value co-creation among stakeholders involved in cities, regions or countries, and of the growing inter-regional and cross-border intersections, to better analyze complex systems of multiple many-to-many marketing exchanges from the joint perspective of supply and demand” (p. 87). To address these gaps, this research investigates the place identity, place brand and the main outcomes from multiple stakeholders' perceptions (supply and demand sides), it further develops a framework that links place identity, place brand with the image of region, and explores the connection to the entrepreneurship, place brand visual identity and authentic lifestyle.

## 3. Research methodology

### 3.1. Context

The research context is the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia. It has a population of over 3.8 million and 173 ethnic origins with the majority being Tatars (53.2%) and Russians (39.7%) (Tatarstan Strategy 2030, 2015). Tatarstan embraces a multinational culture that takes a prominent place, mainly determining intercultural, interfaith tolerance in a society which creates a unique spiritual heritage (Nagimova, Zainullina, & Bulatov, 2015). The capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, is one of the largest and most beautiful cities of Russia, listed in UNESCO World Heritage sites ([whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)). Tatarstan is located at the confluence of the Volga river and the Kama river (Russia's two largest waterways) and is in close proximity to the Russian capital city Moscow.

The capital of Tatarstan, Kazan, officially became ‘sports capital of Russia’ and has hosted major international events such as Universiada 2013, 2014, World Fencing Championships, and 2015 World Aquatics Championships. Kazan is also one of the host cities for the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2018 FIFA World Cup ([tpprt.ru](http://tpprt.ru));

tatarstan.ru). Also, Kazan will host the 45th WorldSkills Competition in 2019. Such top international events raised tourists' visitation (Gabbrakhmanov & Rubtsov, 2014) and produced extensive investments in infrastructure ([invest.tatarstan.ru](http://invest.tatarstan.ru), 2017). The target of the Tatarstan-2030 strategy is to become the core Eurasian region of Russia. Thus, it is essential for Tatarstan to build effective branding strategies to serve various market segments; hence, the research contributes to the policymakers and communication professionals that are involved in developing the tourism industry in Tatarstan.

### 3.2. Research design

A qualitative approach was adopted to evaluate the multifaceted phenomenon of place identity and place brand from both the ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ perspectives using various stakeholders (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hultman et al., 2016). Qualitative research was employed, because of the present lack of understanding of the phenomenon of place branding in the travel industry. As Churchill Churchill Jr. (1979) described, the qualitative study contains “a judgment sample of persons who can offer ideas and insights into the phenomenon” (p. 66). According to researchers, it is beneficial to combine focus groups and in-depth interviews (Foroudi et al., 2018, 2014; Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, & Foroudi, 2017). The results obtained from the focus groups and interviews assisted in obtaining additional data that were not established from the literature review.

The study was conducted between June 23 and September 30, 2015, in the Republic of Tatarstan by using a qualitative multi-method data collection procedure. The study was conducted in two stages, starting with the in-depth interviews with key informants and experts, following by in-depth interviews with tourists, and focus groups with local residents.

The research performed in-depth interviews with participants, which helped to gain a better grasp of the phenomena, and gather attitudinal and behavioral data (Foroudi et al., 2018, 2017, 2014; Shiu, Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2009). In-depth interviews were employed in this research as (1) the participants can answer in their own words, are not reliant on the researchers' preconceived bias and the interviews allow new insights to be gained into the topic of interest; (2) interviews allow time to examine the topic deeply with the respondent; and (3) they can be used to develop hypotheses, which, afterward, can be tested in a quantitative survey (Kolb, 2008).

In the first stage, the desk research (official documents and mass media - supply-side view), online research (social media, forums - demand-side view) and infrastructure audit were conducted. Those procedures gathered a considerable amount of archival data (Hultman et al., 2016) on the identity, brand, and image of Tatarstan. As highlighted by Hultman et al. (2016) from the supply-side perspective, first the desk research should be conducted by studying the materials from official documents and mass media. The official documents that were carefully reviewed: the official government Tatarstan strategy 2030 ([invest.tatarstan.ru](http://invest.tatarstan.ru), 2015), official tourism website visit-tatarstan ([visit-tatarstan.com](http://visit-tatarstan.com), 2015) and official Tatarstan government website tatarstan.ru (Tatarstan Strategy 2030, 2015). Mass media included the searches from newspapers about Tatarstan such as [Guardian.com](http://Guardian.com) (article-How to sell a country: the booming business of nation branding), [Transformmagazine.net](http://Transformmagazine.net) (article -Place branding: Tatarstan) and local newspapers (i. e. [business-gazeta.ru](http://business-gazeta.ru)).

Afterward, the main field study was conducted starting from the supply side and followed by the demand side. Following Foroudi et al. (2016), the supply side respondents were drawn from key informants and decision makers from organizations engaged in place branding and place image activities such as the State Committee on Tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan. The participants in the interviews had many years of experience concerning the tourism or creative industry and participated in the implementation of place branding and place image communications for tourism, export promotion, and investment

**Table 1**  
In-depth interviews with managers.  
Source: The Researchers.

Industry	Interview position	Interview approx. length	Industry	Interview position	Interview approx. length
Government	Chairman of the of the State Committee of Tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan (RT)	60 min	Private business in the sphere of tourism and services	Head of the Hotels and Restaurants Association	60 min
NGO	Executive director	90 min	Restaurant	Head Chief of the restaurant	90 min
NGO	Deputy executive director	30 min	Travel	Director of travel agency	30 min
NGO	Development Center for Tourism RT	60 min	Travel	President of the travel agencies association	60 min
Government	Deputy Minister of Culture RT	82 min	Travel	Executive director of the hotel; Director of travel agency	82 min
Government	Aide to the RT President responsible for the heritage	90 min	Hospitality	Head of the Hostel	90 min
Government	Aide to the RT President responsible for the cities planning in the region	65 min	Travel	Deputy director of a travel agency	65 min
NGO	Chairman of the Committee for External Relations And Tourism of the Executive Committee of Kazan	60 min	Restaurant	Managing director of the restaurant	60 min
Government	Mayor of the new tech Innopolis city in RT	30 min	Academic experts		
Government	Deputy Chief of Tatarstan Investment Development Agency (TIDA)	62 min	Education	Vice-president of the Academy of Sciences RT	30 min
NGO	Director of Tourist Information Center of Kazan	85 min	Education	Head of the department of museology, culture, and tourism in Kazan Federal University	62 min
NGO	Head of Tourist Information Center of Elabuga	90 min	Education	Head of the Department of Tourism and Service Povolzhsky in the Academy of Physical Culture, Sports and Tourism	85 min
Government	Employee of the State Committee of Tourism RT	32 min	Creative Cluster		
NGO	Deputy Director of the Museum Association	60 min	Media	Editor of the Kurag magazine	32 min
NGO	Deputy Director of a museum	60 min	Music	Organizer of musical Kremlin LIVE	60 min
NGO	Deputy Director for Development, Elabuga State Historical- Architectural and art museum- Reserve	90 min	Creative	Head of Academy of Creative Youth	60 min
			Food	Expert in Tatar cuisine	85 min

Topics discussed:

- The understanding of place identity, place brand and place image,
- The factors that influence place brand,
- Their experience of what they understand about place brand and its influences on place image, place brand visual identity, authentic lifestyle, and entrepreneurship,
- Discussion of elements of place identity and whether they influence place brand,
- The main perceived impacts of place brand.

**Table 2**  
In-depth interviews with tourists and focus group with native residents.  
Source: The Researchers.

	Occupation	Type	Interview approx. duration
1	Art consultant	Tourist from Russia	60 min
2	Partner in consulting company	Tourist from Russia	65 min
3	Interior designer	Tourist from Russia	30 min
4	Interior designer	Tourist from Russia	60 min
5	Housewife	Tourist from Russia	82 min
6	Partner in the law firm	Tourist from Russia	53 min
7	Blogger	Tourist from Russia	90 min
8	CEO in global company	Tourist from Russia	65 min
9	Public figure	Tourist from Russia	60 min
10	Head of the development company	Tourist from Russia	30 min
11	Head of bank department	Tourist from Russia	58 min
12	Screenwriter	Tourist from Russia	85 min
13	Stay at home wife	Tourist from Russia	90 min
14	Analyst	Tourist from Russia	32 min
15	Stay at home wife	Tourist from the UK	90 min
16	Stay at home husband	Tourist from the UK	30 min
17	HR specialist	Tourist from the UK	60 min
18	Interior designer	Tourist from the UK	82 min
19	Doctor	Tourist from Germany	75 min
20	Stay at home wife	Tourist from the UK	45 min
21	Director of the center	Tourist from Poland	60 min
22	Stay at home wife	Tourist from Poland	30 min
Workshops (focus groups) with native residents			
	Number of participants		
1	5		120 min
2	7		120 min
3	10		180 min
Topics discussed			
- The understanding of place identity, place brand and place image			
- The factors that influence place brand			
- Their experience of what they understand about place brand and its influences on place image, place brand visual identity, authentic lifestyle and entrepreneurship			
- Discussion of elements of place identity and whether they influence place brand			
- The main perceived impacts of place brand.			

attraction. Thereafter, the researchers conducted 31 in-depth interviews (see Table 1) with key informants and decision-makers, from 16 government and NGO organizations (1046 min in total), 8 from private business in the sphere of tourism and services (537 min in total), 3 academic experts (177 min in total), and 4 creative clusters (237 min in total).

The second phase comprised 22 interviews (1332 min in total) and three focus groups (total of 22 people, 420 min in total) with residents and tourists (Table 2). Focus groups provide an opportunity to examine the topic in-depth by stimulating discussion between members (Foroudi et al., 2014, 2017, 2018; Kolb, 2008) to explore new ideas during the process of gathering data. Marketing scholars (Bryman, 2012) have emphasized that focus groups are an exceptional method of collecting qualitative data. By conducting focus groups, the researcher advances the knowledge of what people think about the phenomenon. Also, “focus groups are the form of strategy in qualitative research in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue, product, service or program are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher” (Kumar, 2014a, p. 193).

The five main topics of the discussion are (1) the understanding of place identity, place brand and place image, (2) the factors that influence place brand, (3) their experience of what they understand about place brand and its influences on place image, place brand visual identity, authentic lifestyle and entrepreneurship, (4) discussion of elements of place identity and whether they influence place brand, and (5) the main perceived impacts of place brand.

The target tourist population sample is based on UNWTO (2017) data representing people under the age of 45 years, with an income of 30 thousand rubles per month, with higher education, middle and senior managers, representatives of creative professions, singles, and family, with children and without. As Craig and Douglas (2005) pointed

out, there is an increasing “tendency to adopt a more interactive approach to focus groups, to encourage consumers to participate actively in the discussion and to enlist them as a partner in the discussion and exploration of topics” which can take the form of consumer workshops, where “increasingly, therefore, the distinctions between observation, projective techniques, group interviews, and creativity groups are becoming blurred” (p. 229).

The demand side consisted not only of native residents (3 workshops conducted) but also tourists (22 interviews, as they were not available for focus groups). Interviews with 14 Russian Tourists (6 females and 8 males) and 8 Foreign Tourist from Europe and US (4 males and 4 females) aged from 18 to 45 years, with a minimum income of 30 thousand rubles per month. Three focus groups were conducted among residents with the first one consisting of 5 people (3 females and 2 males); the second included 7 respondents (4 females and 3 males); and the last one had 10 participants (5 females and 5 males). All respondents were within the 18–45 years age range.

Following the data collection and preliminary analysis, the 3 advisory committees - Public Council on Issues of Development Tourist Branch Republic of Tatarstan (11 members), Council of Tour Operators and Representatives' Travel Services (15 members), and Art Council, Artists, Art Directors, Graphic Designers, Architects, Arts, and Public participants (19 members) - were formed to discuss results.

Based on the topic of this study, a field research guide was developed that broadly outlined the place identity, place brand and place image as subjects of interest to facilitate the discussion. The qualitative investigation throughout the interviews and focus groups included general unstructured, open-ended questions, which helped to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, and gather attitudinal and behavioral data (Foroudi et al., 2014; Kolb, 2008; Shiu et al., 2009). Participants were initially contacted by telephone, and then by e-mail



to schedule a face-to-face meeting at a convenient time and place (Hanna & Rowley, 2015). The field research in the form of interviews and focus groups were between one and two hours long. The qualitative data (interviews and focus groups) were gathered up to the point of saturation (Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Knox & Burkard, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interviews and focus groups were conducted in the native language of the country (Russian) by a bilingual researcher, and at the end of the investigation, they were transcribed and then translated into English (Craig & Douglas, 2005). The research was in line with the aim of a “conversation-like dialogue rather than asking questions that impose categorical frameworks on informants’ understanding and experiences” (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994, p. 492). This study adopted Harpaz, Honig, and Coetsier’s (2002) recommendation of translation-back-translation as the “procedure used was to discuss each question and the alternatives in a small group of persons fluent in both languages” and “discussion occurred until agreement was reached as to the linguistic equivalence of the questions in both languages” (p. 236); this was conducted by three bilingual individuals proficient in English and Russian. All field studies were recorded using two recorders and transcribed verbatim. Participants’ names were replaced with a code for confidentiality reasons. The researcher adopted both manual and electronic tools in qualitative data analysis and management (Foroudi et al., 2014, 2016). The data were first manually coded and then imported into NVivo 10 to improve the trustworthiness of data. The data coding in NVivo consists of creating nodes, which is a combination of references about a particular topic, place, person or another area of interest (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). NVivo assisted in the gathering of various data (from supply and demand sides) together in one place and presenting the relevant themes and topics that conceptualized the research framework discussed below.

#### 4. Findings

Based on the qualitative study findings, the research framework (Fig. 1) was created supported by the literature. The study discovered a variety of patterns in the qualitative data regarding relevant keywords and behavioral themes (Hanzel, 2011) that were adopted to construct different categories to investigate further (Tran, Nguyen, Melewar, & Bodoh, 2015). By creating the research framework, the answers to the research questions were obtained. To answer the RQ1 (what are the main drivers of regional place brand?), the study results found the key dimensions of place identity and showed that place identity is the building block of a strong and favorable place brand through distilling the authentic national trait. Findings also suggest that place brand can result in favorable place image, place brand visual identity, authentic lifestyle, and entrepreneurship. Three main moderators are identified as place experience, communication, tourist motivation. Therefore, the study resulted in specifying the regional place brand framework that identifies place identity as the primary driver of the place brand with the main outcomes, such as place image, place brand visual identity, authentic lifestyle, and entrepreneurship. The following section of the paper describes the results based on the main concepts of this research.

##### 4.1. Place identity

Place identity in this study refers to ‘what the place is’, as in marketing literature, corporate identity refers to ‘what we are’ (actual identity) (Balmer, Stuart, & Greyser, 2009, p. 7; Foroudi et al., 2017, 2018). Results from the qualitative study showed the significance of the key themes and words informing the place identity perception. Based on the data analysis, the main themes were: (1) tangible elements including food, accommodation, heritage sites, transport, town planning, architecture; and (2) intangible elements which included hospitality, visitors’ information, culture, practices, history, religion, people, politics, environment, entertainment, and security. The findings are broadly

consistent with existing studies concerning places (Florek, 2005; Govers et al., 2007; Govers & Go, 2009; Qu et al., 2011). As Govers and Go (2009) noted “place identities are constructed through historical, political, religious and cultural discourses; through local knowledge, and influenced by power struggles” (p. 17) and represents a multifaceted phenomenon comprising the tangible (heritage sites, infrastructure, architecture) and intangible components (culture, traditions, practices).

There is a general alignment of the views of the supply and demand side. However, the supply side mainly notices positive aspects, whereas the demand also pays attention to negative aspects (as a potential way to improve the place) (Brandano, Osti, & Pulina, 2018; Evren & Kozak, 2018; Weigert, 2018). From the supply side perspective, the following statements, which identify the identity of the place, were highlighted as ‘the main advantage of Tatarstan in the eyes of its inhabitants – tolerance, cultures, ethnicities, and religions’, ‘We sell the East’, ‘Our main feature – Islam’, ‘We sell the coexistence of Christianity and Islam’, ‘The uniqueness of Tatarstan is that there is no language barrier to a foreign culture’, ‘Great personalities from Tolstoy, Chaliapin to Pasternak and Tsvetaeva’, ‘Rich in history, culture, architecture, music, sports’, ‘Largest industrial production’, ‘Advanced digital technology, Innopolis’, ‘Beautiful natural wealth, Volga, fields, woods and parks’, ‘Own cuisine and special delicious food’.

The demand side also highlighted the points mentioned above. They noted that in Tatarstan are “Kind-hearted people”, “Positive emotions”, “Coziness”, “Cleanness”, “Peace”, “Security”, “Interesting objects”, “Cuisine”, “All the people with whom I spoke were very polite and friendly”, “The first thing that strikes in the capital of Tatarstan - It’s neat. A lot of green”, “Kazan was for me this culinary capital of Russia. I fell in love with the Tatar cuisine with the first echnomak! Generally during walking to a variety of restaurants, cafes, of course, it is worth noting Kazan’s love for the cuisine. It was in all the places you visit”.

However, the participants from the demand side also mentioned some negative comments in relation to Tatarstan. For example, “Newly made things, the lack of authentic experiences”, “Difficulties with roads and public transport”, “Insufficient number and variety of the places (Especially for children and families)”, and “Quality standards do not correspond to the requested price”. The results also illustrate that the participants from both supply and demand sides stated that Tatarstan holds a unique notion of authenticity (authentic national trait), which is rooted in the identity of the place and should be used to create the brand of the place.

##### 4.2. Archetypal nation trait

Archetypal nation trait represents the DNA of the place (Gunn & Var, 2002) with the archetypal characteristics strengthening the identity of the place (Forristal & Lehto, 2009). Gunn and Var (2002) pointed out that every place holds a built-in characteristic or DNA. Based on our study results, the place brand is rooted in place identity through an archetypal nation trait, that is distilled from the identity of the place (Fig. 2). The archetypal nation trait can be related to the brand personalities and brand archetypes, as all successful brands retain personalities (Kotler & Gertner, 2002) and use the archetypal characteristics to reinforce a strong and recognizable identity (Forristal & Lehto, 2009). Brand personality is frequently considered as an efficient way of emotionally bonding with current and potential consumers, as it holds a self-expressive value for the consumers (Forristal & Lehto, 2009). Scholars also pointed out that vivid personality traits that reinforce a brand essence are increasingly recognized as significant to the success of a place brand (Forristal & Lehto, 2009) and product brand (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006).

In addition, the archetypal nation trait can be an essential factor for the brand as it is related to symbolic or mythic significance. Based on the Jungian archetype theory (Jung, 1954), myths are built on archetypes that transcend communication (Tsai, 2006). Faber and Mayer (2009) noted that archetypal qualities are associated with consumer

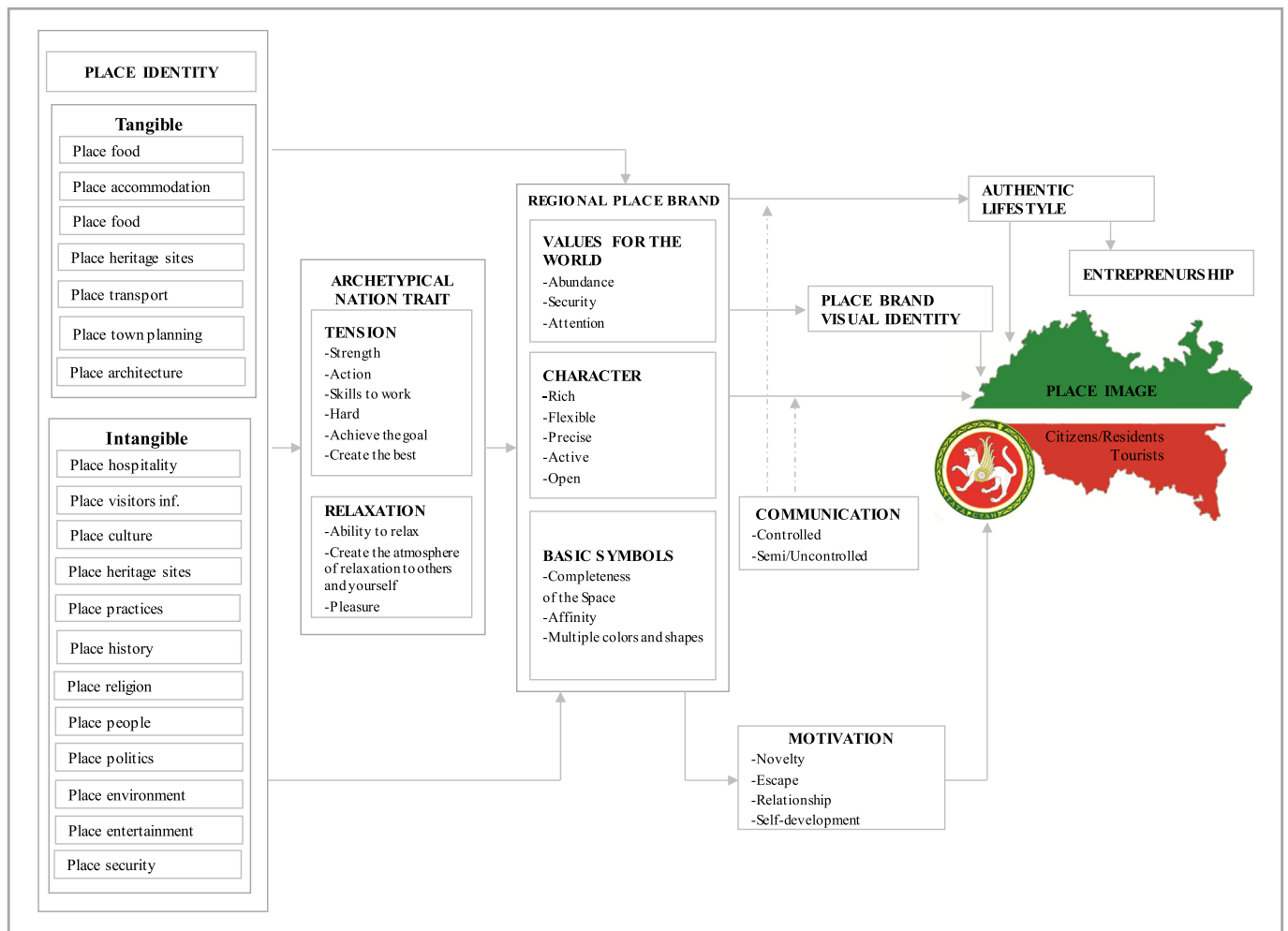


Fig. 1. The proposed research framework.



Fig. 2. Archetypal nation trait.

choices. Forristal and Lehto (2009) studied the native species in relation to brand personality and brand archetype, as a building element of a place/destination branding and found it to be an important notion. Similarly, respondents here highlighted:

*“Tatars are an ancient nation that has own distinctive character traits*

*distinguishing them from other nations. In general, these are positive features. The Tatars are spoken of as a clean, hardworking people, ready to always come to the rescue. This is also supplemented by a desire for knowledge, patience, honesty, and generosity. They stand out for such qualities as courage and enterprise. Tatars are tolerant of other nations - they did not interfere with the lives of strangers. The Tatars historically tend not to publicize their internal problems. In society, the role of the family is clearly defined, and in the family the position of parents, representatives of the older generation, children. In short, Tatars make Tatarstan”.* (I2).

Based on the findings, the archetypal nation trait is a part of the distillation process to build the place brand. Mayes (2008) referred to place branding as a “practice or art of distilling the essence of the place” (p. 215). The ‘distillation’ process is presented in Fig. 2 and two aspects of the authentic national trait are illustrated in Fig. 3. Participants identified the strong emotional connection to the ‘Tatar’ national characteristics that authors broadly divide into ‘tension’ and ‘relaxation’ characteristics (Fig. 5).

#### 4.3. Place brand

The place brand refers to the particular geographical area which contains a promise to all of the current and potential stakeholders, including citizens, public bodies, companies, investors, tourists (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Kavaratzis, 2004). Findings revealed that to build a favorable place brand it needs to be anchored in the identity of the place (Cai, 2002; Govers et al., 2007). It is particularly important that the place identity holds positive features as it will

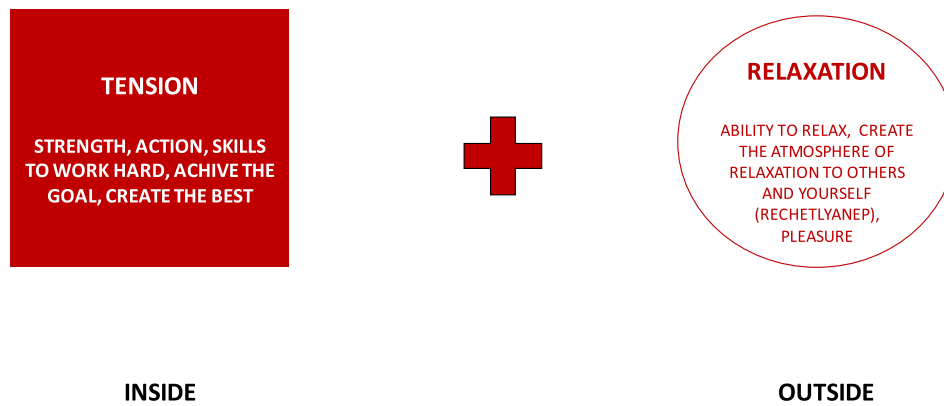


Fig. 3. Authentic trait consists of two aspects.

be mirrored in the place brand, as a negative place identity can result in a negative brand (Qu et al., 2011). Based on participants' responses and the two aspects of the archetypical nation trait discussed above, the following brand was created in Tatarstan by INSTID Company (Fig. 2). Participants mentioned “When I walk around the Republic's capital, Kazan, I feel secure and free. There is always something happening around and at least once a year a grand international event is taking place, like Universiade-2013. In Tatarstan, I am attracted to its rich history and heritage sites such as Bolgar, Kremlin and newly built facilities like Kazan Arena.” A participant also said,

*“Thirty years ago in Tatarstan, a huge automobile factory “KAMAZ” was built. The construction was so big and successful that many foreigners came to see it. Once the Tatar builder invited the French journalist Andre Remakly to visit the village of his parents. The journalist later wrote –“Tatar hospitality knows no bounds!”. He told how cordially he was received in a village house. And most of all you know what struck the Frenchman in Tatar hospitality? “The guest, according to custom, takes the whole village, he must move from family to family, even if it lasts a whole week!” - Andre Remakly wrote with astonishment and admiration. Of course, the French, who read about it, was also surprised and delighted.”*

The holistic place brand model from the multi-stakeholders point of view presents the key features to define the place brand of Tatarstan and consisted of three equally important elements which are basic symbols, values for the world and character (Fig. 4). Values for the world and character, which are part of Tatarstan place brand, communicate the value of Tatarstan that encapsulates its local culture and communicates the region's unique history, demographics, and outlook, that have been passed on from generations, regardless of people's ethnicities and religion (Transformmagazine.net, 2017). It is a set of values that have persisted into modern-day Tatarstan (theGuardian.com, 2017).

Values for the world and character are described in more details in Table 3. The values for the world represent the substantive part that determines which Tatarstan memory cell should occupy the minds of tourists. These are three things that any tourist should in one form or another discover if they ask about Tatarstan. This is the key form in which it is necessary to present information about Tatarstan to target audiences and with the help of which it is possible to make decisions regarding the development of the tourism sector of Tatarstan. The three main recognized elements are (1) *abundance* (fulfillment, diversity, extensive choices, everything that please the soul, and inexhaustible reserves), (2) *security* (infinite tranquility, only positive things can happen, nothing to fear, full relaxation, and peace and rest), (3) *attention* (personal attention to everyone and each guest feels special, they are happy to see each guest, they work especially for them, they are greeted wholeheartedly).

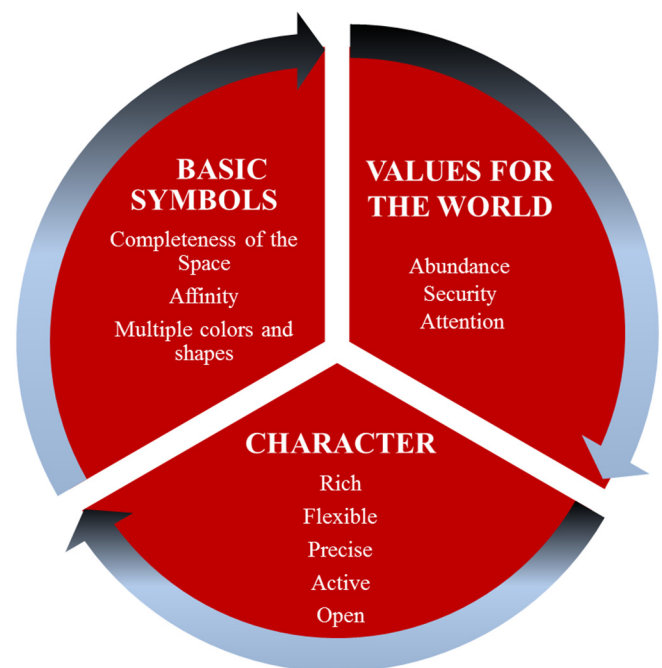


Fig. 4. Place brand model.

Appendix 1 shows the findings from the qualitative study regarding the key characters in place branding based on seven types of communication (written, oral, nonverbal, color, form, composition, and structure) which were measured through five key elements (rich, flexible, precise, active, and open). Based on the elements discussed above, the Tatarstan place brand concept (Realnoevremya.com, 2016) was built, as illustrated in Table 4. The main message of the Tatarstan place brand concept is ‘Tatarstan: Land of 1001 delights’ (Realnoevremya.com, 2016). The united common property of the people of Tatarstan was found and presented in the ‘Tatarstan: Land of 1001 delights’ formula represented by two main aspects. ‘1001’ represents a great variety, hard work, which people in Tatarstan input (invest) in its guests, in the development of the industry, products, services (their hospitality). A ‘delight’ is in acquaintance with Tatarstan way of life, culture, points of interest, food, and entertainments.

#### 4.4. Place brand visual identity

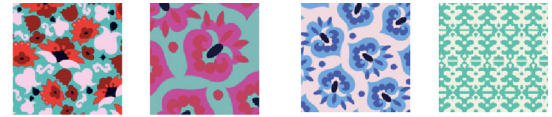
Place brand's visual identity represents the coherent and consistent brand visual representation (Foroudi, 2019; Hanna & Rowley, 2015) of the corporate name, logo, slogan, and color, and company typography (Foroudi, 2019; Foroudi et al., 2014). The participants expressed that



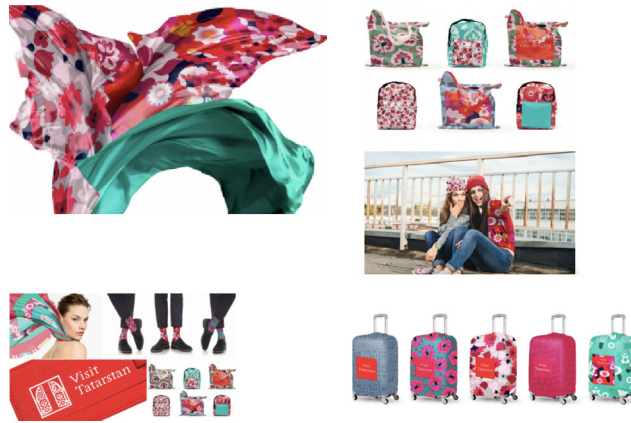
Logo



Patterns



Souvenirs



Website

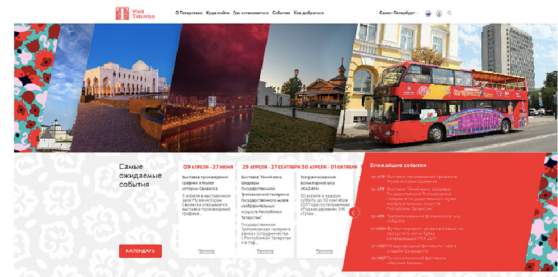


Fig. 5. Place brand visual identity of Tatarstan (VisitTatarstan).

Table 3

Place brand: Values for the world.

Values for the world	
Meaning	The values for the world represent the substantive part that determines which Tatarstan memory cell should occupy the minds of tourists. These are three things that any tourist should in one form or another recall if they ask about Tatarstan. This is the key in which it is necessary to present information about Tatarstan to target audiences and with the help of which it is possible to make decisions regarding the development of the tourism sector of Tatarstan.
Elements	<p><b>ABUNDANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfillment</li> <li>Diversity</li> <li>Wide choices</li> <li>Everything that pleases the soul</li> <li>Inexhaustible reserve</li> </ul> <p><b>SECURITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infinite tranquility</li> <li>Only positive things can happen</li> <li>Nothing to fear</li> <li>Full relaxation</li> <li>Peace and rest</li> </ul> <p><b>ATTENTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal attention to everyone</li> <li>Each guest feels special; they are happy to see 'them, they work especially for them, they are greeted wholeheartedly</li> </ul>

for them it is crucial to have an actual visual representation of the brand, as they need to have something to 'share' and 'talk about'. A key expert mentioned "place brand visual identity of the place represents for me the common visual trajectory of movement, common standards and rules of the game. For our republic, the priority is to create/communicate a Tourism brand of Tatarstan, and from it, its visual representation, as tourism is the major area of potential growth. The tourism industry in particular needs a common trajectory of movement, common standards and rules of the game. Most of the projects for the development of tourist destinations in the world and Russia are, as a rule, reduced to enumerating the main attractions or certain advantages of the territory. In practice, it turns out that the regions become very similar to each other." Besides, one of the critical experts stated that.

*"Tourism is inseparably linked with the territory, and it needs to be*

*effectively managed. VisitTatarstan will help us in this. Now tourists see that there is Kazan, and there is practically no mention of Tatarstan on tourist portals. Many people confuse Kazan with Kazakhstan. Naturally, everyone has heard about the Universiade and other major events, but not everyone knows why to go to Tatarstan if there are no major events. The program opens a new horizon - will make the tourist come and visit any corner of the republic. Its goal is to make tourism an important source of Tatarstan's welfare."*

This study outcome illustrated the significance of the place to focus on having a memorable place brand visual identity. Hanna and Rowley (2015) stated that "leadership must establish structures that convey coherent and consistent brand messages through the place brand's visual identity" (p. 103) and emphasized that in contrast with corporate branding, the place branding involves multiple stakeholders that need to be captured by a collaboration of those multiple stakeholders. However, authors (Chen & Chen, 2000; Dooley & Bowie, 2005; Hankinson, 2009; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Martinez & Pina, 2003), warned of the dilution effect when many stakeholders are involved. It can be useful to create a portfolio of place brand visual identities (Braun & Zenker, 2010; Hanna & Rowley, 2015). Therefore, it is highly advised for the places, based on core identity and created place brand elements, to build a sub-place brand visual identity's from tourism, investment, study – based on the core goals and unique characters of the place and on the multi-stakeholder cooperation! All those sub-brands should be presented in the main place of brand visual identity.

4.5. Authentic lifestyle

Authentic lifestyle represents the actual articulation of the place brand and archetypical nation trait in the form of activities. Giddens (1991) referred to the lifestyle practices as the decisions not only about "how to act but who to be" (p. 81). Scholars (Gahwiler & Havitz, 1998; Gross & Brown, 2006; Kim, Scott, & Crompton, 1997; Kuentzel & McDonald, 1992; Ryan & Cave, 2005) adopted lifestyle as a dimensional component or as a self-contained dimension labeled as 'centrality to lifestyle' and there is a need for further research on this subject (Gross & Brown, 2006). Ryan and Cave (2005) studied Auckland's image and researched people's lifestyle there. They found it "perceived

**Table 4**  
Tatarstan brand concept.

Tatarstan: Land of 1001 delights	
Concept	<p><i>It's nice to be back, where you are loved.</i>  <i>Where all issues have been taken care of.</i>  <i>And give time to the things that matter.</i>  <i>You sail along the river of Pleasures.</i>  <i>You can not see what awaits you in the future, but you know that it will be ok.</i>  <i>Tatarstan will remember you.</i></p>
Tatarstan: Land of 1001 delights	<p>This is a motivation for Tatarstan to create, build a richer infrastructure, and expand the geography of the tourist objects on the whole territory of the republic. This is Tatarstan lifestyle. This is a manifestation of the traditions of Tatarstan.            We are hospitable not because we are waiting for praise, but because of our character, we can not behave any other way. Tourists will see it. We do not deliver happiness to someone; we make ourselves happy first. The fact is that we can do so many things, and we do it.            We use the sight; there is a river- we use the river. Everything that grows lives, exists. The land of Tatarstan also is used. All these are the resources to create Authentic experience and Pleasure.</p>
1001	<p>Here, "1001" indicates a great variety, hard work, which people in Tatarstan input (invest) in its guests, in the development of the industry, products, services. At the same time, there is a hint of the Eastern Tradition; there is apparent cultural binding.</p>
Delights	<p><u>Delights</u> mean complete satisfaction, saturation when the tourist receives everything that pleases the soul.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● from walking around the city or travel to nature</li> <li>● from visiting cultural events</li> <li>● from extreme sports</li> <li>● from literary readings</li> <li>● from working with business and State</li> <li>● from food or cooking</li> <li>● from the use of products</li> </ul>

as a busy, brash, and commercial city. These factors contribute to a lifestyle wherein Aucklanders are seen as being more materialistic than others in New Zealand" (p. 146). Also, other aspects of Aucklanders' lifestyle were highlighted as "shopping, the city's ethnic minorities, and Auckland's café society" (Ryan & Cave, 2005, p. 146). Gross and Brown (2006) researched South Australia as a lifestyle tourism destination and found that "South Australia offers tourists high levels of attraction, self-expression, and enjoyment of food and wine, however, tourism experiences do not occupy a central role in tourists' lifestyle" (p. 699).

Cohen (2011) pointed out the importance of lifestyle consumption as a means of socially stratifying individuals and a central notion of discussion around consumer culture. Authentic consumption transforms to the life project where "the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily dispositions" (Featherstone, 1987, p. 59) are combined into a distinctive lifestyle.

The results of the study pointed out that the articulation and explanation of the authentic lifestyle in its modern interpretation based on the place brand is the key to unlocking the Tatarstan region's potential. Regional infrastructure and brand communication need to follow this authentic blueprint. The findings show that residents value the unique lifestyle rooted in the ancient civilization, different ethnicities, equal measures of traditional Islam and Christianity, spread over fertile lands and river throughways and distilled through the place identity, archetypical nation trait, place brand and evolved in a modern context. It brought about an intriguing and genial blend of wisdom, ways of living, and rules of conduct.

For visitors, the communicated unique lifestyle is prominent in all aspects of life. For them, this is an opportunity to discover the land of the region, to learn its features and secrets, to try out its 'salt'. Developing the authentic Tatarstan lifestyle in its modern interpretation was the key to unlocking the region's potential. It is crucial not only to explicitly articulate the modern authentic lifestyle that will build a favorable impression of the place for visitors/investors, tourists, and residents (place image), in order to promote entrepreneurship but also to improve the infrastructure of the place.

Based on the study outcome, authentic lifestyle builds on the place identity, archetypical nation trait, place brand and includes (1) *authentic lifestyle in action* representing the actual articulation of the place brand and archetypical nation trait in the form of activities. This includes events such as: Literary festival, Quest for symbolism of poetry, Silver Age in Chistopol, and Festival – analogue of 'Kazantip', (2)

Development project *modern Tatarstan's cuisine*: The contemporary Tatarstan's cuisine should start from the principle of land, local ingredients are given modern interpretations, actual formats, characteristics of modern way of life, thinking, (3) *Success stories* of the residents, tourists, investors (storytelling) with actual people. For example, a chef, jeweler, businessman, and (4) *Create symbolic objects* that can contain the authentic modern lifestyle through symbolic objects. For instance, souvenirs that are practical, aesthetically expressing regional uniqueness, kettles and tea sets; a collection of herbs, aromatic candles, practical crafts, regional delicacies in a new/shape – form. Through an authentic modern lifestyle that people can relate to themselves based on their emotions, they can help to build a favorable place image and entrepreneurship culture.

#### 4.6. Place image

Place image refers to the overall immediate impression left in the minds of visitors/tourists/residents and represents an asset, which allows places to differentiate and increase their chance of success (Foroudi et al., 2014, 2016). Similarly, Styliadis, Biran, Sit, and Szivas (2014) identified place image as a combination of impressions, beliefs, ideas that people have about the place, representing the mental construct based on the impressions gathered from the vast amount of information about the place. Additionally, "it is argued that comprehensive place image studies are an effective vehicle for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of tourism destinations" (Selby & Morgan, 1996, p. 287). However, scholars (Elliot & Papadopoulos, 2016; Rojas-Mendez, 2013) stated that regardless of the significance of the concept of place image in the way it influences people, the concept is still met with a lack of depth in research. In particular, researchers (Foroudi et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2016, 2017) recognized that there is a gap in the studies related to the relationships between place branding, place identity, authenticity and place image.

Results from the qualitative study showed the significance of the construction of a favorable place image for the successful development of the region. The findings illustrated that through a modern authentic lifestyle, people can relate to place based on emotional bonds which can help to build favorable place image. As respondents noted "to my mind, Tatarstan now is trying to modernize and package the Tatar lifestyle that embodies the traditional uniqueness but at the same time adds a modern twist. It feels in the events, the way they open to the international community

and all the renovation in infrastructure including the new city Innopolis. This is a grand regional challenge that takes time. But I think they are definitely on the right track. As when I go to international events outside Tatarstan, they mostly know Kazan (capital of Tatarstan) as a modern and diverse city/region in Russia". Furthermore, a key expert mentioned that,

*"In a way, the Image of Tatarstan region is a view of the future, Tatarstan is trying to be based on what it has now and what it has communicated. There is a lot of work to be done, but there is a move in the right direction".*

Thus, the study highlights that powerful place brand should be anchored in the identity of the place (Cai, 2002; Govers et al., 2007) which can result in the positive image (Qu et al., 2011). Places can adopt a favorable place image to enhance the tourism sector, business activities and overall investment climate for import and export (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Kotler et al., 1999; Papadopoulos, 2004; Qu et al., 2011).

#### 4.7. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as a favorable environment for new business ventures' creation (Keller, 2012; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). It was highlighted by the participants that by providing the authentic modern lifestyle, this would positively affect the culture of entrepreneurship and create the entrepreneurship environment. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in place competitiveness (Komppula, 2014). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) referred to entrepreneurship as a new venture and small business development, and Keller (2012) emphasized the role of entrepreneurship in the growth of the place. Participants noted "as an entrepreneur myself; I can say that some of the most important are policies and practices that places/cities/regionals adopt, which in a way should be 'given' factors for any place that is attracting entrepreneurs. The culture of entrepreneurship should be developed by building efficient incubators and accelerators based on the best global practices (Hornsby, Messersmith, Rutherford, & Simmons, 2018). Not only should all of this be based on best international practices but also it should have unique/authentic features to attract to a particular place. Why this place and not the other? That particular 'thing' can be a lifestyle that adds quality to life and all its areas. One of the tourists' states,

*In Tatarstan, I feel, the infrastructure is getting there by building Innopolis city, very special economic zones and preferential tax systems but it still lacks the comfortable logistics between all of these as a whole. In a way, the dots are not connecting yet. There are huge will and action, but it takes time and strategic thinking. I am looking forward to seeing the Tatarstan entrepreneurship culture flourishing, attracting international talents and growing its own."*

Another participant added,

*"I think entrepreneurs by being creative souls, are lured to the quality of life, in line with the talented, cheap workforce that they can use. By creating a lifestyle in the region that fosters creativity and training a talented workforce, they can build a favorable entrepreneurship culture that positively influences the economic development of the region."*

Weiermair (2010) noted that innovative entrepreneurship could determine the success of the place/destination life-cycle. Respondents also indicated that more profound policies and practices emphasizing the entrepreneurship growth should be developed.

Thus, the respondents highlighted the necessity of the policy change and improvement to create the business finance support programmes for small and medium-size entrepreneurs, establish stable and clear guidelines for business, providing a qualified workforce by developing the apprentice programmes. The outcome of this study and scholars (Keller, 2012; Ryan et al., 2012) highlighted that the entrepreneurial effort plays a crucial role in the growth and development of place/destination. Thus, extra attention should be put on improvements in the

policy and practices in this area.

#### 4.8. Communication: moderating between place brand and place image

Communication relates to the harmonized messages distributed in a synchronized manner via controlled (design, website, promotion) and semi/uncontrolled (word of mouth, public relations, media relations, social media marketing) channels to promote the place brand (Foroudi et al., 2016, 2017; Tran et al., 2015). Individually, the broad importance is placed on the website of the place, as scholars (Foroudi et al., 2016, 2018; Rodriguez-Molina, Frias-Jamilena, & Castaneda-García, 2015) noted that perceptions of the place could be improved by designing new websites or optimizing the existing ones. Similarly, Molina, Fernández, Gómez, and Aranda (2017) stated that one of the most essential and visible faces of place/city/destination online branding strategies is a website and social media.

All the respondents pointed out that communication is the key ingredient on the road to a successful place image. For example, "to reach the strong impression of the company, the right messages should be improved by communicating through the right channels. I use social media to see the place promise; what the place is like to be perceived, then if I like what I see on social media to go deeper I would go to the website of the place. Then if it doesn't meet my expectations, I don't think I will be interested in visiting that place. Also, PR is crucial – what official media says about the place coupled with actual people's reviews about it. I would perhaps add brand ambassadors' communication, in the form of people from that place that I met rather than an official brand ambassador in the media" (academic expert). A focus group participant added,

*"To me, Tatarstan has not communicated well yet of what it has to offer. More thought and strategic thinking need to be added to align all the communication to a particular goal and strategy".*

Tran et al. (2015) categorize communication online and offline. Foroudi et al. (2017) classified it as controlled (design, website, promotion) and semi/uncontrolled communication (word of mouth, public relations, media relations, social media marketing). As Foroudi et al. (2017) noted: "organizations harmonize both internal and external communications to generate favorable images of the company for target audiences" (p. 574). Places should harmonize both internal and external communications and controlled and semi/uncontrolled communications to achieve a favorable place image and entrepreneurship. It is important for decision-makers to realize which communication tools, channels, and messages are more powerful in the minds of stakeholders (Kitchen, 2005; Tran et al., 2015). It is also vital that all the sources of communication transmit consistent images to stakeholders (Cian & Cervai, 2014; Tran et al., 2015), where communication contributions must speak the 'language' of the target audience (Mast, Huck, & Zerfass, 2005) and write in a conversational voice (Weil, 2006; Willi, Melewar, & Broderick, 2013). The findings of this study highlighted the significance of communication to create positive images (Ageeva, Melewar, Foroudi, Dennis, & Jin, 2018; Foroudi et al., 2017; Tran et al., 2015) and entrepreneurship.

#### 4.9. Motivation: moderating between place brand and place image

The motivation of the visitor/tourist is defined as an internal force generated from the need for visitor/tourist (Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014; Solomon, 2014). Respondents highlighted four main motivations: "Novelty, Escape, Relationship, Self-development", which relate to widening the mental and emotional horizons. The findings are in line with the world trends of global travelers' motivation. The main idea behind it is authenticity, where people ask themselves "who are we?" and aim to become 'pioneers'. They are mainly interested in the real life of real people, unique in all their manifestations, blurring the edges between tourism, investment, and territories.

Previous researchers (Jang & Feng, 2007; Mak, Wong, & Chang,



2009; Nowacki, 2009; Pratminingsih et al., 2014; Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006) noted that travel motivation and place/destination image are the fundamental motives for traveling behavior (i.e., intention to re-visit/stay; intention to recommend) and play a crucial role in grasping the decision making process of critical stakeholders. Pratminingsih et al. (2014) found that motivation positively influences the destination image. Similarly, according to Foroudi et al. (2016), motivation and place/destination image influence the intention to re-visit.

## 5. Conclusion

This research demonstrated that place brand should be based on the place identity through the construction of the archetypical national trait (first nation trait). Favorable place brand should be adopted to attract talents, tourists, investors and keep the residence (place image), instill entrepreneurship by creating the authentic lifestyle. The results of this study support the dialogue concerning the regional place identity and place brand from the supply and demand sides' perspectives. Since the introduction of 'VisitTatarstan' tourism brand, the tourists' inflow has increased by 6.7%, according to the State Committee on Tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan ([realnoevremya.com](http://realnoevremya.com), 2016), which is one of the main aims of the Tatarstan development strategy.

The results of this study bridged the gaps by identifying the relationships between place branding, place identity, authenticity and place image (Foroudi et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2016, 2017). In addition, the current research is in line with the Hultman et al. (2016) city branding study of Leeds city (UK) from the perspective of both brand steerers (supply) and brand consumers (demand), and Martinez (2016) research on place branding in Colombia from joint supply and demand (multiple stakeholders') perspective by using qualitative multi-method data collection procedures. In this study, supply-side consists of conducting desk study (official documents and mass media), in-depth interviews, advisory committee, and infrastructure audit and observation in 6 main cities (Kazan-regional capital, Chistopol, Elabuga, Naberezhnye Chelny, Sviyazhsk, Bulgaria), while the demand side consists of online research, interviews, and workshops. The target groups for the study on the supply side are represented by the key informants and decision makers (i.e. government and non-government organizations in tourism and creative industries, and academic experts in the area), while the demand side consisted of the place users (i.e., residence, tourists and international investors) (Martinez, 2016). The findings of this research are of importance to academics and decision-makers, as it not only contributes to the discussion regarding the place identity and place brand notions but also provides practical advice and examples of how to create a place brand rooted in a place identity.

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

There is an increased interest in the research on place identity and place brand (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Foroudi et al., 2016; Hultman et al., 2016; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Qu et al., 2011), in particular, from the multiple stakeholder perspective (Hultman et al., 2016; Martinez, 2016) and in the emerging market context (Dinnie et al., 2010; Foroudi et al., 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009), such as Russia (Eidelman et al., 2016). However, there is still little discussion about how place a brand is created and its main outcomes and even less research addresses both demand and supply perspectives. Therefore, this exploratory study has attempted to fill this gap, by evaluating the process of place brand formation from the multi-stakeholder viewpoint. This research constructed the place brand framework (Fig. 1), as well as identified the essential dimensions of the place identity, broken down into tangible and intangible groups.

First, it contributes to the discussion of place identity and place brand by clarifying the concepts and construction of the research framework, as little is known about the relationship between place

identity and place image (Foroudi et al., 2016; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The study highlights the notion that powerful place brand should be anchored in the identity of the place (Cai, 2002; Govers et al., 2007) which can result in a positive image (Qu et al., 2011). Place brand represents a comprehensive interdisciplinary concept and is still an emerging discipline that needs to be further developed (Kotsi et al., 2016; Noronha, Coca-Stefaniak, & Morrison, 2017; Zenker et al., 2017). The authors suggest that there is a great need for a holistic approach to place brand.

Second, it adds to the understanding of the phenomenon by combining multiple stakeholders' perspective in line with the scholars' (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Zenker et al., 2017) view that suggested that place brand conceptually required aligned multiple stakeholders' views (i.e., residents, companies, and tourists). However, very few studies looked beyond the tourists' perspective (i.e., Hankinson, 2004; Kotsi et al., 2016) and more are needed (Hultman et al., 2016; Martinez, 2016). Martinez (2016) noted that "partnerships between stakeholders can lead to favorable associations, consistency and brand strength. We need a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of value co-creation among stakeholders involved in cities, regions or countries, and of the growing inter-regional and cross-border intersections, to better analyze complex systems of multiple many-to-many marketing exchanges from the joint perspective of supply and demand" (p. 87).

Third, this research contributes to the understanding of the place of brand construction in an emerging context (Dinnie et al., 2010; Foroudi et al., 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Little is known about place brand in Russia (Eidelman et al., 2016; Klyukanov et al., 2008; Mingaleva & Bunakov, 2014), in particular in relation to the regional level (Eidelman et al., 2016).

### 5.2. Managerial implications

To enhance advantage in an increasingly competitive world, cities/regions/countries strategize to improve their development by focusing on the place identity, place brand and place image improvements (Aureli & Forlani, 2016; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Kotler et al., 1999; Papadopoulos, 2004; Qu et al., 2011). To improve the positioning of places, the perception about them from the key stakeholders should be enhanced (Foroudi et al., 2016; Kumar, 2014b; Middleton & Clarke, 2012). As the construction of the place brand is a costly and demanding task (Foroudi et al., 2016, 2017), decision-makers should take great care in developing a favorable place brand that will create a positive impression about the place. Hence, it is paramount for the decision makers and place consultants to understand the phenomenon of the place brand formation and distinguish between the place identity and place brand from multiple stakeholders' perspective; that is clarified in this study by creating the place brand framework and providing an example of place brand formation.

Also by combining the demand and supply sides, this research contributes to the understanding of multiple stakeholders perception on place brand. The combined views from multiple stakeholders are found to be very useful to present 'true' identity of the place, as it is noticed that the supply side mostly mentioned the positive side; the demand side emphasized both positive and negative outlook, with the view of how the place can be improved. Thus, it is highly advisable for the decision makers to take into consideration multi-stakeholder perspectives when considering the place brand formation. Based on this study, multiple stakeholders from demand and supply sides need to be involved to uncover the place identity and to build the place brand.

Based on the study findings, the authors suggest to government organizations that are in charge of the place branding strategies that they should implement 'the place brand center' with a strong expert management structure that targets group-specific sub-categories, such as tourist, residents, and investment, which is in line with the views of scholars (Braun & Zenker, 2010; Hanna & Rowley, 2015). Braun and Zenker (2010) suggested the need for a portfolio of place brand visual

identities, and this is found to be relevant, based on this study outcome. Thus, concerning the Tatarstan context, Tatarstan government are advised to add to the already created tourist visual identity (VisitTatarstan), the visual identity for residents (Be Tatarstan), for students (Study in Tatarstan), and refresh the brand for investors (Invest in Tatarstan - already exists). The primary website should be created as BrandTatarstan with a separate link to sub-brand categories (i.e., Visit Tatarstan, Invest in Tatarstan, Study in Tatarstan). Currently, the Visit Tatarstan ([visit-tatarstan.com](http://visit-tatarstan.com), 2017) brand that was already created based on this study is successfully operating and widely used by residents and tourists.

However, it is import to keep the core identity, unified message and attributes to strengthen the core message through the sub place brand visual identities. The consistency of core identity is critical for the success of long-term oriented place branding practices (Qu et al., 2011). Therefore, clarifying the place identity and creating a favorable place brand should form the crucial parts of the place making efforts of the government organizations, as a part of the economic development strategy. Thus, it is paramount for the government tourism organization, brand administrators and brand consultancies and consultants specializing in understanding aspects of place identity that is regarded as a foundation of the place brand.

### 5.3. Limitations and directions for future studies

The research is exploratory and intended to call for further research into the concepts and definitions related to place identity and place

brand formation from multi-stakeholders' perception. As for every research, this study is not without its limitations. The study was conducted in a single setting (i.e., Tatarstan region in Russia). In relation to other countries, the results might differ. Another limitation can be linked to the qualitative design of the research, that was aligned with the study and has probably limited the opportunities for generalization; further investigation here is also recommended.

More study in this interesting area is encouraged, as numerous questions are arising that are suitable for investigation. First, there are more overall questions that could be evaluated, for example, the relationship between place identity and place brand, that needs more research. Second, connected to the research framework's main constructs (Fig. 1), further studies should be conducted to test the model. Third, the research framework should be investigated concerning different places, as this is an exploratory study that needs to be further developed. Finally, the study framework needs to be refined and tested quantitatively to demonstrate greater generalizability and validity of the relationships.

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### Appendix 1. The finding from qualitative study (place brand – character)

Types of communication	Rich	Flexible	Precise	Active	Open
Written	Shaped, metaphors	Without a cliché, variability, constructions	Facts, structural, unambiguity	Rhythmical, active voice	Understandable, available
Oral	A rich variety of vocabulary	Diverse	Bluntly, just business	Emotional, high variability	Clear, articulated
Non-verbal	Memorable, multifaceted, diverse	Relevant to the context, corresponds to the situation	Business, punctual, calibrated	At a pace, smart	Benevolent, free
Color	Juicy, saturated, complicated	A large variety of shades	Not blurred, narrow palette	Active	Clear
Form	Diverse, complex	Without direct lines and angles, variability	Outline	Flowing, asymmetric	Unfinished
Composition	Set, occupancy, space	A variety of options for organizing blocks	High contrast, build-up	Active interaction of elements	Without borders, interaction with the background
Structure	Soft, silky	Variability, multiplicity	Geometric elements, clarity of lines	Noticeable, with ebbs, with brilliance	Diversity, a wealth of materials

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