Tourist Perceptions of Destination Branding: A Case Study of Saint Lucia

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The intent of this research was to identify the effectiveness of a destination brand as determined by international tourists visiting the destination. The Caribbean can be viewed as a homogeneous region to many individuals seeking sun, sand, and sea; therefore, product differentiation is essential. Destination branding represents and distinguishes a country among competing nations. This concurrent mixed methods study set forth to investigate the effectiveness of the Saint Lucia destination brand. The following objectives underlie this research: i) to explore how the current destination brand was chosen, ii) to evaluate tourists' perceptions and images of the destination, iii) to explore the relationship between tourists' perceptions and destination choice, and iv) to evaluate the extent to which the destination brand influenced destination choice.

The research findings indicate a lack of awareness concerning the new destination brand. A lack of brand communication and insufficient exposure has been detrimental to the overall success of the destination brand. A conceptual model for the development process of a destination brand was suggested to enhance destination brand effectiveness. The six essential stages include market research, destination image, targeting and positioning, brand identity, communication of the brand, and continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout. It is recommended to engage in monitoring and improvement initiatives of the brand to better gauge its effectiveness; to enhance exposure of the brand through effective niche marketing initiatives that showcase the diversity and unique attributes of Saint Lucia; and finally, to work towards transforming the destination brand into a national brand.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, Lauchlan Bruce.

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List of Abbreviations

ARC	Atlantic Rally for Cruisers
CBI	Country Brand Index
CHTA	Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
GOSL	Government of Saint Lucia
HDM	Hierarchical Decision Model
HERITAS	The Heritage Tourism Association of St. Lucia
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
SLASPA	Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority
SLHTA	Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association
SLHTP	St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme
SLTB	Saint Lucia Tourist Board
TEAM	Tourism Education And Me

Chapter 1
Introduction

As the travel and tourism economy currently accounts for 7.6 percent of global employment, the potential benefits arising from this sector can dramatically alter the shape of a country if policies and planning are not guiding development (WTTC, 2009, p. 6). This thesis was designed to identify the role and function of a destination brand. Destination brands are often used as a marketing tool to attract prospective tourists and increase awareness of a destination. The underlying motivations for tourists are often complex and difficult to determine. Rather than conducting research solely regarding a tourist's motivation for travelling to a particular destination, this research aimed to address the issue of destination choice in regards to the emitted destination brand. Limited research within academe has managed to focus on the differences and similarities that exist between the emitted brand and the perceived image of a destination. This thesis will provide insight into the effects of destination branding as dictated by a representative global sample. Furthermore, this thesis will present a case study of Saint Lucia, a small island state geographically located within a homogeneous region of the Caribbean.

This research focused on the effectiveness of destination branding in relation to the current perceptions held by international tourists. In order to properly understand the concept of destination branding in its entirety, it was essential to explore literature discussing product brands and product branding. This research enabled an in depth comprehension of the role of brands and how branding a product can influence consumer choice. Additionally, there is a growing body of literature surrounding destination branding with various members of academe publishing case studies and models pertaining to effective destination brand development (Balakrishnan, 2009; Metaxas, 2009; Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009; Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004). The application of destination personalities and destination image are two concepts related to destination branding that have also

been applied to this thesis. Additionally, literature discussing tourist motivations and tourist

perceptions was significant as these factors can be influenced by a destination brand.

1.1 Background

Technological advances have provided access to anywhere in the World, thus ultimately increasing

the market of tourism supply and demand. Verbeek and Mommaas (2008) dictated the unambiguous

truth surrounding tourism growth: "an increase in global tourism thus accompanies an increase in

tourist mobility" (p. 630). Therefore, increased tourist mobility accentuates an increase in demand. To

facilitate consumer satisfaction, many destinations have developed unique brands that differentiate

the country from competing destinations. The complex process of destination branding can be a

determinant of the success of the destination as it encompasses attributes that can attract potential

consumers. This notion of image congruence, defined by Hogg, Cox, and Keeling (2000) as "the

evaluation of product attributes with the interpretation of product meanings", is a key factor in brand

effectiveness (p.642). Both marketing and tourism literature alike encompass complex ideologies,

thus the amalgamation of both disciplines in this research warrants the provision of various

definitions. Regardless, this particular area of research has been rapidly growing and has seized the

attention of various academic researchers; thus the establishment of the International Conference on

Destination Branding and Marketing held bi-annually.

Morgan et al. (2004) noted the significant increase of awareness regarding destination

branding and that it is "one of the hottest topics amongst place marketing professionals and

politicians" (p. 3). The rise in positive attention to this field of research is beneficial for both the

academic community as well as national government agencies responsible for tourism development

and promotion.

1.2 Statement of the issue

There is a growing quantity of literature on product branding and how to determine brand effectiveness. In comparison, minimal literature dedicated to the measurement of destination branding has surfaced. Furthermore, there is also a fair amount of research on travel motivations and perceptions, yet minimal research has linked these two topics. The perceived expectations of tourists can be a factor in determining the effectiveness of destination branding. The Caribbean is viewed as a homogeneous region to many individuals seeking sun, sand, and sea; therefore, product differentiation is essential. This gap in current literature was the inspiration for this thesis. The connection of tourist perceptions and destination branding initiatives will be discussed throughout the course of this thesis. This research study has united these two areas of literature to further enhance knowledge pertaining to the effectiveness of destination branding in Saint Lucia as determined by tourists visiting the island.

1.3 Research Questions, Purpose, and Objectives

This research addressed six primary research questions:

1) What is the destination brand?

2) Does branding influence destination choice?

3) Are tourists aware of the destination brand prior to their vacation?

4) Is the vacation similar to what the tourist had expected?

5) Does the destination brand accurately portray the island?

6) Does the destination brand differentiate the island and promote a niche product?

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Saint Lucia destination brand. More specifically, the objectives of this research were: (1) to explore how the current destination brand was chosen, (2) to evaluate tourists' perceptions and images of the

destination, (3) to explore the relationship between tourists' perceptions and destination choice, and (4) to evaluate the extent to which the destination brand influenced destination choice. To achieve these objectives, quantitative survey questionnaires were administered to measure the relationship between the destination brand and tourist perceptions and images of the destination. At the same time, the effectiveness of destination branding was explored through semi-structured qualitative interviews with various employees of the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) and other individuals involved in providing tourism related services. The reason for having combined both quantitative and qualitative data is to better understand this research problem by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. Furthermore, this mixed methods approach enhanced validity and amplified triangulation efforts.

The following thesis will be divided into seven significant chapters. Chapter 2 consists of the review of literature, which has been divided into four main components. First and foremost, the context of branding must be set; therefore, relevant literature pertaining to product brands and branding will be reviewed. Subsequently, the examination of pertinent literature concerning destination branding will be discussed. This is followed by an analysis of literature discussing tourist motivations and image formation. Finally, the role of tourism as economic development and tourism in the Caribbean will be noted. Chapter 3 consists of the methods used for the research and the justification for applying the chosen methods. Chapter 4 will examine the context of Saint Lucia, while chapter 5 illustrates the results and analyses. Chapter 6 consists of the discussion and implications of the findings, and finally, chapter 7 will discuss the recommendations and conclusions pertaining to this research.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the disciplines that encompass destination branding literature. This thesis is comprised of two distinct bodies of literature; the first concerning brands and branding initiatives, the second regarding tourist motivations and the image formation process of a destination. These two issues have emerged from marketing and tourism literature separately, although a variety of academic researchers have ventured to combine the subjects (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005; Buhalis, 2000; de Chernatony & Riley, 1999; Kozak, 2002). Tasci and Kozak (2006) identified that "as an interdisciplinary area, tourism borrows and applies many aspects from other areas of inquiry; branding is one of them from the field of marketing" (p. 300). Therefore, a holistic conceptualisation of each discipline is integral to the comprehension of destination branding and consequently each discipline will be discussed independently.

This literature review is divided into several sections. The chapter will begin with a clear distinction regarding the term brand and the term branding from a marketing perspective. Furthermore, destination branding will be examined to illustrate the relationship of marketing and tourism literature, and how branding a destination differs from branding a product. Subsequently, the various motivations for travel and destination choice, as well as the destination image formation process will be examined. Finally, limitations of current research and areas of needed research will be presented.

2.2 Marketing

The American Marketing Association (2010) identified marketing as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing

customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders" (Dictionary section, ¶ Marketing). The action of marketing has been further explained as "a universal process that can be applied to developing and promoting many entities, including products, services, experiences, places, persons, properties, ideas, causes, and information" (Philip Kotler, Forward of Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). Marketing can endorse both the tangible and the intangible, enhancing the exposure of the product. Tuckwell (1998) simplified the definition of marketing to be "a process that identifies a need and then offers a means of satisfying it" (p. 4). For the purpose of this research, the concept of marketing will encompass the methods undertaken by the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) to promote the island itself, as well as the products, services, and experiences available to tourists on the island. Kotler, Armstrong, and Cunningham (2005) noted the two primary goals of marketing consist of attracting new customers and to sustain loyalty of current customers through satisfaction (p. 5).

Marketing consists of various forces within the microenvironment and the macroenvironment. The former, defined as "forces close to the organization that can affect its ability to serve its customers: the organization itself, marketing channel firms, customer markets, and a broad range of stakeholders or publics". The later, comprising eight key forces, is defined as "the larger societal forces that affect the microenvironment: competitive, demographic, economic, environmental and natural, technological, political, cultural and social, and legal forces" (Hudson, 2005, p. 18 – 19). The marketing mix has been defined by Kotler (1984) as "the mixture of controllable marketing variables that the firm uses to pursue the sought level of sales in the target market" (as cited in Hudson, 2005, p. 8). The traditional marketing mix includes four elements, the Four P's: product, price, place, and promotion. An additional three P's have been added to expand the marketing mix for services. These additional elements include: people, physical evidence, and process. This marketing approach has been criticised for its lack of focus towards the customers and services, suggesting a paradigm shift towards the use of relationship marketing (Grönroos, 1997). Relationship marketing

refers to "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 34). This form of marketing is consistent with the desires of the tourism sector. Shifting the focus from the product to the needs and wants of the customer is important to sustain tourism development and long-term success.

A key component to marketing is the promotion and advertising of products, or in this case, a place. Differentiation within the Caribbean is essential for generating interest from potential tourists; therefore, the portrayal of the destination is imperative. This can be done through the implementation of a brand.

2.2.1 Product Brands and Branding

The following section presents a variety of definitions pertaining to brands and branding. The concept of brand development and branding initiatives often transpire in unison to achieve strategic marketing positioning among competitors. Regardless, these are two diverse terms and although they are often referred to interchangeably, academic literature has articulated characteristics that differentiate them from one another. As both the term brand and the term branding are of key importance for this research project, a clear distinction is warranted. In order to understand the concept of destination branding, it is integral to first analyze marketing literature pertaining to product brands and product branding.

The American Marketing Association (2009) defined a brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (Dictionary section, ¶ Brand). This definition has been frequently cited within academic literature (Fan, 2006; Hankinson, 2004; Kerr, 2006); although other definitions have been introduced as well. de Chernatony and Riley (1998) have defined a brand as "a complex multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products and services with values and this facilitates the process by which consumers confidently recognise and appreciate these values" (p. 436). Aaker

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(1991) identified the principal role of a brand is "to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" (p. 7). Furthermore, the author noted that "a brand thus signals to the customer the source of the product, and protects both the customer and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical" (Aaker, 1991, p. 7). Anholt (2007) explained that "the brand name acts as our short cut to an informed buying decision" (p. 7). A brand is thus applied to products to improve customer recognition, leading to purchase behaviour and accordingly increases the possibility of brand loyalty.

Four streams of brand conceptualisation that are all inextricably linked have been identified within academic literature (Hankinson, 2004). The author classified the four groups as: (1) brands as communicators, (2) brands as perceptual entities, (3) brands as value enhancers, and (4) brands as relationships; each stream being unique and integral to place brand development (Hankinson, 2004, p. 110). Although a brand may seem simple, the development of it is complex and the roles of the brand are multifaceted. Having focused their research on product brands, de Chernatony and Riley (1998) argued that the vast array of definitions pertaining to the term 'brand' can be synthesised into 12 distinct themes. These 12 themes are as follows: (1) legal instrument, (2) logo, (3) company, (4) shorthand, (5) risk reducer, (6) identity system, (7) image in consumers' minds, (8) value system, (9) personality, (10) relationship, (11) adding value, and (12) evolving entity (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998, p. 418). These attributes are vital to brand development and illustrate the complexity of this marketing concept. Therefore, although consumers may be unaware of the functions of a brand, brand choice can have an active role in the success of a product.

A brand is used as a tool to represent specific characteristics and enable self-expression of the consumer (Caldwell & Freire, 2004). de Chernatony and Riley (1999) noted the difference between goods and service based brands:

Regardless of whether they are goods- or service-based, brands are a blending of rational and emotional components, that they can thrive by building a relationship with consumers, based on trust, and that both goods and service brands symbolize an ability to satisfy consumers' needs ... for services, it is the emotional side that must be developed first to enable the functional components to become more easily understood. (p. 186)

Therefore, brands serve to differentiate the product from similar products offered by competing companies. If previous experience with a particular brand is deemed successful by the consumer, an emotional connection has been achieved and may influence future purchase behaviour. This concept of added value is labelled brand equity. Brand equity is identified as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991, p. 15). The brand itself is created by the company responsible for the product; however, the interpretation of the brand can differ among consumers. de Chernatony and Riley (1998) argued "the interpretation of the brand as a shorthand device recognises how the myriad of marketing activities are integrated in the consumer's mind to form the brand entity" (p. 420). The clarity of an effective brand will minimize the risk of misinterpretation; however, this may also reduce the amount of consumers who successfully develop an emotional relationship with the product (Nickerson & Moisey, 1999).

In contrast, Nickerson and Moisey (1999) defined branding as the "images people have of the state and what kind of relationship they have with it" (p. 217). Furthermore, de Chernatony and Riley (1998) described the branding process: "the brand is positioned by the firm through the elements of the marketing mix, which work together to convey a pre-determined brand identity and personality" (p. 428). Branding a product entails marketing initiatives used to help convey the developed brand. Branding is complex and can be influenced by a variety of external factors that influence customer perceptions. Therefore, individual self-concepts play a role in how a brand is interpreted and will determine which images become associated with that brand.

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2.2.2 Destination Branding

The concept of destination branding is multifaceted, requiring an in depth analysis of the literature. Initially, properly defining the term destination is fundamental for this research. Buhalis (2000) identified the term destination broadly as encompassing "amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers" (p. 97). Therefore, a destination can be defined by what products and experiences are available rather than geographical scale and cultural diversity. The perception of a destination can comprise a variety of diverse attributes and can be a city, a country, or a continent, in addition to a specific attraction or event (Buhalis, 2000). Furthermore, Hu and Ritchie (1993) have defined a tourism destination as "a package of tourism facilities and services, which, like any other consumer product or service, is composed of a number of multidimensional attributes that together determine its attractiveness to a particular individual in a given choice situation" (p. 26). A tourism destination in particular is subjected to individual perceptions and thus the need for differentiation and competitiveness transpires. The ability to capture the tourists' attention and spark their curiosity can be achieved by means of destination branding.

Destination branding refers to the branding of a particular destination, regardless of geographical, political or social scale. Hankinson (2004) defined branding in the context of a destination brand as "the built environment in which the various services forming part of the core brand take place" (p. 117). Fan (2006) argued that "nation branding concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image (p. 6). Furthermore, the author noted that place branding is "to promote the country (or maybe a city in the country) as a destination for tourism" (Fan, 2006, p. 7). A variety of definitions have been suggested for destination branding due to a lack of agreement among academics (Pike, 2008). In fact, research relating to destination branding had not emerged until the late 1990's (Pike, 2008). Regardless of the vast array of

definitions presented within academic literature, for this thesis, destination branding can be best

described in a holistic manner as the following:

> The set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily *identifies* and *differentiates* a destination; that (2) consistently convey the *expectation* of a memorable travel *experience* that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to *consolidate* and *reinforce* the *emotional connection* between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer *search costs* and *perceived risk*. Collectively, these activities serve to create a *destination image* that positively influences consumer *destination choice*. (Blain et al., 2005, p. 337)

The development of differentiation among competitors is a key function of a destination brand.

The ability to effectively capture the attention of a potential consumer and foster an emotional

connection between the individual and the destination is a determinant of the brands effectiveness

(Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). Nickerson and Moisey (1999) suggested the following in regards to the

creation of an emotional connection:

> Portraying feelings and emotions in destination marketing campaigns will certainly capture some of the consumers, but may inadvertently turn other people away. Therefore rather than attempting to place the 'feeling' into the consumer through the photograph, it may be more advantageous to provide a visual image of a feature such as a mountain, and allow the consumer to determine if the mountain provides relaxation, physical challenge or spirituality. (p. 218)

To foster a successful creation of an emotional connection with a consumer, the destination brand

must be credible, deliverable, differentiating, conveying powerful ideas, enthusing for stakeholders

and partners, and finally resonating with the consumer (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004, p. 70). The

capability of a destination to market itself through positive image building will help to distinguish

itself among similar destinations (Cai, 2002). Furthermore, Hankinson (2004) dictated that "the

successful branding of destinations results from a combination of imaginative marketing supported by

investment in the key services and facilities required to deliver the experience on offer" (p. 116).

While Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) noted the dimensions and abilities of a strong national brand; "it

must attract businesses and investments; it must promote the goals of the tourism industry; it must

promote public diplomacy; it must support the interests of exporting industries; and it must strengthen

national identity and increase self-respect" (p.11). Ultimately, the primary objective of destination branding is to captivate the potential consumer and to develop an inherent interest in a destination that will positively influence destination choice.

Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) noted how the brand development process is very time consuming and can often take a span of five to ten years. Brand development can take this long due to the numerous steps involved in the process. The five suggested primary stages for the operational plan of a destination brand include: (1) start-up and organization, (2) research stage, (3) forming brand identity, (4) making execution and enforcement plan, (5) implementation and follow-up (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p. 166). Each stage is important in itself and must be completed to move on to the next.

Positioning is defined as "establishing an image for a product or service in relation to others in the marketplace" (Hudson, 2005, p. 54). Three steps have been identified to attain a competitive advantage: "product differentiation, prioritizing and selecting the competitive advantage, and communicating and delivering the position" (Hudson, 2005, p. 54). Furthermore, Pike (2008) noted the three core positioning elements for destinations include the place name, the symbol, and the positioning slogan (p. 229). These elements are critical to market the destination as they act as an immediate representation of the place and help to diversify the available product against competitors.

The logo of a brand is the visual representation of the product, service, company, or place that is being advertised. The logo should identify the product, differentiate the product, raise consumer awareness and enhance recognition (Blain et al., 2005; Henderson, Cote, Leong, & Schmitt, 2003). In relation to a destination, the logo should attract and stimulate the consumer, reduce search costs, and influence destination choice (Blain et al.; van Riel & van den Ban, 2001).

2.2.3 Brand Equity

Brand equity is the value of the brand as determined by consumers, a measurement of performance as defined in economic terms (Aaker & Biel, 1993; Pike, 2010). It is comprised of five underlying assets: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1991, p. 16). The measurement of brand equity is effective for product brands and is represented by financial gain (Pike, 2010). For destination brands, this measurement is ineffective due to the intangibility of the brand itself; therefore, consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) was introduced. CBBE is defined as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand", and is comprised of two underlying attributes: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993, p. 8). More recently, Pike (2008) suggested a total of four underlying attributes: brand awareness, brand associations, brand resonance, and brand loyalty. Essentially, increased brand awareness and positive image associations could lead to increased consumer choice, and thus, increased tourist arrivals due to effective marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993). The goal of CBBE is to measure the effectiveness of marketing initiatives, as determined by the consumers of the brand.

Keller (1993) outlined two different approaches to measuring CBBE, the indirect approach and the direct approach. The indirect approach "attempts to assess potential sources of customer-based brand equity by measuring brand knowledge"; while the direct approach "attempts to measure customer-based brand equity more directly by assessing the impact of brand knowledge on consumer response to different elements of the firm's marketing program" (p. 12). The underlying principle of measuring CBBE is to determine how the marketing initiatives are impacting the consumer (Pike, 2010). The ability for a consumer to be familiar with a destination brand and make associations is a determinant of an effective marketing campaign. Aaker (1991) noted eleven types of brand associations: product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use/application,

user/customer, celebrity/person, life-style/personality, product class, competitors, and country/geographic area (p. 114). The development of these associations help the consumer relate the brand to specific attributes, increasing brand awareness and the recall of brand information. The greater the ability for the consumer to make these associations, the greater success can be placed on the marketing initiatives.

2.2.4 Management of Place Brands

The management of the place is a key component and can be influential to tourism development. Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) noted how the positive image of a place under negative circumstances can be retained through good management, while poor management can effectively damage a positive image of a place (p. 26). Hankinson (2009) further noted five categories of managerial practice in the context of destination branding: brand culture, brand leadership, departmental coordination, brand communications, and stakeholder partnerships (p. 99). The overall brand essence is affected by the structure of the internal organization responsible for the development of the place brand. The brand culture, the brand communication and the brand leadership are essential factors towards the development of brand commitment (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Brand commitment is further detectable through the integration of stakeholder partnerships. The integration of stakeholders is important to tourism development. In particular, community inclusion and support throughout the entirety of the process is vital (Mayes, 2008). The support derived from the local citizens is identified as "living the brand" (Anholt, 2005a; Vasudevan, 2008). Anholt (2005a) explained the degree to which this support must be executed: "the general population as well as the private and public sectors need to agree with, subscribe to, and *enact* the country's vision of what it is, what it stands for, and where it's going" (p. 300). This form of support and confidence from stakeholders has the ability to influence the image of the destination that is emitted abroad.

2.3 Destination Image

The perception of a country or a specific destination is developed on an individual basis. The creation of perceived images will vary with regards to personal beliefs and demographic factors. The broad research area of destination image has been studied in tourism literature for more than 30 years (Pike, 2002). Richardson and Crompton (1988) have dictated that "income appears to exert few significant effects upon perceptions of the vacation attributes and the effects of age were not significant" (p. 135); while in recent research, Kozak (2002) noted a variety of factors "may have an influence on destination choice, i.e. age, income, personality, cost, distance, risk and motivation" (p. 222). Additionally, personal perception of destination image is further developed and influenced by an array of information sources, including various media outlets (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; McCartney, Butler, & Bennett, 2008). "From an advertising perspective, their challenge is to capture those images most likely to enhance a destination's image, motivate purchase decision, and induce visitation" (Litvin & Mouri, 2009, p.152). The information received by the consumer and the source of that information has the potential to manipulate how the individual de-codes the conveyed message. Anholt (2005a) identified the Nation Brand Hexagon, comprising six areas of national competence. According to Anholt (2005a), the six areas that develop an individual's perception of a nation include (1) tourism, (2) exports, (3) governance, (4) investment and immigration, (5) culture and heritage, and (6) people (p. 297). Consequently, a tourists' perception is not only influenced by external outputs and information sources, but also by the policies and national identity of that country.

An extensive range of definitions for the term image and the concept of destination image have been introduced within academic literature (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Buhalis, 2000; Cai, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Gali & Donaire, 2005; Goodall, 1992). A selected few of the available definitions will be discussed to enhance simplicity and pertinence of this concept. The American Marketing Association (2009) defined brand image as the "perception of

a brand in the minds of persons. The brand image is a mirror reflection (though perhaps inaccurate) of the brand personality or product being. It is what people believe about a brand - their thoughts, feelings, expectations" (Dictionary section, ¶ Brand Image). Therefore an emotional connection between the consumer and the projected product image is apparent and influences purchase behaviour. The brand image possessed by the consumer can be positive or negative in nature; however, this fundamental perception is acquired from personal beliefs and thus varies per person.

With regards to an image of a destination rather than a tangible product, Buhalis (2000) defined the term image as "the set of expectations and perceptions a prospective traveller has of a destination" (p. 101). Consequently, the formation of such an image is developed prior to arrival at the destination; hence destination satisfaction might be determined in part based on the pre-conceived image. In a similar context, Cai (2002) defined the image of a destination brand as the "perceptions about the place as reflected by the associations held in tourist memory" (p. 273); suggesting the influence of past travel experience at a destination on the image of a destination brand. Each tourist at a destination may possess a different image of the destination brand due to individual perceptions. These images are "subjective introspections that are constructed in the mind of the visitor" (Gali & Donaire, 2005, p. 777); illustrating the complexity of a destination brand and the need to market specific attributes to reduce further ambiguity by tourists.

The image formation process can be further influenced by a promoted destination personality. A destination personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a destination as perceived from a tourist rather than a local resident viewpoint" (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006, p. 128). The inclusion of personality traits enhances the possibility of an emotional connection between the tourist and the destination. Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2007) noted that destination brands should incorporate personality traits as these are relatable to potential consumers. Furthermore, Hankinson (2004) argued that the brand personality is "characterised by functional attributes, symbolic attributes

and, most importantly in the context of service products, experimental attributes" (p. 115). The author discussed the differences among these elements; noting that the functional attributes are tangible, while the symbolic attributes are intangible (Hankinson, 2004). Comparable to Hankinson (2004), Echtner and Ritchie (2003) dictated that the incorporation of both functional and psychological characteristics in relation to tangible and intangible attributes will affect destination image.

Bigné et al. (2001) argued that an "image will influence a tourist in the process of choosing a stay, the subsequent evaluation of that stay and in his or her future intentions" (p. 607). In relation to homogeneity, when prices are comparable, the image can act as a decisive factor in destination choice (Goodall, 1992). Furthermore, tourist behaviour at a destination can be, to a certain extent, conditioned by the individuals' image acquired of the destination (Bigné et al.). Therefore, destination image has a significant function as it can influence the tourist prior to travel, throughout travel by means of their behaviour, and upon return after the travel experience.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) developed a general framework of destination image formation. This model illustrated that the destination image is subjected to both personal and stimulus factors (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, p. 870). The personal factors that affect destination image include psychological and social attributes; the stimulus factors of significance that affect destination image include information sources and past experiences. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) concluded that destination image is therefore comprised of perceptual/cognitive features, affective features, and finally global features (p. 870). Gnoth (1997) differentiated between emotions and cognitions: "cognitions refer to mental representations such as knowledge of beliefs. Emotions, on the other hand, encompass drives, feelings, and instincts. Attitudinal affect is a distinct influence of the emotional system by being attached to cognitions about objects and experiences" (p. 287). While destination image is influenced by a variety of factors, the branding of a destination will significantly alter tourist perceptions if the brand is developed and marketed effectively.

Middleton and Clarke (2001) noted that "leading destination brands such as London, New York and Singapore have to rely on persuasion and co-operation rather than the full management control enjoyed by individual organizations and it is very much harder to make them effective" (p. 134). This lack of control is due to the various perceptions individuals may possess of a destination brand. Once a destination brand has emerged, an image is established and the destination is now associated with the projected image. Regardless of the destination brand being marketed, a destination image is often altered by personal stereotypes, past experiences, word-of-mouth, historical events, and common misconceptions (Anholt, 2005b; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Kozak, 2002; McCartney et al., 2008; Richardson & Crompton, 1988; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). Furthermore, Hogg et al. (2000) noted "the symbolic aspects of consumption decisions could therefore be linked to internal and external influences in the creation and maintenance of social identity" (p. 664). It is difficult to manage how people perceive a destination and, therefore, although the role of a brand for a destination can help to alter that perception, the final decision is that of the consumer. The amenities provided at the destination each play a role in portraying the brand and will influence the overall experience for the traveller. Hankinson (2005) noted "places exist both as holistic entities or nuclear products and as collections of contributory elements or individual services and facilities" (p. 25). Therefore, the destination itself can be viewed differently in a variety of ways and thus, this perception will have a manipulative effect on the perceived image of the destination brand.

Literature within the tourism discipline has highlighted the difference between emitted image and perceived images (Camprubí, Guia, & Comas, 2008; Gali & Donaire, 2005). The emitted image is that of which has been constructed for the purpose of being advertised by the marketing campaigns of a destination (Gali & Donaire, 2005); whereas the perceived image is that of which is received individually and is subjective to personal attitudes (Camprubí et al., 2008). Gunn (1972) described a sequence of seven ways in which cognitive images are formed. This seven-step process of tourism

image development includes: accumulation, modification, decision, travel to destination, participation, return travel, and new accumulation (Gunn, 1972, p. 120). The author noted regarding these seven steps that neither one is independent of the others and that each step operates collectively (Gunn, 1972). Discussions by O'Leary and Deegan (2005) surrounding the seven-step process created by Gunn (1972) noted "for tourism development, it is important that the actual participation at a destination equal or surpass the preimage perception of the destination for the experience to be satisfying" (p. 248). Therefore, in order for a vacation to satisfy the tourist, the experience must not fail to fulfill any of the pre-conceived images possessed of the experience prior to departure.

It can be argued that there is a possibility of the destination image being perceived differently based on what type of tourism the traveller is involved in. Mass tourists may possess different perceptions of a destination in comparison to business tourists, who may possess different perceptions than adventure tourists. Hankinson (2005) studied this notion and concluded that:

> The similarities between the brand image attributes associated with business tourism and those associated with leisure tourism suggest that these two areas should be managed together in order to capitalise on potential synergies and avoid the negative impact caused through the communication of two conflicting brand images. (p. 30)

Therefore, although each different type of tourist may view the destination differently, it is integral for the destination to identify and market one sole branding initiative. This will minimize ambiguity among potential visitors and will increase the identity of the destination, thus enhancing uniformity throughout the entire destination.

2.4 Tourist Motivations

Travel motivations play a significant role in destination choice and therefore an in-depth comprehension of push and pull factors is integral to effective destination branding. Research of tourist motivations has been studied for decades. Dann (1981) contributed significantly with his publication on tourist motivations which continues to be frequently referred to within current

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literature. The role of motivations in travel is of primary importance and should be taken into consideration when marketing a destination (Fodness, 1994). Buhalis (2000) noted "each destination can only match certain types of demand and hence tourism marketers need to appreciate travel motivations in order to develop appropriate offerings and brand destinations for the right target markets" (p. 100). Furthermore, Hsu, Tsai, and Wu (2009) have noted "personal preferences, like motivations, may be both intrinsic, reflecting individual likes and dislikes, and extrinsic, or socially conditioned" (p. 290). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) dictated "countries seeking to increase their tourism share should consider the characteristics of their target markets and tailor their image development and positioning efforts to specific sociodemographic and motivation segments" (p. 892). Tourist motivation differs among each individual and therefore it is vital for a destination to brand itself in a suitable manner and then advertise to this particular target market.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) argued that "tourism destination loyalty has causal relationships with motivation and satisfaction" (p. 55). The ability for tourism destination marketers to identify with the push and pull factors of prospective tourists will enhance the capability of effectively positioning a destination. Although both push and pull factors have a role in the decision making process, the push motivation will have more influence determining destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 55). Bansal and Eiselt (2004) developed a model to illustrate the sequence of events of a decision making process regarding destination choice and motivation. The authors noted that the first step in the interdependence of travel planning is the consideration of the image of all regions (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004, p. 393). Additionally, Hsu et al. (2009) have developed a hierarchy of destination selection; this model contains four distinct levels and illustrates that destination choice is subjected to both internal and external forces (p. 291). In this model, destination image is categorized as an intangible factor of external forces, thus suggestive of various tangible and intangible features. Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2010) noted how destination choice can be "a significant lifestyle indicator for today's

aspirational consumers and the places where they choose to spend their squeezed vacation time and hard-earned income increasingly have to have emotional appeal, high conversational capital and even celebrity value" (p. 4). The choice of destination will remain significant even after the vacation has ended as memories will be reflected upon, pictures will be on display, and stories will be told to friends and family.

2.5 Tourism as Economic Development

The tourism market has the ability to transform an emerging destination both positively and negatively. The industry itself consists of numerous sub-sectors catering to different demands created by the hosts and tourists alike. Hudson (2005), noted the magnitude of the industry worldwide: "tourism is a powerful economic force providing employment, foreign exchange, income, and tax revenue" (p. 4). Tourism development is a powerful force for change and has been identified as one cause for rapid global transformation (Macleod, 2004). The emerging interest garnered within academia concerning marketing for tourism and destination branding is a preview of the importance of destination differentiation. Clancy (1999) argued "when developing countries promote tourism, they are embracing greater integration into the global economy, leading to direct economic and political effects on the region" (p. 2). The growing contribution of tourism to the global economy will only encourage destination marketing organizations to become more innovative to attract greater tourist arrivals. Growing global competition among destinations highlights the significance of destination branding and marketing campaigns. The needs of a community are reflected in marketing policies, contributing to economic development (Metaxas, 2009, p. 1362). These creative strategies need to be memorable and encourage travel in order to gain the economic benefits of tourism.

2.6 Tourism in the Caribbean

Numerous regions of the world rely heavily on tourism and the Caribbean is certainly no exception. According to the St. Lucia Tourist Board (2008) "the Caribbean relies on tourism more than any other region in the world" (p. 3). The employment and significant foreign exchange earnings generated from the industry is critical to the region (Crick, 2003, p. 161). The array of sandy beaches, warm weather, and beautiful scenery is appealing to individuals who do not find the time to relax in their home environment. Additionally, the Caribbean region offers many different types of accommodations at various price points.

2.7 Small Island States

Due to a highly recognized homogeneity among small island states in the Caribbean, a brief overview of their characteristics is considered integral to this research. As islands are viewed by many for being a tropical paradise, image and branding initiatives become highly significant. Correia and Oliveira (2008) identified that "islands represent well-known examples of tourist destination because of their specific characteristics" (p. 187). If a prospective tourist is simply interested in the sun, sand, and sea characteristics, many islands become highly substitutable. The islands are typically viewed as tropical paradises with exotic species surrounded by beautiful blue waters (Jayawardena, 2002). Such circumstances are apparent in the Caribbean due to the great number of islands and the perception of homogeneity among the islands. A destination brand will help with the development of positive image associations between the potential tourist and destination. Scheyvens and Momsen (2008) have argued that "it is easier for small island states than for other countries to give themselves a coherent brand and thus, to signal that they offer a niche product" (p. 499). The development of a niche product that is marketed through a destination brand has the ability to support national economic development and attract desired tourists. Small island states have great potential to differentiate

amongst themselves through the use of destination branding; however, the effectiveness of the destination brand is ultimately dictated by the tourist.

2.8 Conclusion

Throughout academic literature within both tourism and marketing disciplines, insight into the various aspects of destination branding has confirmed its complexity. While tourist motivations and product branding have been researched for decades; tourist motivations regarding destination images and branding initiatives have not been extensively researched. Regardless, Nickerson and Moisey (1999) noted a lack of practical application and field research concerning motivation and the travel decision process. Boo, Busser, and Baloglu (2009) have identified that the lack of research of destination brand measurement as evaluated by tourists confirms the complexity of this issue. Additionally, Hankinson (2005) noted the impact of culture on the tourists' perceptions of various destination images also warrants further research.

In summary, there is a call for further research combining destination branding and tourist motivations for travel and destination choice. An enhanced understanding of the correlation of these issues will aid in recommending effective destination branding strategies to ensure satisfied customers. The ability for a destination to effectively market itself will require in-depth analysis of image perception and therefore field research will help to conceptualize this multi-dimensional issue. This thesis combines both tourism and marketing disciplines and had set out to further enhance comprehension of what tourists seek in a destination brand.

Chapter 3
Research Approach and Methods

This research involves a single case, mixed methods approach of data collection. The ability to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously provides an extensive array of valuable information for analysis. The researcher has obtained primarily rich quantitative data through the administration of questionnaire surveys to international tourists. In addition to this, qualitative data was acquired through semi-structured interviews with various employees of the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) and other individuals involved in tourism related services. The island of Saint Lucia was ideal for the case study due to the launch of the new destination brand in January of 2009.

The researcher spent a total of five weeks on the island during July and August 2009. Other than a brief home-stay in the Southern town of Soufriere, the majority of time was spent living in the North of the island within proximity of Castries, the nation's capital, and the main tourist area of Rodney Bay. The entire set of tourist questionnaires were dispensed in the North-West region of Saint Lucia. Questionnaires were distributed at two duty-free shopping centres in Castries to target cruise ship passengers, as well as along Reduit Beach to target stay-over tourists. The time spent travelling throughout the island provided great insight into Saint Lucian life and the importance of tourism activity to the island's economy. This enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding of local culture, regional history, and social implications of tourism dependency, thus, providing context and enhancing the quality of this research study.

3.1 Research Approach

3.1.1 Research Framework

Although destination branding is a rapidly growing topic of interest, a lack of literature discussing long-term destination marketing performance measures has been identified (Boo et al., 2009; Pike,

2007, 2009, 2010). Measuring the effectiveness of destination brands is critical for effective long-term destination management (Blain et al., 2005). In order to develop an appropriate research approach, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection was deemed to be most effective for this research study. The ability to contrast and compare the destination brand that is being marketed to the image attributed to Saint Lucia by international tourists was contingent upon the willingness of international tourists to participate in the data collection process.

The quantitative data provided information regarding the tourists' perception of the Saint Lucia destination brand. In order to comprehend the meaning of the quantitative data upon analysis, it was integral to set the context. To achieve this, qualitative interviews took place with various employees of the SLTB in addition to individuals involved in the provision of tourism related services throughout the island. This variety of data collection enhanced the quality of the research and allowed the researcher to gain insight into both the administrative and social constructs involved in the conveyance and the perception of a destination brand. The specific research methods that have been employed by the researcher are outlined subsequently.

3.1.2 Selection of the Case Study Site

The case study method was selected for this research to obtain data from different informant groups concerning the destination brand. Neuman (2006) noted that in case studies, "ideas and evidence are mutually interdependent" (p. 188), and was thus confirmed to be the ideal method to test pre-conceived theories of destination branding. Yin (2009) defined case study research as two-fold, encompassing both the scope of the research in addition to other technical characteristics (p. 18). Case study research is defined as being "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"; while further noting the second feature:

the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2009, p. 18)

Case study research is an all-encompassing method of research, being complex and multi-dimensional. The use of a case study for this research increases validity and reliability, while triangulating multiple data collection and analysis techniques.

3.1.3 Saint Lucia

Geographically located in the Lesser Antilles, Saint Lucia is one of the four Windward Islands, and forms the case study of this research study. Saint Lucia is 616km squared with a population of 170 331 (Government of Saint Lucia, 2008).

Figure 1: Regional Map of Saint Lucia
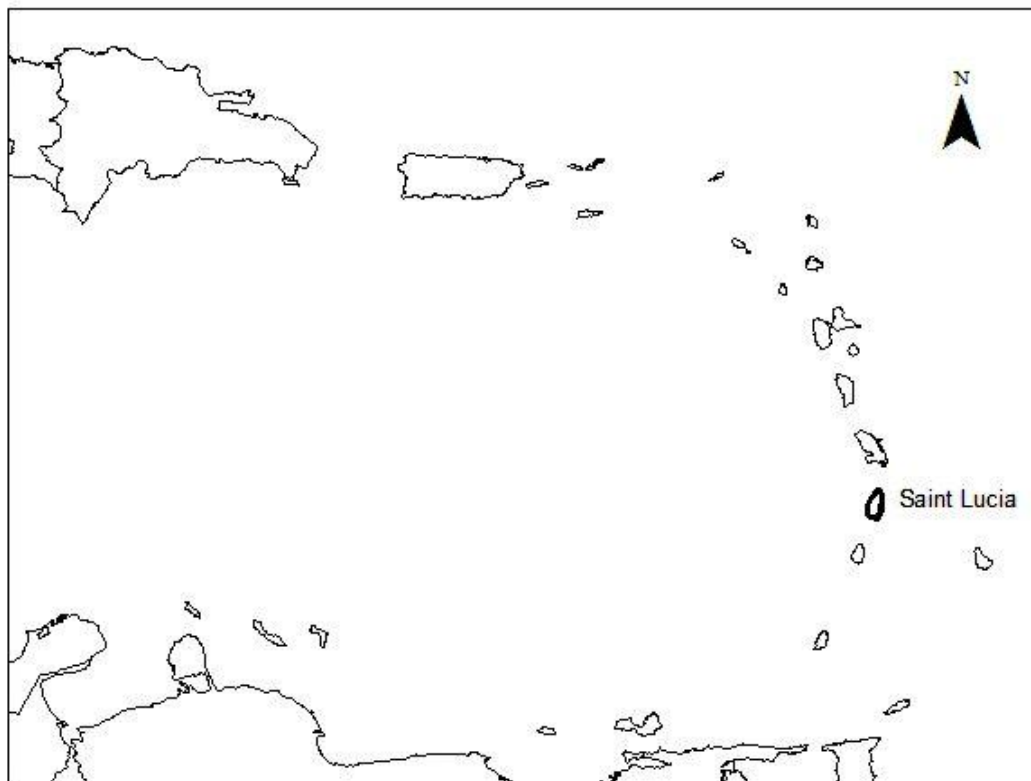
(Photo Source: ESRI, 2003)

Figure 2: Island Map of Saint Lucia
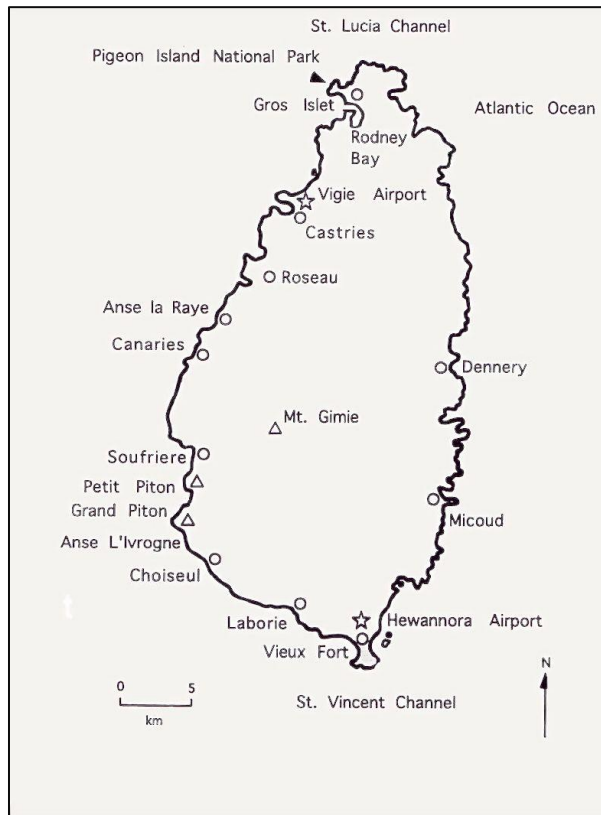
(Photo Source: Wilkinson, 1997)

The Caribbean shares a regional identity due to homogeneity and widespread availability of undifferentiated products and attributes (Daye, 2010). Due to the ever present threat of substitutability, it is vital that a country differentiate itself among adjacent islands to increase awareness and market share. Regarding the Eastern Caribbean, McElroy and de Albuquerque (1998) noted the homogeneity among these microstates, their comparable size, their similar histories, and their focus of mass tourism development (p. 146). Due to these similar attributes, an international tourist indifferent to cultural variations may perceive all of the regional small island states to be ideal and comparable vacation choices. As a result, the researcher had set forth to understand what role destination branding may have in destination choice.

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The manner in which a country markets itself abroad can influence both the type of tourist attracted and the image that is being projected. This research was undertaken to explore existing marketing initiatives within Saint Lucia, and to generate greater knowledge of the effects and implications of marketing to tourism development. Through data collection with international tourists visiting the island, the researcher highlighted how Saint Lucia is perceived abroad and the degree to which this perception corresponds to current branding initiatives. Through this exploratory research, a conceptual model for the development of a destination brand strategy is suggested. The results from this research support existing literature and provide insight into the effect of destination branding as expressed by island visitors. The amalgamation of literature from both marketing and tourism disciplines were contrasted to the primary data collected in the field. This research study intended to contribute to academic literature, as well as outline the necessary initiatives for developing a successful and lasting destination brand.

3.2 Data Collection

Research methods each possess different strengths and weaknesses. In order to account for these faults, the researcher applied crystallization of the methods as much as possible. The mixed methods approach was chosen for this research as the weaknesses of one form of data collection may be offset by the strengths of the other (Creswell, 2009; Neuman, 2006). Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this thesis providing results that have greater reliability and validity. This study comprises the use of four different research methods: qualitative semi-structured interviews, quantitative survey questionnaires, participant observation, and the analysis of secondary data sources.

3.2.1. The Mixed Methods Approach

The multi-method approach was deemed to be most suitable for this research as it enabled the researcher to collect and analyse both text and numeric data simultaneously (Creswell, 2009). This research study involved the outsiders' view of Saint Lucia, in addition to the opinions of those involved in the branding process. Quantitative questionnaires were administered to international tourists, while qualitative interviews took place with assorted personnel of the SLTB and other individuals in the tourism service sector. All interviews were conducted in Saint Lucia. The field work was concurrently gathered during the months of July and August, in the year of 2009.

3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

To effectively determine who was willing to participate in this research study, a letter detailing the purpose and goal of the research was e-mailed to four potential key informant interviewees employed by the SLTB one month prior to the researcher's arrival. The process of identifying these individuals involved an Internet search. The letter was e-mailed to the four individuals of interest, as their contact information was available on the SLTB's website. It was important that key informants possessed a variety of professional backgrounds in order to question the entire branding process; therefore, purposive sampling was used to determine potential candidates. None of the potential candidates responded to the email. Upon arrival to Saint Lucia the researcher contacted the office of the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation who then refused an interview for an undisclosed reason, yet provided another contact with whom an interview did result. Snowball sampling was used to contact other potential interview participants upon referral from key informants. Five semi-structured key informant interviews took place in Saint Lucia. For the official interview guide, please see Appendix A. For the list of interview participants, please see Appendix B. Information gathered from these sources has enabled the researcher to understand the role of tourism, the context of the destination brand, how the brand was developed, and future plans for tourism development. Furthermore, the pre-

determined set of questions for these participants enabled the researcher to gather specific information required to assess the effectiveness and scope of the new destination brand. To ensure proper documentation of the interviews, the researcher had asked each participant for permission to audio-record the discussion prior to the interview. Conducting interviews with various employees of the SLTB enabled the researcher to understand the brand development process from several key individuals involved in the process.

Each participant provided valuable information, although one participant in particular was of great benefit to the research. This individual was willing to discuss all aspects of the brand development as well as several political debates unknown to the public. This participant also provided the researcher with documents deemed to be confidential by the other key informants.

3.2.3 Survey Questionnaires

A pilot study was conducted prior to departure to pre-test the survey questionnaire for potential faults. This pilot study ensured clarity among the questions and confirmed the overall validity of the questionnaire. The pilot study questionnaires were administered to eight individuals that were conveniently accessible to the researcher and possessed various professional backgrounds; thus, validating that English speaking individuals with a range of backgrounds were able to effectively understand and complete the questionnaire. While conducting the pilot tests, the researcher kept track of the time taken to complete the surveys in addition to any comments, questions, and suggestions provided. The pilot test took an average of eight minutes to complete. Results of the pilot test identified several problems and potential misunderstandings. Changes were then made regarding the organization and structure of the survey questionnaire. One question was omitted as it was repetitive of a previous question, and several other questions were worded differently to enhance clarity and simplicity. In general, the results of the pilot test were highly favourable and those who participated were fundamental in the development of the final questionnaire administered abroad.

The questionnaire comprised 27 questions and was constructed of Likert scale, ranking, close-ended and open-ended questions (please see Appendix C). A total of 99 questionnaires were administered in the field; however, only 92 questionnaires were deemed to be adequate for analysis. Seven of the questionnaires were incomplete, having one of the four pages blank. The final sample size was sufficient for measurement and large enough to detect reoccurring trends. In order to ensure validity, systematic sampling was originally intended to determine who was eligible to participate; however, upon arrival to Saint Lucia there were not as many tourists as originally anticipated (see Figure 3). Therefore, to ensure sample validity, each individual sitting in a beach chair was approached for participation.

Figure 3: Photographs of stacked beach chairs indicating low occupancy

(Photos by Smith, 2009)

Both males and females were approached in the same manner; the researcher used the same introduction and explanation of her research for all qualifying individuals. For individuals traveling as a couple, the male and female of each couple would be approached in sequence. For those traveling in a group, one individual was allowed to participate, again rotating from male to female in sequence. A minimum age of 18 years had been determined for participation, acknowledging the greater possibility of vulnerability among minors (Creswell, 2009). Limiting the minimum age requirement to 18 years or older enabled the questionnaire to directly address the individuals that were most likely

to be involved in the decision making process of destination choice. Furthermore, all respondents were required to fluently comprehend English in order to participate. The questionnaire was not translated into different languages, minimizing any risk of miscommunication. Overall, the researcher had been refused by potential respondents on 16 separate occasions, indicating a response rate of 85.2%.

The questionnaire included a cover letter with the University of Waterloo letterhead to help the participant understand the credibility of the research. The letter explained the goal of the research and why it was being conducted in Saint Lucia. The participant needed to provide verbal consent to participate. In order to ensure anonymity, written consent was not collected. Demographic information was collected within the questionnaire to categorize the sample. Upon completion of the survey questionnaire, the respondent was asked if they wanted to keep the cover letter for their own personal records. A total of 15 respondents chose to keep the letter.

The use of questionnaire surveys for this research had various strengths and weaknesses. An evident strength was the rapid response rate. Upon introduction and a brief explanation of the research, the individual was immediately capable of refusing participation. A second strength was the ability to complete several questionnaires in a short period of time. The questionnaire was structured to gather vital information through clear questions, without taking too long to complete. A maximum of ten minutes to complete the survey was mentioned to each participant. Furthermore, the researcher carried three clipboards; therefore three people could participate simultaneously. The researcher did not want to have any potential influence on the answers or time allocation and would step back while the participant completed the survey, ensuring she was visible to participants if any questions arose. This allowed the participant to take as much time as needed and feel comfortable. Finally, the pre-determined set of questions gathered the desired information.

3.2.4 Participant Observation

The researcher engaged in participant observation during the entirety of the field research. This occurred during both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Observations were written down in a notebook that the researcher would bring everywhere. Observations were able to help the researcher probe further on certain questions during key informant interviews. One instance includes the old brand mark advertised on top of a building in the Castries harbour (see Figure 4). This was mentioned in an interview and it was explained that this had not yet been replaced because that building in particular was soon to be demolished in order to develop the waterfront.

Figure 4: Old brand mark on roof in the Castries harbour

(Photo by Smith, 2009)

While conducting the qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires, the researcher introduced herself as a graduate student conducting research on destination branding in Saint Lucia. There was no deception purposefully applied to any data collection methods. Her role was always known to participants and therefore adhered to the "Observer as Researcher" attributes of qualitative observations (Creswell, 2009).

3.2.5 Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources helped ensure the validity of this research project. Upon completion of the key informant interviews, the researcher would ask the participant if they could provide any

additional sources for the purpose of acquiring further information. These sources have enhanced the quality of the research and provided further knowledge that may have been surpassed during the interview process. Secondary data sources that were obtained through this process include three PowerPoint presentations, one journal article and one essay outlining the role of the SLTB, two compact discs consisting of the entire branding process from FutureBrand, and various excel files of statistical tourism data from the research department of the SLTB. Additionally, other significant secondary data sources were retrieved through an extensive Internet search.

Further methods were applied to enhance the quality of the research and ensure triangulation. Travel magazines were continuously examined for advertising from the SLTB as well as for articles discussing the island. The national newspaper, the St. Lucia STAR, was accessed online daily to remain informed on current events transpiring throughout the nation. Additionally, the researcher visited 10 travel agencies in three South-Western Ontario cities throughout the months of March, April, and May of the year 2010, to acquire information concerning their knowledge of Saint Lucia. A list of pre-determined questions was compiled to assess the frequency of which the travel agency was involved in arranging travel for customers to the island (see Appendix D). When collecting this information the researcher would always identify herself and the scope of her research. The researcher did not mention that she had previously travelled to Saint Lucia as she wanted to identify the scope of information available to those interested in travelling to the island.

3.3 Data Analyses

3.3.1 Qualitative Analyses

All notes and audio-recordings collected throughout the field research were transcribed while in Saint Lucia. Semi-structured interviews took place in Saint Lucia with key individuals involved in promoting the country as well as tourism service providers. Semi-structured interviews were deemed

most suitable for this research as they provide guidance for the interview, yet enable the interviewee to "respond freely within their own frame of reference" (Hankinson, 2009, p. 104). In order to ensure consistency throughout all interviews conducted, questions were developed prior to arrival, with room left for probing. The following areas of discussion formed the interview guide: (1) SLTB background, (2) brand development, (3) brand success and brand future, (4) predominant activities and target markets, and (5) recommendations for further research. The official interview guide is located at the end of this thesis; please see Appendix A. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher transcribed them and e-mailed the interviewee a copy to provide them with the ability to make any final changes and ensure participant satisfaction. The researcher then proceeded to use content analysis to examine the information collected. Coding the qualitative data was done by using colour coded schemes (Creswell, 2009). The researcher read over each of the interviews and observed fifteen emerging themes; the themes were then merged into seven prominent categories that were reoccurring throughout the data. The seven emerging categories were then condensed into four prominent themes: branding, marketing, the role of tourism entities, and the future of tourism development (see Appendix E). These themes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.3.2 Quantitative Analyses

Quantitative data analyses occurred through the use of the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). This tool was valuable to data analysis and fundamental in understanding the results. The Likert scale, ranking, close-ended and open-ended questions were input into the program using a numerical coding scheme unique to each question. Open-ended questions were collapsed into various categories determined by similarities in the answers provided, and coded accordingly. Data of the nominal scale of measurement were analysed using descriptive statistics. To explore the relationship between variables, the chi-squared test for independence was

applied. Significance was determined at the 0.05 level. Results from the data analysis will be

identified and explained in Chapter 5.

3.4 Research Challenges, Limitations, Delimitations and Opportunities

Various limitations and challenges were dealt with throughout this research. Prior to departure the

researcher thought arranging interviews would be a simple task. There was a great deal of difficulty

attaining interviews with members of the SLTB and other tourism related entities throughout the

island. Individuals with whom the researcher was able to interview were of great value to this

research and their time is greatly appreciated.

An apparent limitation to this research was the amount of time spent on the island. Although

five weeks was believed to be more than sufficient prior to departure, upon arrival in Saint Lucia it

became evident that more time would have been very useful. The time constraint was caused by a

lack of finances, a typical struggle for many students. It is suggested to have arrangements for

additional time if necessary for those conducting similar research in the future. An additional

limitation of this research that was recognized upon arrival to Saint Lucia was an embezzlement

scandal unfolding within the SLTB. Various media outlets were reporting a case of governmental

embezzlement of tourism funding and will be further discussed in the following chapter.

An apparent delimitation for this research was the lack of residential participation. These

individuals would have been able to provide different insight regarding the destination brand and their

perceptions of the island. A second delimitation for this research was the requirement that

respondents were able to fluently comprehend English. The participant had to understand verbal

communication occurring between them and the researcher as well as complete the questionnaire

without assistance. This requirement did prove to hamper results as a Spanish cruise ship docked in

the Castries harbour once weekly with a maximum capacity of 1350 passengers (SLASPA, 2008). By

excluding these individuals, the researcher may have lost valuable insight concerning the destination

brand from a large market. An additional delimitation was the requirement for respondents to be in Saint Lucia for a minimum of three days prior to completing the questionnaire. This ensured that the respondents had the necessary time to gain insight regarding their vacation and the island itself. Furthermore, this ensured that they have had the opportunity to relax and reflect on the accuracy of their perceptions.

Finally, this research provides an opportunity to examine tourists' perceptions of a specific case study and dissect the manner in which their perception was formed. The examination of their attitudes and perceptions had facilitated the development of a conceptual model suggested to assess the effectiveness of a destination brand; a tool that is anticipated to be adapted and applied in future research within academic publications.

3.5 Summary

This chapter began with a brief introduction regarding the identification of a lack of existing literature that can be pertinently reproduced for this research. The case specific methodology presented in this chapter is capable of being reproduced throughout other destinations. Subsequently, justification for conducting this genre of research in Saint Lucia was identified. The author continued to outline the research framework, discussing the mixed-methods approach, identifying both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data analyses techniques as well as challenges, limitations, delimitations and opportunities were then discussed, thus concluding the research approach and methods chapter.

Chapter 4
The Saint Lucian Context

This chapter outlines background information pertaining to the tourism industry in Saint Lucia. The purpose of this chapter is to provide further information on aspects discussed in the literature review within the Saint Lucian context. The chapter begins with a broad overview of Saint Lucian history, politics, tourism, and other significant socio-cultural information. This is followed by a discussion of the previous Saint Lucian destination brand and the process undertaken to develop the new destination brand. The role of various Saint Lucian tourism entities will be examined, as are future tourism development prospects. Finally, film-induced tourism will be discussed briefly as the island was recently showcased on *"The Bachelor"*, an American reality television show. This wide-spread advertisement brought Saint Lucia into the homes of over a million viewers and could have thus sparked interest for future travel.

4.1 The History of Tourism in Saint Lucia

4.1.1 Historical background to Tourism in Saint Lucia

Having historically relied on agricultural exports, Saint Lucia altered the focus of their main economic driver in the late 20th century. Upon losing preferential treatment of the banana industry, the government shifted focus towards the development of tourism as the primary economic driver in the late 1990's (Rough Guides, 2006; Tulsie, 2006). Improvements were made within the hospitality sector of the tourism industry in 2007 in preparation for the cricket World Cup (Oxford Economic Country Briefings, 2008, p. 3). The diversity of the island's history has established the existence of several unique cultures throughout the nation. Gaining full independence in 1979, the nation had previously been governed by both the British and the French:

> To St. Lucia's complex cultural mosaic, the British contributed their language,
> educational system, and legal and political structure. French culture is more evident in

the arts--music, dance, and Creole patois, which stands alongside the official language of English. ... African traditions have survived the repressions of slavery and servitude to become the strongest element in St. Lucian culture today. (Original official guide to St. Lucia, 2010, ¶5)

The presence of various influential factors towards local culture is intriguing and offers a breadth of exciting experiences for tourists.

4.1.2 Tourism as Economic Development

Similar to the small island states within proximity of Saint Lucia, tourism has been an important economic driver for several decades. Having originally focused on being a sun, sand, and sea destination, Saint Lucia recently shifted focus to cultural and environmental forms of tourism development (Crick, 2003). While the island hosts a variety of accommodations suitable for the typical mass tourist seeking an all-inclusive vacation, Saint Lucia is not limited to this genre of tourism. The diversity of accommodations generates pride, as explained by one key informant: "from the exclusive to the ultra-modern, to the all-inclusive to the mom and pop's operation, if you are with a backpack and you just want a bed for the night, all of these are available" (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009). The accommodation sector is not the only element on the island featuring diversity. Local culture differs from the South to the North of the island, as does the physical geography and landscape, offering a plethora of experiences. The diversification of tourism products and services available enables the island to attract a range of individuals thus enhancing the island's appeal globally and encouraging greater tourist arrivals from various target markets.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2009), the Saint Lucian "travel & tourism economy employment is estimated at 26,000 jobs in 2009, 37.1% of total employment, or 1 in every 2.7 jobs. By 2019, this should total 35,000 jobs, 42.2% of total employment, or 1 in every 2.4 jobs" (p. 6). A local tourism transport provider discussed its importance: "tourism, as an industry provides the avenues for all other industries – manufacturing, service, agriculture ... tourism is

important also as it is the main income earner for the government at this point in time" (O. Augier, personal communication, July 21, 2009). Crick (2003) noted tourism as being the primary industry for Saint Lucia in terms of GDP; therefore, policy and planning are essential to govern the industry and provide stability to citizens.

Being a small island state, over-reliance on tourism can be dangerous due to the island's vulnerability to global economic shocks, threat of natural disasters, dependence on foreign airlines and slow-moving pace of technology transfer (Jules, 2005; Lazare, Antoine, & Samuel, 2001, p. 37). Product diversification has helped the island attract a variety of visitors during different seasons and partially mitigate such weaknesses. In an effort to sustain tourist arrivals year-round, Saint Lucia has adopted several annual events during low season. Litvin and Mouri (2009) discussed how greater economic success can be achieved through strategic "use of tourism promotional tax dollars to create festivals and events that provide visitors a special reason to visit" (p. 158). The Saint Lucia Jazz Festival, occurring annually in May, attracts close to ten thousand tourists. One key informant explains the desire to keep this event to several thousand visitors: "we're not looking for the 20 thousand, 25 thousand people to attend, ten thousand - eight thousand people is unique, it's a nice close setting you can really enjoy" (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009). Artists and bands perform an outdoor concert on Pigeon Island and the performers are changed annually to encourage repeat visitation. The Carnival is a three week long event attracting tourists and participants from the Caribbean region and abroad. Various events and competitions highlight Saint Lucian culture and foster national pride. The Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) takes place every November. It is a trans-Atlantic yachting rally departing from the Canary Islands and concludes in Saint Lucia; attracting more than 250 yachts from more than 25 countries worldwide (Yachting in St. Lucia, 2010).

> We market a lot of those special events, but primarily for us is that we want to always
> ensure that in doing all of these, that every aspect - every aspect, is of a certain standard.

Because we recognize that our competition is not the Caribbean, it's the World. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

Marketing the island is no easy task; it comprises an amalgamation of individuals and entities. A tourism authority is essential to ensure success as well as growth and development within the tourism sector. Tourism entities responsible for marketing Saint Lucia as a destination will be discussed below.

4.2 Saint Lucian Tourism Entities

The SLTB functions as the implementing arm for marketing and advertising of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. The mission statement of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation is as follows: "to manage the Tourism and Civil Aviation industries in a professional, ethical and responsive manner by stimulating marketing and promoting investments that are culturally sensitive and sustainable thereby exceeding visitors' expectations and resulting in improved national welfare" (source: plaque in office). While the mandate of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation is to outline policy and dictate budget and development projects, the SLTB is in charge of achieving the goals set forth by the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. "While the Ministry of Tourism concentrates on developing policy and standards for the industry, they thought it necessary to find means of having an agency, while supported by government funding, that specifically targeted the marketing of the island" (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009). International promotions and partnerships that showcase accessibility to the island are all conducted by the SLTB.

> The Saint Lucia Tourist Board operates under the Tourism Ministry Development Act of 1982 which was subsequently amended in 1993, 1996, and 2002, but not substantially. So the act provides the tourist board with a very broad mandate largely oriented around the marketing of Saint Lucia, it also includes mandates to undertake product development, collect information, and organize events. (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

The goals of the SLTB have been outlined as the following: "to market Saint Lucia overseas, to bring

more clients, more visiting paying guests into Saint Lucia, to maintain the image of Saint Lucia in the

international market" (W. Octave, personal communication, August 5, 2009).

In addition to the public sector, the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA) is a

private non-profit membership organisation with the following mission statement:

> To maintain an effective and financially viable Association geared to delivering
> membership satisfaction and benefits, by serving as an active lobby and a medium for
> implementing programmes of action to facilitate the promotion, security, profitability
> and sustainable growth of the tourism industry. (SLHTA, 2010)

One key informant continued to discuss the SLHTA and the benefits of this organization to property

owners on the island:

> So anything that is part of the general component of the tourism plan all follow the
> policy guidelines of the Ministry. The other aspect of it is another body which is called
> the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association and their concerns, whilst it's a
> registration only organization, they only see after the interests of those who are
> registered. But they are critical in terms of speaking to the formulation of policies to the
> Ministry. So for instance, if the Ministry is going to put together a policy that is going to
> hurt the interests of the small properties, they would obviously be the ones who speak
> out and alert them. If it's going to become heritage tourism in Saint Lucia, they will
> obviously be in a position to sort of be the ones in battle in discussions that take place.
> So in a sense all of these organizations are critical, but of course the government would
> be called the grand-father of all the organizations within the Ministry of Tourism.
> (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

In addition to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, the SLTB, and the SLHTA, other regional

tourism organizations also contribute to the Saint Lucian tourism sector. These other organizations

include the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism

Association (CHTA). The importance of these linkages between tourism organizations was discussed

by a key informant:

> The Saint Lucia Tourist Board, of course because of its miniature role, it is
> necessary to obviously have linkages with other agencies- specifically such as the
> Caribbean Tourism Organization, and that is critical because that is the central

body that sees the general interest for all of the Caribbean. ... If we stand alone then we stand to lose. We are also members of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, and so we discuss at that level what are the priorities. In a way these organizations are like think tanks and offer a sort of guide to sort of small, miniature islands like us. We may not necessarily have financial resources but want the advantages of what these sorts of organizations can bring to us. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

The collaboration of these tourism entities along with the St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme (SLHTP) and the Heritage Tourism Association of St. Lucia (HERITAS) (discussed in section 4.3.1 of this chapter), helps guide the tourism industry in Saint Lucia towards sustainable development. The collaboration between various tourism organizations both nationally and regionally is beneficial to the tourism sector and provides various benefits to stakeholders. A particular drawback attributed to the involvement of various organizations concerns the communication necessary to develop successful results. Clarity is essential to minimize miscommunication, apparent in the following statement discussing the confusion of the term policy and what it implies:

It depends on how you define what policy is. … To me policy is more broad, grow the business, or, I want you to have a sustainable tourism rather than a mass market tourism. So you would limit the number of visitors but offer a higher quality and a higher expenditure. But when the minister says I want to host a particular event, I suppose that's policy. But to me it's much more tactical. I mean policy would be for sake of argument, I want to improve relations with the cruise industry and that therefore as the tourist board you would sit down and determine the ways in which you think that can be achieved within a reasonable budget. And you would say, well what are the objectives when you say you want to improve relations. Well, more ships to call here, I want more ships to call in the summer, I want them to stay longer in port, I want them to buy more from the local provisioners [sic], I want to have more Saint Lucians employed on the cruise ships. Now those are policy objectives and we would sit down and say well the ways in which we can achieve this is that we can go and meet with food suppliers. (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

A clear distinction of policy among stakeholders can lead to development that is more accurately structured and properly organized. Policy guidelines help shape tourism development and should be detailed to minimize uncertainty.

4.2.1 Enhancing the Tourism Product

The identification of best practices for tourism marketing highlighted several aspects needing improvement to enhance the tourism product (Ministry of Trade and Industry Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2004). This document noted a need for national branding relevant to the tourism sector in order to relay a consistent message and image that is perceived abroad. The document also identified the significance of a successful brand that can be used for years, noting a failure of consistent marketing in the past: "the fact that it [brand mark] has changed perhaps 15 times in 15 years demonstrates the inconsistency in St Lucia's marketing" (Ministry of Trade and Industry Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2004, p. 4). The ability to enhance the tourism product requires communication between various tourism organizations. The tourism consultant for the SLTB identified the need for communication between tourism organizations:

> The successful promotion of a tourist destination is a partnership between the various stakeholders who do have some control over the various elements of the marketing mix and the tourist board itself. Its effectiveness has to be understood in that context and goals and targets set accordingly. (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

Therefore, ensuring clear communication between tourism organizations that have different mandates can increase the success and clarity of the available tourism product. This is particularly important for a small island state such as Saint Lucia, where tourism is critical to the national economy. The World Trade Organization (2007) noted that "the tourism sector continues to be the lead sector and engine of growth in the Saint Lucian economy, as it continues to attract significant investment with ongoing expansion of the island's room capacity" (p. 6). Therefore, while the tourism sector continues to grow, in both scale and significance, it is critical that guiding policies and supporting organizations are in place to enable proper development and foster long-term success.

4.2.2 Political Turmoil

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher became aware of several events taking place in Saint Lucia that may have influenced the degree of information made available from the SLTB. One event in particular was an embezzlement scandal that had occurred in 2008 and was being investigated by the SLTB in association with police officials (Ally, 2010a; Ally, 2010b). Various media outlets were reporting the details of the investigation throughout the nation during the weeks when field research was conducted. This negative attention towards the SLTB was not well accepted throughout the nation. The SLTB was already under speculations from citizens for the decision to undergo re-branding initiatives during harsh economic times when the finances used could have been allocated to national development and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Furthermore, much controversy was apparent surrounding the Tourism Consultant, Dr. James Hepple. Nicholas (2009b) noted:

> It was in November of 2007 when it was announced without warning, as with most Chastanet ideas, that Trinidadian Dr James Hepple was being brought to Saint Lucia as a marketing consultant "to help reform Saint Lucia's tourism industry." Under a three-year contract it was disclosed that Dr Hepple would receive an annual salary of US$150,000 tax free. (¶4)

The decision to hire Dr. Hepple was not unanimous among those involved, particularly as he is a non-national. To make matters worse, the tourism consultant has since resigned prior to the completion of his contract upon accepting a new position abroad, causing much uproar from citizens and press (Nicholas, 2009b; Williams, 2009).

Finally, further political turmoil is apparent in the overall government structure of the SLTB and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation is slated to set the policy, while the SLTB is slated to execute marketing initiatives. Two key informants noted discrepancies within this structure due to the Minister making decisions without support from other board members. One key informant noted that "in recent times, we have had cases where the Minister

has taken decisions for the Board, without consulting the Board. And it is because he has the power to

do that as the Minister" (O. Augier, personal communication, July 21, 2009). While the other

commented about ineffective spending,

> When you take 30% of your budget and you spend it on special events, whereas we can't
> spend anywhere close to that on something like this [re-branding the country], people
> will legitimately ask, "well why would you get into that if you knew that you weren't
> able to implement and execute?" (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

4.2.3 The Rationale to Re-brand Saint Lucia

The late former Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the honourable Sir John Compton noted the

competitiveness of tourism regionally and globally; "St. Lucia may [b]e beautiful, but we must realise

that we are not the only pebble on the beach, and to meet the competition we must mobilise the best

brains and our resources" (Caribbean Net News, 2006, ¶5). One particular marketing strategy used to

boost awareness was the re-branding of the island (see Figure 5). The entire process occurred rapidly;

it began in August of 2008 and was officially launched in January of 2009. Louis Lewis, the Director

of Tourism for Saint Lucia explained the rationale for the new destination brand:

> This new logo is a more direct representation of the uniqueness associated with Saint
> Lucia. It reflects the shape of our iconic Pitons in the colours of our national flag. That in
> itself instills [*sic*] a sense of ownership. Logos used in the past could have been adopted
> by other destinations with ease. However, our current one is unique to Saint Lucia.
> ("One on one with the new Tourist Board director", 2009)

While the brand development firm, FutureBrand (2009b), further identified the essence of the new

design:

> Our new brandmark traces the shape of The Pitons, illustrated as a waving flag. This
> island landscape uses our national colours, evoking the tropical feel of crystal blue
> waters and a golden sky. The elegantly tapered lines have a sense of forward momentum,
> and the crisp stylized topography imbue this identity with a sense of pride and
> refinement. (p. 22)

Figure 5: The old (left) and the new (right) destination brand mark

(Source: SLTB, 2009)

The SLTB ensured the re-branding procedure would be completed within several months due to the opportunity to launch the new brand at the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Marketplace conference held in Saint Lucia in January 2009. This conference was ideal for networking and island promotion to business partners and destination competitors. One key informant noted how the island took advantage of the opportunity:

> We wanted to take advantage of the fact that we, Saint Lucia, was the first in the Eastern Caribbean islands to host such a big event... a major show that brought in business partners and key stakeholders who operate as travel agents from around the world and so it was the only opportunity that can captivate them and get their attention, so it was good time to do it. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

FutureBrand, a brand development firm based out of New York, was responsible for the re-branding strategy of the country. The discovery phase for Saint Lucia included a document review and assessment, a Saint Lucia brand review, interviews with global executives and local experts, a review of blogs and social networking sites, a Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) analysis for auditing competing nation brands identified by the SLTB (Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Costa Rica, and Jamaica), and a Country Brand Index (CBI) based competitor analysis measuring the success of the peer's brand profiles (FutureBrand, 2009a).The brand identity was then created upon the analysis of the data collected throughout the market research phase.

The brand development firm understood that Saint Lucia had a desire to go from a limited destination to a multifaceted offering, noting four key brand components: (1) nature and topography, (2) culture and history, (3) diverse attractions, events and activities, and (4) friendly, welcoming people. Evoking both functional and emotional characteristics, the four key brand attributes identified were lush, boutique, mosaic, and genuine. Key attributes for Saint Lucia to emphasize included (1) art and culture, (2) history, (3) families, (4) safety, (5) quality products, and (6) fine dining, as these are all attributes that peer countries have not excelled (FutureBrand, 2009a). Three positioning concepts had emerged upon analysis of the key brand attributes, identified as (1) intimate, (2) connoisseur, and (3) vivid/tapestry (FutureBrand, 2009a). Upon completion of the research and development phases, stakeholders held a vote and "discerning" was identified to be the brand positioning strategy. FutureBrand (2009a) described the discerning positioning concept as the following:

> While small in size, St. Lucia possesses an abundant number of unusual and distinct experiences. Discerning travelers seek out the exceptional and the authentic — occasions for discovering what is unique, intimate and genuine. St. Lucia embodies these qualities with a magnetic appeal, making it an alluring and premium destination, instilling a sense of pride for citizens and providing a diverse set of opportunities for investors. The sincere warmth and friendliness of St. Lucians create a welcoming environment. Bold topography is beautiful, diverse and spectacular. Creole cuisine and fine homemade rums are epicurean delights. An exciting array of cultural events dazzle and range from a renowned jazz festival to weekly street parties. Historical sites and quaint communities pay tribute to the country's intriguing history. A wide range of hotels, resorts, spas and marinas provide stylish accommodations for the most demanding travelers. St. Lucia's manifold charms and attractions draw aficionados of the Caribbean experience. Colorful and alive, St. Lucia fosters romance and leaves an indelible mark on all who visit and all who call it home. (p. 31)

The new positioning statement for Saint Lucia is all-encompassing of the rich and unique culture and diversity that is apparent throughout the island. The director of marketing for the SLTB described the essence of the re-branding strategy:

> The whole premise of the new logo is to showcase the diversity of Saint Lucia as a product. Basically, before Saint Lucia was 'simply beautiful' and that's all it said- that we were simply beautiful. We are a beautiful island, but it didn't really highlight the diversity that we offer – the diversity of accommodations, the

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diversity of activities, the diversity of people, history, so we really wanted
something to capture all of that. (W. Octave, personal communication, August 6,
2009)

Furthermore, another interview participant identified the importance to Saint Lucian

nationals of the new brand and how the country is portrayed through this new brand:

The current logo represents, it depicts the Pitons. But it also incorporates the
national colours and of course the colours of the flag of Saint Lucia - which is
obviously the nice blue that represents the sky, the warmth of the people. The
yellow, that comes out and speaks to the fact of the sunsets that we have, you
know the perfect sunset. The black, that really represents most of the
pigmentation that we have. And that in its wholesomeness represents who we are
as a people and what we have to offer to the various people who come to Saint
Lucia. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

The new brand-mark is a portrayal of the country's landscape and the national identity.

4.3 The Future of Tourism Development in Saint Lucia

In order to enhance the overall tourism experience for all stakeholders involved, tourism policy

makers are currently in the process of adopting a framework that places greater importance on

sustainability. The notion of "village tourism" has been publicised throughout the media within Saint

Lucia as the new approach to tourism development. Saarinen (2007) argued that "tourism can be a

means of providing economic development in peripheral regions" (p. 43). The new focus for tourism

development is the local communities and their unique attributes that distinguish them from one

another. According to the Saint Lucia National Land Policy (2003), "there has been a geographic

concentration of tourism activity in the north-west corridor" (p. 15); therefore, the introduction of the

village tourism concept should help disperse tourist activity throughout the island. This distribution of

wealth may bring many benefits to both locals and tourists alike, in addition to enhancing the overall

economic structure of the island.

4.3.1 Village Tourism

Saint Lucia's new focus on village tourism has been chronicled by two well-read travel magazines, the December 2009 issue of *'Travel & Leisure'* as well as the January/February 2010 issue of *'Caribbean Travel and Life'*. Community inclusion and involvement at various levels within the tourism development process is vital for effective and sustainable development. Nicholas, Thapa and Ko (2009) support this argument by stating that "community involvement is considered to be the cornerstone of sustainable tourism development" (p. 396). The ability for local citizens to participate in different sectors of tourism development within their own community will enhance pride as well as make a positive contribution to society. Many individuals who become involved in such projects may have been born and raised in these communities with no desire to live elsewhere. This degree of attachment to their community should be valued and enhanced by tourism development. Nicholas et al. (2009) further argued "community attachment can play a key role in influencing the perceptions and attitudes of residents towards changes or developments in their community" (p. 395). Therefore, the national strategy to adopt village tourism that highlights the unique features of each community throughout Saint Lucia is enlightening and may help achieve a synergy of local involvement in the tourism industry.

Saint Lucia is well recognized for its lush beauty and picturesque Piton mountains, yet there are ample other attractions that do not receive comparable promotion. Litvin and Mouri (2009) argued "once attracted to the destination by the "magnetism" of its featured "iconic" attractions, then efforts should be made to disperse visitors among various areas beyond the featured attractions" (p. 160), village tourism is an ideal option to achieve this harmony. Saint Lucia is host to two weekly street parties that are a must-see for visitors to the island. The Friday night street party of Gros Islet in the North part of the island showcases local vendors selling souvenirs as well as food and beverages. Music plays loudly while tourists and locals amalgamate on the main street and dance to local music

(personal observation). Also on Friday nights is the Anse-La-Raye Fish Fry located along the South-Eastern shore of the island mid-way between Castries and Soufriere. Local citizens cook various kinds of fish in the street with locals and tourists taking part. These weekly festivals are vital to the communities in which they occur as they produce an influx to the economy with the money staying in the community. Crick (2003) noted that "part of the internal marketing strategy is therefore to make sure that communities benefit directly from tourism. Weekly street festivals are community sponsored with the role of the tourism authorities being merely to promote them and give guidance where necessary" (p. 164). Cooper (2004) further noted the positive social impacts arising from community-based tourism initiatives. The communities and events are an attraction as the ability for interaction showcases the friendliness of the local people and can result in an authentic experience for the tourist.

Initiated in 1998 by the Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL), the St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme (SLHTP) was created to help generate direct benefits of tourism for the poor (Renard, 2001). The mission of the programme is stated as:

> ...To establish heritage tourism as a viable and sustainable component of St. Lucia's tourism product by facilitating a process of education, capacity building, product development, marketing, credit access and the promotion of environmental and cultural protection for the benefit of host communities and St. Lucians. (Renard, 2001, p. 2)

A predominant achievement of this programme was the development of heritage tours and the formation of an association responsible for further development and marketing of the heritage sites. The Heritage Tourism Association of St. Lucia (HERITAS) was established in 1999 to effectively improve and market national heritage sites around the island. The mission statement dictates the desire to offer authentic tourism experiences:

> To provide a heritage tourism product, through collaborative planning, development and marketing of heritage sites and attractions, which offers a unique St. Lucian experience to the visitor, while ensuring greater community involvement, environmental sustainability, and distribution of economic benefits to the wider St. Lucian population. (HERITAS, 2007)

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Renard (2001) noted that if pro-poor tourism was effectively designed and implemented, "tourism-related activities can provide direct social, educational and cultural benefits to local users and domestic visitors" (p.14). The creation of a voluntary based group of dedicated individuals, such as HERITAS, is certainly a positive development for future success (Figure 6).

Figure 6: HERITAS attraction

(Photo by Smith, 2009)

With a focus on village tourism, the Saint Lucian Government is taking action to "further diversify the economy and strengthen the linkages between agriculture, tourism and industry" (Government of Saint Lucia, 2009a, p. 14). The development of Village Tourism Incorporated, an umbrella brand currently being created by government, encourages locals to open small hotels and restaurants in their communities (Lindberg, 2009). The island's Minister of Tourism, Allen Chastanet, explains the Village Tourism Incorporated notion:

> Our goal is that any properties below a three-star rating be exclusively owned by
> nationals. ... Every small property must become a member, in exchange, the government

will pay for the marketing, the accounting, product development, even interior decorators. New hotels must meet certain criteria, and existing hotels that don't meet the standard, we'll put money into help them refurbish. (as cited in Lindberg, 2009)

The island is slated to be "subdivided into zones, with each division themed to target a specific aspect of tourism playing on the four key attributes: lush, boutique, mosaic and genuine" (Nicholas, 2009a). Each zone will focus on tourism initiatives that highlight the unique characteristics of the region; each zone will have their own logo, tagline, and keywords (see Table 1). Benefits arising from village tourism development include community pride, creation of employment opportunities, preservation of culture and traditions, minimized economic leakages and enhancing the multiplier effect within the communities (Crick, 2003; Nicholas et al., 2009; Saint Lucia National Vision Plan, 2009).

Table 1: Summary of the Saint Lucia National Vision Plan (2009) for village tourism

Villages	Tagline	Keywords
Babonneau, Grande Anse	The Tribal Coast	untouched culture and wilderness
Dennery, Micoud	Celebrating the Local Colour	sing, dance, fish
Anse La Raye, Canaries, Laborie, Choiseul	The Creole Coast	true island flavour
Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, Pigeon Island	Marina Bay	dock, play, lime
The Pitons, Soufriere, National Forest	Heart of the Caldera	dive, hike, discover
Castries	The Harbour of Lights	port, capital, market
Vieux Fort	The Urban South	sports, industry, education

The concept of village tourism for Saint Lucia boasts great potential however, it is a process that will be both time consuming and costly. If implemented properly through effective policy guidelines, the future of tourism in Saint Lucia could be dramatically different than that of the current product.

4.3.2 Infrastructure Improvements

Improvements to national infrastructure are highlighted in the National Vision Plan to enhance the island's tourism product. Slated improvements include the development of necessary ring roads, highway expansions, and rehabilitation to existing roads in need of repair. Marine transportation improvements include increased berthing capacity for cruise ships and a waterfront boardwalk in the Castries harbour, the construction of a cruise pier at the South of the island in Vieux Fort, expansions to inter-island ferry services, and the development of a water-taxi service. Air transportation is expected to improve through the enhancement of the G.F.L. Charles Airport located in Castries used for small Caribbean flights, in addition to the re-development of Hewanorra International Airport in Vieux Fort used mainly for international flights (Government of Saint Lucia, 2009a; Saint Lucia National Vision Plan, 2009). These slated improvements have the ability to enhance the available tourism product for tourists in the future, enhance the quality of life for all Saint Lucians, as well as generate employment opportunities throughout the completion of the tasks highlighted above.

4.4 Film Induced Tourism

Film-induced tourism boasts the opportunity for showcasing a destination to the global audience. The portrayal of any destination throughout various forms of media has the potential to provoke interest in foreign cultures and distant regions of the World. Hudson and Ritchie (2006a) have defined film tourism as "tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination's being featured on television, video, or the cinema screen" (p. 387). The portrayal of Saint Lucia in film, both movies and broadcast television, has granted the island great potential for the tourism economy. Film-induced tourism presents the opportunity to evoke the imagination, influence viewers to visit the projected destination and improve the image of the place, thus acting as a pull factor for travel (Beeton, 2005; Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005; Im & Chon, 2008; Inglis, 2000; Jewel & McKinnon, 2008; Mercille, 2005; Tasci, 2009).

The filming of the final two episodes of the popular American reality television series *"The Bachelor: On the Wings of Love"* occurred in Saint Lucia in 2010. Speculations from the SLTB arose regarding the positive boost to the tourism economy that may result (Government of Saint Lucia, 2010). Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Senator the Honourable Allen Chastanet was quoted in a press release:

> The Bachelor is one of the top shows on ABC – one of the top networks in the United States. Last year, the show had over two [twenty] million viewers, and if we begin to do the maths, one percent of twenty million is two hundred thousand considering that last year we only had one hundred thousand visitors from the US. I think the timing of this show could not be better. (Government of Saint Lucia, 2009b)

In addition to the show itself, the numerous television commercials broadcast promoting the reality show will also portray scenes of the island. The Director of Tourism stated that "the island ran 15-second television ads in 10 key US markets during the final episode" (St. Lucia Star, 2010, ¶ 4).

Academic literature of film-induced tourism is not widely available and, therefore; an area of interest necessitating further research (Beeton, 2005; Frost, 2006). Although case studies have yet to reveal extensive evidence that presence in the media can be linked to increased tourist arrivals, Hudson and Ritchie (2006a) dictated the benefits of being showcased in the media:

> In an increasingly competitive and crowded marketplace, destination placement in films and TV shows is an attractive marketing vehicle that increases awareness, enhances destination image, and results in significant increases in tourism numbers, succeeding where traditional marketing efforts cannot. Film tourism offers destinations the opportunity to generate significant incremental revenue, tourist visits, and economic development. (p. 395)

Several destinations have exhibited an increase in tourist arrivals having occurred when the film or television series was well-known (Beeton, 2005; Bolan & Williams, 2008; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b; Im & Chon, 2008). There is not enough academic evidence to support any claim that the appearance of Saint Lucia on *"The Bachelor"* will generate an increase in the islands' tourism economy; however, 11.5 million viewers watched the episode airing February 15th, 2010 showcasing the island

and visits to the national tourist website increased 111% the following day (CaribWorldNews, 2010). The season finale aired on March 1st, 2010 also garnered ample attention with 15 million viewers (TV Guide, 2010, ¶ 3). Tourist arrivals are not slated to rise simply due to the appearance on the television show; nonetheless, this is an excellent marketing opportunity to be capitalized by the SLTB.

4.5 Summary

This chapter helped reveal various aspects that influence tourism development on the island. Tourism is a mainstay for the Saint Lucian economy and thus requires policy and planning by the government and other tourism entities such as the SLTB and the SLHTA. The use of the new destination brand needs to be consistent and used in conjunction with effective marketing strategies. The development of village tourism is a step in the right direction, if sustainable policies are implemented; therefore, enabling nationals the opportunity to partake in community development and improve social welfare. Furthermore, having the island showcased on *"The Bachelor"* boasts great potential for increased tourist activity. Statistics indicate great viewership; however, it is important that marketing campaigns be in place to further motivate individuals. Finally, the resources fostering tourism development are present in Saint Lucia, and with the development of the new brand strategy, the island has great potential for success.

Chapter 5
Results

The primary objective of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the new destination brand, according to tourists who visit the island. This thesis evaluated tourists' perceptions and images of Saint Lucia, and assessed the extent of which these perceptions were influenced by the destination brand and other marketing efforts. This thesis also examined the role of the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) in the development of the new destination brand and marketing efforts abroad, in addition to identifying the influence of travel agencies. Presented within this chapter are the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data collected from this mixed-methods research. This chapter is structured based on the re-occurring themes identified through the application of content analysis: branding, tourist attitudes, marketing, and tourism organizations. These broad themes will be subdivided into categorized sections where the results of the data analysis will be discussed.

5.1 Branding

This section is divided into two categories based on the nature of the branding process under examination. The first section begins with relevant information collected from the data pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of the old destination brand. This is followed by an explanation of the decision to omit an associated tagline.

5.1.1 The Old Destination Brand

The old destination brand continues to be of relevance to marketing initiatives undertaken by the SLTB. Information collected through semi-structured interviews notes the ongoing application of the old destination brand to current marketing approaches. The logo with the adjacent tagline "simply beautiful" was replaced in January 2009 with a new logo that does not have a supporting tagline (refer back to Figure 6, located in chapter 4). Two key informants stated an aversion to the old logo

suggesting it was too broad as it can "move across any product category" (J. Hepple, personal

communication, July 31, 2009), and that it "didn't really highlight the diversity that we offer" (W.

Octave, personal communication, August 5, 2009). The old brand had been deemed ineffective due to

"very inconsistent and limited marketing over a period of time" (J. Hepple, personal communication,

July 31, 2009). In opposition to those statements, two additional key informants were passionate for

the old logo having stated: "simply beautiful, which I think, in two words described what Saint Lucia

is to a lot of people... if I have to look at it [the new destination brand] in comparison with the older

one, I prefer the older one" (O. Augier, personal communication, July 21, 2009). The second key

informant stated their enthusiasm for the old brand:

> I still feel in my heart deep down consciously that 'Simply Beautiful' is one of the best
> taglines that has ever been created, because everything about Saint Lucia is simply
> beautiful... It can't change ... what has changed is really the symbol. ... I still call Saint
> Lucia simply beautiful. I just don't think anybody can take that tagline. I'll defend it to
> the bone. I won't create a war with it, but I will certainly defend it because it is very
> uncommon that you can find a place that the culture changes with the terrain. Some
> places, if you look at the Middle East, where some countries are created to look like the
> Caribbean - this is artificial, this is not simply beautiful. (Government official, personal
> communication, August 4, 2009)

An emotional connection is apparent for those who liked the old brand, while this integral component

to an effective destination brand is absent with those who found fault. When asked about the

reasoning for developing a new destination brand, one key informant noted the need to better

represent Saint Lucia as a whole:

> I've always said in any advertising we do that what we've become famous for is the
> Pitons, you see the Pitons and you know it's Saint Lucia. And significantly I think that
> was the thinking that went into it [developing a new destination brand]. Essentially too,
> is that a brand should not just speak to a visitor trying to get to Saint Lucia, but what we
> Saint Lucians think about our country. (Government official, personal communication,
> August 4, 2009)

The decision to develop a new brand was partially due to a sense that the old destination brand was

no longer doing justice to the country. The development of the new destination brand then became the

medium used to bring Saint Lucia into a competitive field with other unique destinations.

Repositioning the tourism product of Saint Lucia with the help of the new destination brand will help

to attract specific target markets, therefore enhancing the likelihood of visitor satisfaction.

5.1.2 The Lack of a Supporting Tagline

The new destination brand does not have an associated tagline with the brand mark, as did the old

destination brand. Despite this, the use of text in conjunction with the new brand mark will be applied

throughout various advertisements. The two iconic words 'simply beautiful' may no longer be

formally attached to the logo; however, the words 'simply beautiful' continue to be used in

advertisements to describe the island (Government official, personal communication, August 4,

2009). This method ensures that the island continues to be depicted as 'simply beautiful' yet allows

flexibility and creativity within advertisement campaigns. Developing an associated tagline can limit

the reach of a brand mark, restricting the brand from achieving potential results in various campaigns

throughout various target markets. Different taglines can be developed that best suit the promotional

campaign, using the same logo. The underlying concept to developing a long-term successful brand is

to ensure that it is interchangeable and not geared specifically towards a certain market (D. Augier,

personal communication, August 10, 2009). The new destination brand mark has been designed in a

manner so that it can eventually become a national brand that is not solely limited to the tourism

sector:

> The branding was not to just speak to tourism related products or tourism related
> services, but to Saint Lucia. For instance, it is my understanding that down the road, if
> the manufacturing sector of Saint Lucia said look here we want to create standards and
> when you get to the real standard where you can relay your product internationally then
> you can use that Saint Lucia brand. So, in a sense it now identifies you as an
> international brand that is coming from Saint Lucia. (Government official, personal
> communication, August 4, 2009)

The ability for this new brand to represent Saint Lucia within various sectors will be beneficial to the country. It enables consistency throughout different sectors that enhance the national economy and boasts the ability to increase awareness of the country within the global marketplace. Although the brand is currently being used solely for the tourism sector, the recognition of the brands' potential and the desire to expand the brand exhibits valuable insight and planning by the SLTB that can benefit many stakeholders.

5.2 Tourist Attitudes

This section is divided into three sections that present the results from the data collected in relation to tourist attitudes. Minimal awareness of the new brand is evident, an effect of insignificant exposure. Furthermore, tourist attitudes towards the new brand will be presented.

5.2.1 Tourist Awareness of the New Brand

Forty-four percent of respondents noted having absolutely no knowledge of the current destination brand. Another 20.9 percent stated having minimal knowledge, while 23.1 percent stated that they were unsure. Eleven percent of respondents noted having some knowledge of the current destination brand, while only one percent of respondents noted being very knowledgeable. Tourists' awareness of the new brand is limited due to a lack of marketing and showcasing of the new destination brand mark (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009).

Furthermore, 78.3 percent noted that they had never seen the logo prior to taking the survey, whereas 21.7 percent had previously seen the logo. These statistics suggest a need to implement greater marketing initiatives that showcase the new destination brand. In addition to the design and development of a brand, an effective branding process includes communicating the identity of the new brand (Anholt, 2007). These results indicate a failure to communicate the brand through a lack of effective exposure both domestically and internationally.

5.2.2 Brand Exposure

The lack of brand exposure thus far can be partially attributed to financial constraints. The process of research and design for the brand development was a costly undertaking. "We spent a lot of money on this, more than we wanted to- but that's fine because we got one of the best firms that you can get to do it" (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009). A lack of available funds to propel the brand strategy can be detrimental to the overall success. The rapid pace at which this new brand was developed has since become delayed due to the inability to financially support effective campaigns:

> That's the problem, because we're not ready for it [the new brand]. Because really since January we've been, apart from these [business cards] and letterheads, and putting the brand mark on our website and so on and so forth, we haven't made a great deal of progress. Because, you know, we never had the money. (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

It is crucial to allocate proper funding that supports the brand after its conception. Involving the local community and other stakeholders may become fundamental to communicating the essence of the brand within the nation and abroad. One key informant noted the following in regards to the presence of the old brand compared to that of the new brand; "I think the older one was more prominent throughout the country, and as a matter of fact I had seen a decal on one or two of the taxis, which I thought was a step in the right direction" (O. Augier, personal communication, July 21, 2009). In retrospect, the old destination brand had more presence throughout the nation as it had been in use for several years as opposed to the new destination brand. The lack of exposure and support for the new destination brand is further discussed by the tourism consultant for the SLTB:

> When you take 30 percent of your budget and you spend it on special events, whereas we can't spend anywhere close to that on something like this, people will legitimately ask well why would you get into that if you knew that you weren't able to implement and execute. (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009)

Further comments from the corporate communications manager of the SLTB regarding implementation and execution of the new brand indicate a lack of time to focus on increasing the

awareness of the new brand. She noted the concentration of efforts towards major events such as the Jazz Festival and Carnival, leading to a shortage of human resources to support community-centered events supporting the new brand (D. Augier, personal communication, August 10, 2009). Methods outlined to enhance the awareness of the brand include public service announcements, newspaper ads, a campaign within the educational system known as Tourism Education And Me (TEAM), in addition to the creation of a fan page on the social networking website Facebook (D. Augier, personal communication, August 10, 2009). The implementation of these initiatives will foster brand awareness and help expose the destination brand, becoming of greater potential benefit for stakeholders.

5.2.3 Tourist Attitudes towards the New Brand

The survey questionnaire targeted tourists' feelings towards the new destination brand mark, and results indicated unfavourable attitudes. Respondents were shown a picture of the current destination logo along with images of the two previous destination logos and asked to select which of the three they found the most visually appealing (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Three destination logos of Saint Lucia

(Source: SLTB, 2009)

The majority of respondents (n=58, 63.7%) chose the oldest logo showcasing a red flower. The new destination logo ranked second among respondents with 18.7 percent (n=17) feeling that it was the most visually appealing, followed by the previous destination logo consisting of the 'simply beautiful' tagline as the least appealing to the sample (n=16, 17.6%). In regards to the concept of destination branding, the proportion of males (84.2%) who reported an understanding of this concept

was significantly different than the proportion of females (57.4%) (X^2=6.23, df=1, p=.013). This suggests that males are more familiar with this marketing technique than are females. In order to clarify any possible misconceptions, a brief statement outlining the role of destination branding was provided on the survey questionnaire.

Table 2: Tourist attitudes towards the new logo (N=89)

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
I like the logo	9.0	21.3	36.0	21.3	12.4
The logo entices me to visit St. Lucia	17.0	34.1	34.1	10.2	4.5
The logo grabs my attention	20.2	33.7	21.3	16.9	7.9
The logo represents the island well	20.2	28.1	23.6	15.7	12.4
The use of different colours is appealing	12.4	21.3	23.6	31.5	11.2
The logo is a modern design	3.4	6.7	29.2	40.4	20.2
The logo portrays the island's natural beauty	30.3	23.6	20.2	18.0	7.9
The logo portrays the diversity of the island's culture	32.6	32.6	25.8	5.6	3.4

When asked about the visual appeal of the new destination logo, negative feelings were noticeable (Table 2). Thirty-six percent of the population stated being neutral when asked if they liked the logo, while 21.3 percent agreed and an additional 21.3 percent disagreed. When asked if the new destination logo entices them to visit the island, 34.1 percent of respondents disagreed while another 34.1 percent of respondents were neutral. Furthermore, 33.7 percent of respondents disagreed that the logo grabs their attention, while 20.2 percent strongly disagreed. A small percentage of respondents (16.9%) agreed with this statement and the minority (7.9%) strongly agreed. The response for the statement: 'the logo represents the island well' was more evenly distributed, with the

greatest percentage, 28.1 percent, disagreeing and only 15.7 percent in agreement. The use of

different colours in the logo was appealing to the respondent sample with 31.5 percent in agreement

and another 11.2 percent who strongly agreed. Furthermore, the majority of the sample was in

agreement that the logo is a modern design: 29.2 percent were neutral, 40.4 percent agreed, and 20.2

percent strongly agreed. Unfortunately, 30.3 percent of respondents strongly disagreed that the logo

portrays the island's natural beauty, while another 23.6 percent disagreed. Finally, 32.6 percent of

respondents strongly disagreed while another 32.6 percent disagreed that the logo portrays the

diversity of the island's culture, while 5.6 percent agreed and only 3.4 percent strongly agreed.

Furthermore, when asked if they were aware that the colours in the logo were the colours of

the national flag, the majority of respondents (57.8%) stated no, while 42.2 percent stated yes.

Additionally, when asked if they were aware that the logo is representative of the iconic Piton

Mountains, the majority of respondents (65.9%) stated no, while 34.1 percent stated yes.

5.3 Marketing

Marketing strategies implemented by a tourism board can be a determinant of the success of a country

as a tourism destination. The development of the new destination brand acts as a fundamental step to

ensuring consistency throughout various campaigns. This section is divided into five sections

discussing different aspects of tourism marketing for Saint Lucia. This section will begin with a

discussion of the geographic markets of which the SLTB focuses their marketing initiatives, followed

by the profile of the sample. This is followed by an examination of tourist arrivals to the island and

the major tourist generating regions. An identification of the tourism products and attractions that are

heavily marketed within these markets is evaluated. Finally, the tourist response to marketing is

examined.

5.3.1 Markets

The geographic markets of which SLTB marketing campaigns are concentrated in consist of the regions offering supporting airlift to Saint Lucia. Important tourist generating regions for Saint Lucia include the United States and Canada, in addition to the United Kingdom, Germany and France. In addition to these long-haul destinations, another important generating region for Saint Lucia includes the surrounding Caribbean islands due to a ferry service. All of these generating regions have their own marketing offices that are coordinated by the SLTB:

> We have a marketing office in the UK which covers Switzerland, Germany and France and also the United Kingdom. We have four managers in the US – North East, South East, Mid West and also South West. And we also have a manager in Canada. And then we have the support office down here. (W. Octave, personal communication, August 5, 2009)

Two key informants noted the need for more focused marketing in the United States due to its proximity to the island and the supporting airlift available throughout various states (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009; Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009). One key informant further explained the reasoning for each tourist originating region developed:

> Marketing is driven primarily by United States because of its close proximity to Saint Lucia; Canada, because we now have a number of direct flights with Air Canada and West Jet. The UK continues to be a big market; we have a close association with the UK. … Germany has always been important to us, we have had some unique and complexities in opening to the German market. At one time we had a direct flight, but that flight stopped in terms of the fall of business, but that is re-opening now and I am happy to say that the German market is opening again. And to support that we've actually opened up an office in Germany. ... France is certainly a key player for us, Saint Lucia and Dominica because we speak the Creole language we are in close proximity with the French nationals. Martinique and Guadeloupe happen to be our biggest markets locally within the Caribbean, and so we've always had the opportunity to share with the visitors. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

The array of originating regions is beneficial to Saint Lucia. The proximity to the North American and Caribbean markets, as well as the historical links to Europe encourages destination loyalty.

5.3.2 Tourist Profiles

The marketing strategies undertaken in the United States and the United Kingdom seem to be effective as the majority of the sample originate from these two places. The characteristics of the respondent population are located in Table 3. Females represent the majority of the sample (n=54, 58.7%), while male participation is smaller (n=38, 41.3%). This could be attributed to the procedure of data collection applied, having approached individuals sitting in lounge chairs on the beach. The gender distribution may be attributed to the possibility that females may be more likely to remain in their seats to tan while males may be more likely to partake in various activities on the beach, such as swimming. Participant observation supported such trends, although academic literature does not provide additional support for these claims.

Of the 92 respondents, a substantial (42.4%) number of respondents had previously travelled to Saint Lucia. The majority of those respondents (58.8%) indicated having previously visited the island one to five times, 26.5 percent had visited six to ten times, and 5.9 percent had visited 11 to 15 times, while a noteworthy 8.8 percent had visited the island more than 16 times indicating annual trips due to ownership in a time-share or villa.

The age range of the sample was fairly evenly distributed. Young adults aged 18 to 24 accounted for 7.6 percent of the sample, respondents aged 25 to 34 accounted for 16.3 percent and individuals aged 35 to 44 accounted for 13.0 percent. Adults aged 45 to 54 represented the largest proportion accounting for 30.4 percent of the sample, while adults aged 55 to 64 accounted for the second largest sample size of 25 percent. Finally, older adults aged 65 or over accounted for seven percent of the overall sample population. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (44.6%) noted having a college diploma or university degree, while 27.2 percent had obtained a graduate degree.

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Table 3: Characteristics of the tourist profile (N=92)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	38	41.3
	Female	54	58.7
Age	18-24	7	7.6
	25-34	15	16.3
	35-44	12	13.0
	45-54	28	30.4
	55-64	23	25
	65 or over	7	7.6
Highest Level of Education Attained	Did not finish high school	2	2.2
	High school diploma	10	10.9
	Some College/University	14	15.2
	College Diploma/University Degree	41	44.6
	Graduate degree (Masters, PhD)	25	27.2
Country of Residence	UK	61	66.3
	USA	24	26.1
	Switzerland	1	1.1
	Canada	1	1.1
	Denmark	1	1.1
	France	1	1.1
	Puerto Rico	1	1.1
	El Salvador	1	1.1
	Trinidad & Tobago	1	1.1

Statistical data obtained from the SLTB illustrate tourist arrivals and market share. The 2009 Annual Statistical Review noted the United States representing the largest share of the market (35%), while the United Kingdom was second with 26 percent, the Caribbean region was third with 22 percent of the market share, and Canada was fourth accounting for ten percent of the market share (Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009). The United States is an important market for Saint Lucia to continue to penetrate due to the close proximity to the island and the availability of non-stop airlift service from major airports including Atlanta and New York. The United Kingdom market noted greatest arrivals during the months of February and March, and followed an identical travel pattern during 2007 and 2008 (St. Lucia Tourist Board, 2008; Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009). The Caribbean market, highlighting greatest arrivals during July and August grew by 0.7 percent from

2008 to 2009 (Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009). The Canadian market has shown continuous growth, with tourist arrivals reaching an all time high in 2009; although the greatest influx from this market was between 2007 and 2008 with an increase of tourist arrivals from Canada by 41 percent (Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009). The majority of tourist arrivals from the Canadian market take place in the winter months from November to May (Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009).

Results from the quantitative survey questionnaire indicate the majority of tourists originate from the United Kingdom followed by the United States; while results from the 2009 Annual Statistical Review indicate the greatest arrivals from the United States market followed by the United Kingdom (Saint Lucia Tourist Board, 2009). The Caribbean and Canadian markets were both minimal in the representative sample population.

5.3.3 Tourist Arrivals to Saint Lucia

Tourist arrivals to Saint Lucia have increased over the past decade by more than two hundred and fifty thousand (see Table 4):

Table 4: Tourist Arrivals to Saint Lucia

Year	Tourist Arrivals (Stay-over)	Cruise Ship Passenger Arrivals	Total	Annual Growth (%)
2000	269 850	443 551	713 401	
2001	250 132	489 912	740 044	3.73
2002	253 463	387 180	640 643	-13.43
2003	276 948	393 240	670 188	4.61
2004	298 431	481 279	779 710	16.34
2005	317 939	394 364	712 303	-8.65
2006	302 510	359 593	662 103	-7.05
2007	287 518	610 345	897 863	35.61
2008	295 761	619 680	915 441	1.96
2009	278 491	699 306	977 797	6.81

The annual increase in tourist arrivals is fairly consistent, with the exception of 2002 and 2006, most likely attributed to terrorist attacks and the global economic recession. While stay-over tourist arrivals have remained consistent, cruise ship passenger arrivals have dramatically increased, further justifying the expansive harbour-front redevelopment in Castries and the addition of a cruise ship dock in the South of the island, as discussed in chapter four.

Respondents of the survey questionnaire were asked to identify their form of accommodations while visiting the island (see Figure 8). The majority of respondents (52.2%) were staying at an all-inclusive resort, while 12 percent were cruise ship passengers. An additional 5.4 percent were visiting friends or family, while 9.8 percent were staying at a time-share property. Nineteen percent noted other accommodations, including a villa rental (5.4%) and a non all-inclusive hotel (15.2%).

Figure 8: Accommodations in Saint Lucia
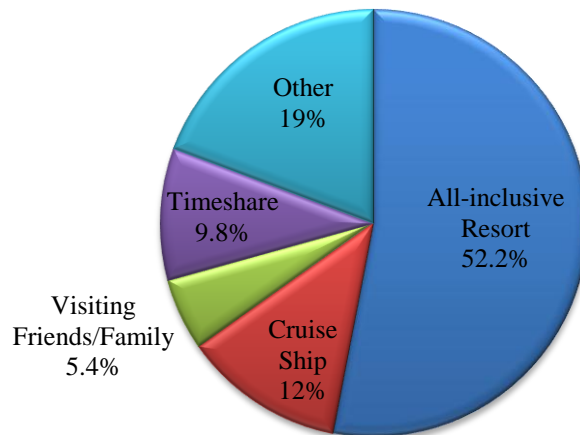
Results indicate an increase in cruise ship calls to the Castries harbour for every month from the year 2008 to the year 2009 (see Figure 9). SLASPA statistics identify Carnival Cruise Lines having the most calls to port with 56 occasions, and Royal Caribbean was second with 50 (SLAPSA, 2009). Trends for both years indicate that cruise ship calls are much more frequent during the winter months of November to March. The month of September 2009 showcases a growth of 300 percent when compared to September of 2008. The months of July and October 2009 also record growth of 100 percent and 113 percent respectively compared to 2008.

Figure 9: Cruise Ship Calls by Month
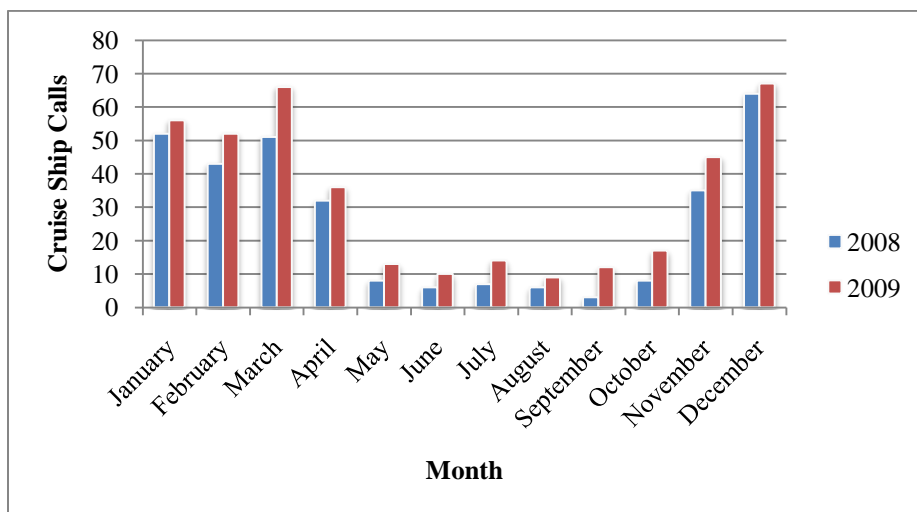
(Source: SLASPA, 2009)

Results indicate a rise in yacht arrivals to the Rodney Bay Marina for every month from the year 2008 to the year 2009 (see Figure 10). Yacht arrivals are the greatest in February for both years. September and October showcase the greatest growth percentage, 124 percent and 154 percent respectively. December of 2009 also indicates an increase of 54 percent when compared to yacht arrivals in that same month of 2008.

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Figure 10: Yacht Arrivals by Month
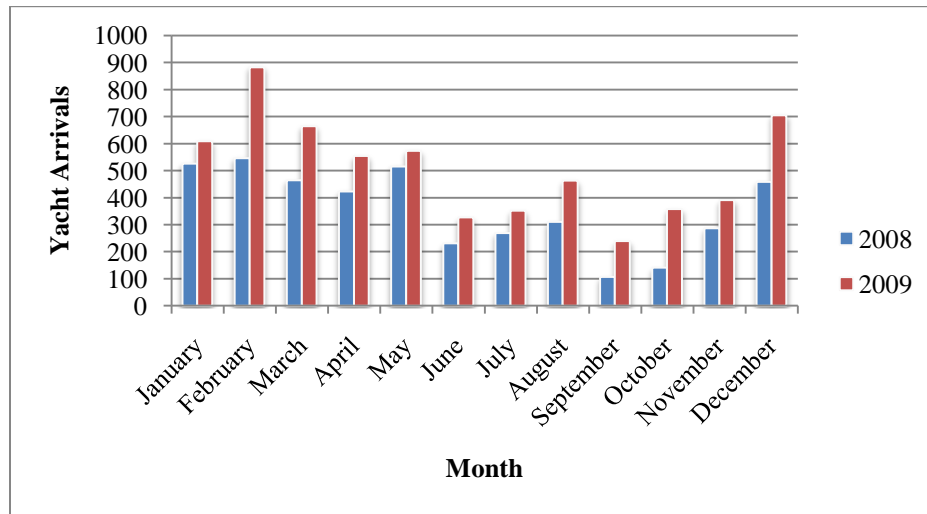
(Source: SLASPA, 2009)

The yacht arrivals from the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) occurring in December 2009 are not included in the graph as this is a special event, they account for an additional 201 yachts.

5.3.4 Features Being Marketed

In addition to geographic markets, it is also important to understand which island attributes the SLTB is showcasing abroad. The majority of marketing campaigns abroad showcase the Pitons and the Drive-in volcano[1] (see Figure 11), as these are unique to the island and symbolic of Saint Lucia, as discussed by one key informant:

> It's highly featured everywhere. The fact that it has become such a draw and people are still fascinated about how it is formed and all of the history, it amazes everybody. The amazing thing is that what you see above the water, below it is almost the same depth. And yes, certainly the Pitons continue to be one of the main images that we use - the other one being the Drive-in volcano which may be one of two in the world. And critically for us is that we now have heritage status for the Pitons, it brings a whole new dimension to the marketing availability of the area. (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009)

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[1] The Drive-in Volcano is an active volcano emitting sulphuric gases that you can drive up to rather than having to walk.

Figure 11: The Pitons (left) and the Drive-in Volcano (right)

(Photos by Smith, 2009)

In order to examine the success of their marketing campaigns, the SLTB attempts to monitor viewership when possible: "in any ads that we buy, we also buy the web components so we can do quite a bit of research, see how effective it is, see the browsing time, and so we look for that component in all ads" (Government official, personal communication, August 4, 2009). Monitoring the effectiveness of various marketing initiatives in such a manner will help determine which campaigns are successful and can guide the SLTB in future endeavours. The tourism consultant for the SLTB noted "the budget, last year was 55 million EC, of which 50 percent was spent on what you would call pure marketing - by that we mean advertising, public relations" (J. Hepple, personal communication, July 31, 2009). In order to ensure the budget is being used effectively, it is important to be aware of the degree of influence such campaigns have on prospective tourists. The proportion of males (16.2%) who reported being influenced by advertising is significantly different than the proportion of females (38.9%) who reported being influenced by advertising in their decision to visit Saint Lucia (0.05 level of significance, $p=0.036$). This indicates that females are more likely to be influenced by advertising campaigns to visit Saint Lucia than are men, suggesting the SLTB gears certain campaigns towards the female audience.

5.3.5 Tourist Response to Marketing

The survey questionnaire asked respondents what they thought the SLTB should promote to enhance interest abroad. Results from this open-ended question indicated that the majority of respondents (33.3%) suggested promoting the scenery and natural beauty of the island. Respondents were also in favour of promoting the beaches and the climate (30.3%) in addition to the friendly locals (30.3%). Approximately one quarter of respondents (25.8%) agreed that tourist attractions and tourism amenities merit promotion, while 19.7 percent suggested the rainforest and waterfalls, and an additional 19.7 percent suggested promotion of the culture and the cuisine. Finally, 18.2 percent of respondents suggested promoting the tranquility of the island, and an additional 18.2 percent suggested the need to improve national infrastructure in order to attract more interest abroad.

When asked about the image they have of Saint Lucia, 46.7 percent of respondents noted a favourable image, and another 48.9 percent stated having a highly favourable image of the island. This positive image of the island possessed by international tourists is ideal for the island's tourism economy and may provide positive word-of-mouth advertising. This assertion is warranted as the majority of respondents (97.8%) indicated that they would recommend Saint Lucia to friends and family. To assess the degree of substitutability of Saint Lucia among other Caribbean islands, respondents were asked if they believed Saint Lucia differed from other islands. The majority of respondents (74.1%) did believe Saint Lucia was different from other islands, while 25.9 percent did not think so. Results of the open-ended question indicate the perception that the island was different due to specific attributes: lush/rainforest (23.2%), friendly locals/culture (23.2%), topography (19.5%), relaxing/safe (17.1%), beautiful (17.1%), and stage of development (9.8%). While the majority of tourists questioned did believe Saint Lucia was different than other Caribbean islands, the threat of substitutability continues to exist in one quarter of respondents.

To further understand destination choice, additional questions targeted the reasons for travelling to Saint Lucia. Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for travelling to Saint Lucia in order to determine what features motivate travel to the island (see Figure 12). The majority of respondents noted having travelled to Saint Lucia for relaxation (70.7%), the climate (67.4%), the scenery (54.3%), and the location (35.9%). To assess the knowledge of Saint Lucia held by tourists prior to arrival, the questionnaire listed a range of elements to which the respondent noted their level of awareness. The majority of respondents (90.2%) were aware of the weather, the geographic location (69.6%) and the currency (67.4%). Fifty percent of respondents noted being aware of the various attractions, while 44.6 percent noted being aware of tourist activities around the island. An additional 30.4 percent of respondents noted awareness of transportation, while one quarter noted awareness of festivals and events occurring throughout the nation. The element of which the least amount of respondents noted awareness was national laws (14.1%).

Figure 12: Reasons for travelling to Saint Lucia
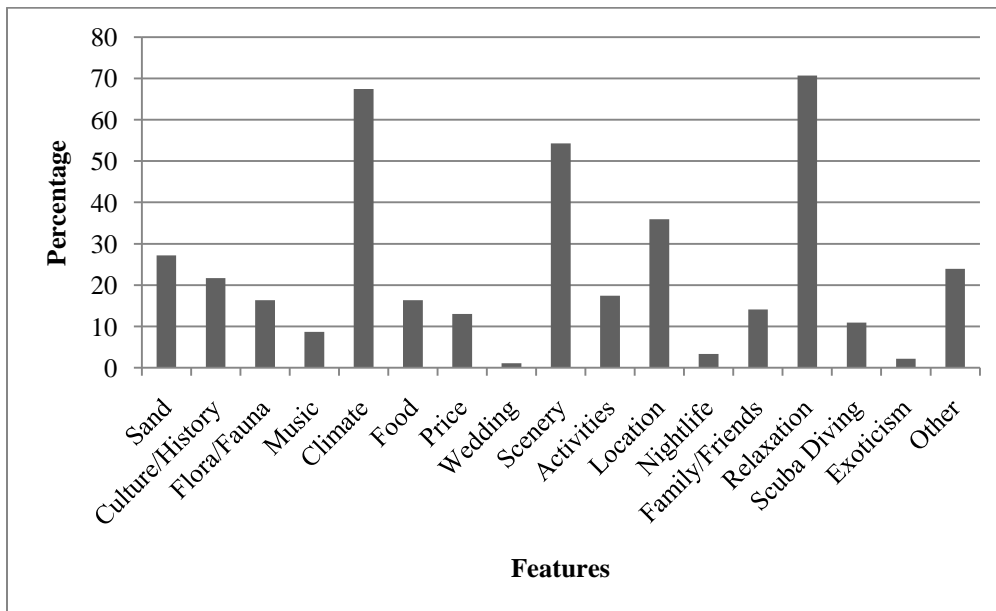
Respondents were also asked which features immediately came to mind when they thought of Saint Lucia. The ability to identify certain features that tourists associate with Saint Lucia can help gauge the effectiveness of existing marketing campaigns as well as help guide future initiatives. When envisioning Saint Lucia, the features that were immediately thought of according to tourists included: beaches (88%), Pitons (66.3%), the rainforest (53.3%), and water sports (41.3%). Other features that were recorded by respondents included: vegetation, steel bands, local people, volcanic island, and cuisine. The chi-squared test for independence was conducted to compare the variables that were immediately envisioned when thinking of Saint Lucia for first-time and repeat visitors. Significant differences were apparent for two of the variables. 52.8 percent of first-time visitors noted immediately thinking of the Pitons when they thought of Saint Lucia, while 84.6 percent of return visitors do. The proportion of first time visitors who immediately think of the Pitons is significantly different than repeat visitors (X^2=8.79, df=1, p=.003). Additionally, 9.4 percent of first-time visitors noted immediately thinking of the Carnival when they thought of Saint Lucia, while 35.9 percent of return visitors do. The proportion of first time visitors who immediately think of the Carnival is significantly different than repeat visitors (X^2=8.06, df=1, p=.005).

The chi-squared test for independence was conducted to compare the intention to return to Saint Lucia for first-time and repeat visitors. The proportion of first time visitors (63.5%) who intend to return to Saint Lucia in the future is significantly different than repeat visitors (92.1%) (X^2=8.26, df=1, p=.004). According to the loyalty groups identified by Oppermann (2000), the majority (57.6%) of visitors to Saint Lucia were first-timers. Repeat visitors (2-5 visits) accounted for 21.6 percent of respondents, while 15.3 percent were identified as loyalists (6 or more visits). An additional 5.4 percent of respondents had previously visited Saint Lucia but failed to identify the number of previous visits, further suggesting loyalty to Saint Lucia.

Human characteristics that become associated to a destination have the ability to enhance the likelihood of developing an emotional connection to a place by a tourist. These human characteristics are referred to as destination personalities. Destination personalities that are associated to a place can influence the image perceived by outsiders. In order to acquire information regarding the destination personalities tourists associate to Saint Lucia, six personality traits and their antonyms were listed on the survey questionnaire. Of these twelve options, four negative personality characteristics: depressing, unromantic, uninteresting, and unattractive received zero percent of the responses. The personality traits with positive attributes received votes by the majority of respondents: beautiful (86.7%), peaceful (55.6%), cheerful (50%), romantic (44.4%), lively (34.4%), and intriguing (18.9%). Saint Lucia was also perceived to be dangerous by 4.4 percent and fragile by 3.3 percent of respondents. Other attributes that were recorded by respondents included: friendly, inviting, clean, and musical. The association of positive personality traits suggests an endearment to the island held by tourists and may also signify a level of comfort and familiarity towards Saint Lucia.

5.4 Guest Satisfaction and Pre-departure Research

This section will discuss the degrees of satisfaction tourists' indicated with their experience in Saint Lucia, followed by indications of destination loyalty by the respondent sample. Tourist research patterns prior to departure are highlighted, as well as the role of travel agencies in destination choice.

5.4.1 Satisfaction with Saint Lucia

Tourism organizations, such as the SLTB, are developed to promote the destination abroad and charged with the task of increasing tourist arrivals. An important element to increasing tourist arrivals includes ensuring guest satisfaction. If the available tourism product is satisfying to the guest, the chances of repeat visitation and destination loyalty are likely to increase. Guest satisfaction was assessed on the survey questionnaire.

Table 5: Trip satisfaction

	Extremely Unsatisfied (%)	Unsatisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Satisfied (%)	Extremely Satisfied (%)
Service	0	3.3	21.7	39.1	35.9
Accommodation	0	3.4	16.9	37.1	42.7
Activities	0	4.6	17.2	44.8	33.3
Weather	0	0	14.3	46.2	39.6
Landscape	0	0	5.5	37.4	57.1
Trip Overall	0	0	8.7	47.8	43.5

In order to acquire information concerning trip satisfaction, respondents were asked to rank their satisfaction on a five point scale concerning various aspects of the trip (see Table 5 for full results). The minority stated to be unsatisfied with service (3.3%), accommodation (3.4%), and activities (4.6%). The majority (39.1%) were satisfied with the service, activities (44.8%), and weather (46.2%). Many respondents (42.7%) stated extreme satisfaction with their accommodation, while 57.1 percent noted to be extremely satisfied with the landscape. In regards to the trip overall, 8.7 percent were neutral, 47.8 percent were satisfied, and 43.5 percent were extremely satisfied.

The majority of respondents (75.6%) stated that they do intend to return to Saint Lucia in the future. The remaining 24.4 percent who do not intend to return to the island provided the following reasons: it is too expensive to travel to Saint Lucia, they were not satisfied with their trip, and they want to travel to other countries. When respondents were asked to compare their prior expectations of their trip to their actual experience, the majority of respondents (54.9%) agreed and 29.7 percent strongly agreed that their trip was exactly what they had expected. A small (3.3%) percentage disagreed, while 12.1 percent were neutral towards the statement.

Table 6: The importance of certain features for their trip to Saint Lucia

	Extremely Unimportant (%)	Unimportant (%)	Neither Unimportant / Important (%)	Important (%)	Extremely Important (%)
Beaches	1.1	0	6.7	40.0	**52.2**
Climate	1.1	0	2.2	34.4	**62.2**
Calm/Tranquil	2.2	2.2	12.2	**44.4**	38.9
Culture/History	2.3	10.5	**41.9**	33.7	11.6
Activities Available	4.7	11.6	**32.6**	**32.6**	18.6
All-Inclusive	**29.1**	10.5	17.4	15.1	27.9
Price/Quality Ratio	6.0	2.4	15.5	**46.4**	29.8
Island Atmosphere	1.1	3.4	11.4	**46.6**	37.5
Beautiful Scenery	1.1	0	8.8	**45.1**	**45.1**
Geographic Location	1.1	6.7	27.0	**38.2**	27.0

To understand why tourists chose Saint Lucia as their destination, respondents were asked to rank the importance of certain features available on the island. The findings located in Table 6 will now be discussed. The majority of respondents indicated that beaches (52.2%) and climate (62.2%) were extremely important in destination choice. Features that the majority stated to be important include calm and tranquility (44.4%), a good price/quality ratio (46.4%), an island atmosphere (46.6%), and geographic location (38.2%). Features of which were deemed to be neither unimportant nor important by the majority of respondents include culture and history (41.9%). No features were voted by the majority as being unimportant, while the availability of an all-inclusive package had the greatest quantity of respondents (29.1%) identify it as being extremely unimportant.

5.4.2 Planning the Vacation to Saint Lucia

Awareness of the research patterns taken by individuals planning a vacation to the island can be beneficial to the SLTB. This information can help determine specific areas to enhance marketing

initiatives as well as indicate which websites influence destination choice. In order to target this source of information through the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked several questions regarding research patterns. The majority of respondents (71.7%) indicated having done research prior to departure. The proportion of males (86.8%) who reported doing research prior to departure is significantly different than the proportion of females (61.6%) who reported doing research prior to departure (0.03 level of significance, p=0.014). Of those individuals who had done research prior to departure, 95.4 percent used the Internet, 12.1 percent looked through travel magazines, 7.6 percent did research using other literature, 24.2 percent used travel guides, 27.7 percent spoke with friends and/or family members who had previously visited Saint Lucia, and 10.8 percent indicated having visited a travel agency for information. Of those individuals who had indicated using the Internet for research purposes, 71.4 percent indicated having visited the official website of the SLTB, while 58.2 percent indicated having read online blogs concerning the island.

Approximately half of the respondents (47.8%) indicated using the Internet to plan their trip, 37 percent noted the use of a travel agency, and 14.1 percent were helped by friends and family members to plan their vacation to Saint Lucia, while 13 percent stated having used other methods. Other methods that were recorded by respondents included: directly with the hotel or airline, through their company, self-booked, and through the time-share. Of the individuals who had indicated doing research prior to departure, 96.6 percent agreed that doing research prior to departure helped them understand what to expect of their vacation. The majority of individuals (70.3%) indicated that they were not influenced by any advertising to choose Saint Lucia as their destination, while 29.7 percent did indicate an influence having effect. Of those who were affected by advertising, 12.1 percent noted influence from the Internet, 9.9 percent noted influence from travel magazines, 5.5 percent noted influence from a brochure, 4.4 percent noted influence from travel guides, 4.4 percent noted influence

from the television, 3.3 percent noted influence from a travel agent, and 2.2 percent noted influence from the newspaper.

5.4.3 Travel Agencies

As the effect of travel agencies and their presence in the research phase as well as the trip planning phase is highly influential, it was deemed important to visit travel agencies to obtain more information. Ten travel agencies were visited in three South-Western Ontario cities and were asked several pre-meditated questions regarding their knowledge of Saint Lucia (see Appendix D). One travel agent was interviewed per agency. None of the travel agencies had any advertising for Saint Lucia inside or outside of the agency. All of the travel agents were aware of the geographic location, climate, attractions, and amenities of the island and were able to discuss the tourism product available in Saint Lucia. Of the ten travel agents approached, five had previously visited Saint Lucia and were satisfied with their vacation. Positive attributes noted by those who had visited the island included the friendliness of the local people, beautiful beaches, favourable climate, great scenery, the Pitons, and the Drive-in volcano. All travel agents described Saint Lucia as being expensive, a romantic destination ideal for honeymooners or for those looking to experience something more exotic and unique.

Of the ten travel agencies approached, two kept statistical information regarding the amount of tourists who travelled to Saint Lucia through the agency. The first agency helped arrange travel to the island for five couples in the year 2009. The second agency noted having arranged travel to Saint Lucia for 225 passengers in the year 2009; however, this is for the entire company as information was not available per agency. Five travel agents indicated that when they suggest Saint Lucia to undecided customers, the main deterrent is cost.

5.5 Summary of Main Findings

The purpose of this chapter was to showcase the main findings of this research. The analysis of data collected from interviews, survey questionnaires, and secondary sources have been presented throughout this chapter and chapter four. The main findings that have emerged from this research have been categorized into five themes: (1) branding, (2) tourist attitudes, (3) marketing, (4) tourism organizations, and (5) the future of tourism development. The main findings from each of these themes have been summarized subsequently.

5.5.1 Branding

- The old destination brand continues to be relevant in current marketing campaigns.

- The rationale for developing a new destination brand was to highlight the diversity available in Saint Lucia, as the old brand was no longer doing the island justice.

- The new brand does not have an adjacent tagline to better increase the reach and ensure the brand is interchangeable to various markets and products.

- The new brand is intended to be applied to other sectors in the future, becoming a national brand rather than being restricted to a tourism destination brand.

5.5.2 Tourist Attitudes

- Almost half of the respondents were unaware of the current destination brand.

- More than three quarters of respondents had never seen the new destination logo.

- There has been a lack of brand exposure, a consequence of financial constraints, time constraints, a lack of human resources, and a focus on other events including the Jazz Festival and Carnival.

- The new destination logo ranked second by respondents against two previous logos.

- Males were more familiar with the concept of destination branding than were females.

5.5.3 Marketing

- Primary tourist generating regions for Saint Lucia include the United States, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and Canada.

- Almost half of the respondents were return visitors, indicating tourist satisfaction and suggestive of destination loyalty.

- Cruise ship calls have increased every month for 2009 when compared to 2008; calls are the most frequent during the winter months from November to March.

- Yacht arrivals have increased every month for 2009 when compared to 2008; the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) is responsible for increased arrivals in December.

- The Pitons and the Drive-in volcano are two iconic features that are consistently used in advertisements.

- Females reported being influenced by advertising in their decision to visit Saint Lucia, while males were not.

- The majority of respondents had a positive image of Saint Lucia and would recommend the island to friends and family.

- Respondents mostly travelled to Saint Lucia for relaxation, climate, scenery, and location.

- The majority of respondents associate positive destination personalities to Saint Lucia.

5.5.4 Tourism Organizations

- Prominent tourism organizations in Saint Lucia include: the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

- Collaboration between national and regional tourism organizations enable the small island state access to greater resources fundamental for sustainable tourism development and increased destination exposure.

- Political turmoil within governmental organizations has hindered the tourism sector.

- The Internet was a great source of information for research prior to departure; approximately three quarters of respondents visited the official SLTB website.

- Travel agencies in South-Western Ontario do not promote the island; travel agents describe Saint Lucia to be ideal for honeymooners or those looking for a unique and authentic Caribbean experience.

5.5.5 The Future of Tourism Development

- The implementation of village tourism is anticipated to help support sustainable rural linkages, enhance the distribution of wealth, and diversify the tourism product.

- Slated nation-wide infrastructure improvements include work to roadways, marine transportation amenities, and air transportation amenities.

- The showcasing of Saint Lucia on the television series *"The Bachelor"* increased exposure of the island abroad.

Chapter 6
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of destination branding, using Saint Lucia as the case study. This research is the first academic study of this form to be applied to Saint Lucia. In depth analysis of the results obtained through research in Saint Lucia has enabled the development and suggestion of best practices for destination branding. The broad implications that have arisen upon examination of the Saint Lucia destination brand will be discussed in this chapter. The lessons that have been learned throughout this process are applicable to nations seeking to enhance their exposure; predominantly these implications pertain to small island states located within a homogenous region where product differentiation is fundamental. The brand development process is lengthy, complex, and unique for each destination. The following best practices are suggested to help guide the destination brand development process to ensure long-term effective and sustainable growth for a tourism destination.

6.1 Market Research

Market research comprises a fundamental element to any strategic marketing plan (Metaxas, 2009; Morgan & Pritchard, 2004), thus it is essential that any branding strategy begin with market research. A SWOT analysis should be undertaken before the brand identity is developed in order to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Results indicate that market research was undertaken by FutureBrand for the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB). This research identified how weaknesses of Saint Lucia could be transformed into strengths and also indicated some influential drivers for destination choice of the discerning traveler (FutureBrand, 2009a). This market research helped form the brand platform, thus providing guidelines for the direction that the new destination brand should encapsulate. Strengths and weaknesses of the old

destination brand were identified, along with strengths and weaknesses of Saint Lucia as a tourist

destination. Furthermore, the brand development firm provided the SLTB with ideas to differentiate

the island among regional competitors by benchmarking various attributes available at various

destinations. The market research undertaken by FutureBrand enabled the development of an

effective brand to be spearheaded by the tourism sector, with future plans to strategically evolve into

the national brand for all sectors.

In an article discussing the re-branding process for the town of Bargo, Australia, Kerr and

Johnson (2005) argued that the expectations and goals determined by local council become the

parameters that the place brand strategy should be developed within (p. 377). Opinions were collected

from tourists, businesses, and residents to access their perception of the town and help develop a

strategic plan for the brand strategy (Kerr & Johnson, 2005). "As tourism demand is extremely

dynamic, marketing research needs to follow constant developments to ensure that all elements of the

destination marketing mix evolve continuously" (Buhalis, 2000, p. 103). In the branding strategy for a

destination developed by Balakrishnan (2009), the author identifies how market research should

transpire throughout the entire process; market research is not only one phase of the process, rather it

should be ongoing from the beginning of the process. Upon analysis of the market research conducted

by FutureBrand, results indicate that in-depth market research only occurred at the beginning of the

branding process.

The Saint Lucia case study revealed limited market research concerning the involvement of

local citizens. The lack of citizen involvement can be partially attributed to the short time frame

specified by the SLTB to FutureBrand. Although interviews did occur with key informants, these

individuals were targeted professionals and did not include the voice of locals. The interviews that

had occurred as part of the market research included global executives as well as local experts, all of

whom were suggested by the SLTB (FutureBrand, 2009a). Metaxas (2009) published a case study

concerning the branding process in Malta which identified the inclusion of over 100 stakeholders, involving external and internal branding. In order to determine the core values of Malta, over 5000 Maltese nationals completed a questionnaire that resulted in a brand platform consisting of heritage, diversity and hospitality elements (Metaxas, 2009, p. 1368). The stakeholder involvement during the research phase enabled local residents to help determine the brand policy, supporting stakeholder involvement and ensuring the brand would be an authentic representation of the national identity. This form of local involvement should have been implemented in the Saint Lucia case in order to capitalize on stakeholder input and encourage community participation. Although the local experts selected provided valuable information, they may not necessarily embody the same voice as other locals who are and who are not involved in the tourism sector. The importance of stakeholder collaboration and participation throughout the market research process is vital as the brand identity is a representation of the national identity. Having excluded this element could prove to be detrimental for Saint Lucia as locals remain unaware of the new brand and are thus incapable of supporting the new brand platform, a representation of destination image abroad.

6.2 Destination Image

The majority of tourists questioned had a favourable image of Saint Lucia and positive attributes were most frequently associated with the island. Understanding the manner in which international tourists perceive a destination can help the destination marketing organization (DMO) guide marketing initiatives through product development. Destination image is a core concept of destination branding as it is a key element that distinguishes one place from another with the ability to influence destination choice (Blain et al., 2005; Cai, 2002; Fan, 2006; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). The image can differ among individuals and it is formed by different factors. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) have determined that word-of-mouth advertising is an influential factor in the formation of destination images; word-of-mouth advertising was also influential in destination choice for tourists in Saint

Lucia as several tourists (27.7%) spoke with friends and/or family who had previously visited the island prior to their departure. Destination image can also be influenced by a variety of additional factors including historical events, religion, diplomacy and sporting events (Anholt, 2005b, p. 116). Findings from a study conducted by Baloglu and McCleary (1999) indicate destination image is formed by two factors: personal characteristics such as psychological and social factors, and external stimulus factors such as information sources and previous experiences. Having addressed pre-trip research patterns in this study, results indicate the Internet, travel magazines and guides, other literature, word-of-mouth, and travel agencies as being influential factors towards destination choice as well as towards the development of expectations.

Results from an open-ended question targeted the tourist's thoughts on which features they felt the SLTB should be promoting. Results indicated various elements that merit promotion including: the scenery and natural beauty of the island, the beaches and climate, the friendly locals, the tourist attractions and amenities, the rainforest and waterfalls, the culture and cuisine, and finally the tranquility of the island. The majority of tourists (74.1%) indicated that they thought Saint Lucia differed from other Caribbean islands due to: the lush rainforest, the friendly locals and culture, the topography, the safety and ability to relax, the islands beauty, and the stage of development. These results showcase several similarities and therefore it is recommended that the SLTB adopt new promotional campaigns that highlight the features that were recommended by tourists and that differentiate the island from others. Therefore, features that merit promotion include the scenery and natural beauty of the island, the friendly locals, the culture, and the rainforest, while the Pitons, beaches, and Drive-in volcano should continue to be promoted. Themes for promotional campaigns that should also be considered by the SLTB include the following: beautiful, peaceful, cheerful, romantic, lively, and intriguing, as these were the destination personalities representative of the island identified by tourists.

Saint Lucians have been identified by international tourists as welcoming and friendly. Respondents also indicated a low perception of crime throughout the island, further suggesting a positive image. Clancy (2009) made note of similar findings in Ireland and proposed the positive image of the citizens can be used as a marketing tool. The images projected by a destination brand and other marketing initiatives should harness positive attributes; however, the images projected need to be authentic, accurate, and distinctive (Balakrishnan, 2009; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, & Ranchhod, 2009). Showcasing inaccurate images abroad will only decrease the likelihood for visitor satisfaction, thus further decreasing the potential for destination loyalty. The SLTB highly promotes the Pitons and the Drive-in volcano in their advertisements, images that are not only genuine but also unique to Saint Lucia. Authentic images are further enhanced through the targeting of specific markets and positioning of the tourism product to generate the most effective marketing campaigns.

6.3 Targeting and Positioning

Target markets have been identified as the most important area of the marketing strategy (Hudson, 2005, p. 51). Destinations are only capable of matching the demand of certain target markets and therefore it is essential to distinguish in advance which markets the destination wishes to pursue (Buhalis, 2000). The SLTB focuses marketing efforts in four generating regions: the United States, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and Canada, also referred to as geographic segmentation. This geographic segmentation by the SLTB is effective for the island as statistical data indicates the majority of tourists originate from these identified regions. In target marketing efforts, it is important to consider the various psychographic segments within one geographic region as these individuals are not homogeneous. Furthermore, efforts to ensure accessibility to these markets through the continuous availability of direct air travel and ferry services can encourage travel, while advertising can increase the awareness of and interest for Saint Lucia.

In addition to the geographic segmentation outlined by the SLTB, an additional psychographic segmentation has been developed with a focus towards the discerning tourist. The distinction of the ideal psychographic segment can also help guide the brand development process in addition to marketing initiatives as this type of tourist typically seeks a certain type and quality of tourism product. Focusing efforts towards attracting the discerning tourist can be beneficial for the tourist as the product is catered to their needs; however, this can also be detrimental for tourists of a different psychographic segment. This concentration towards a specific clientele can also deter prospective individuals from choosing Saint Lucia as their destination. FutureBrand (2009a) noted caution surrounding the discerning positioning concept as this can be confused with upscale and premium offerings. Further market segmentation for tourism and hospitality include demographic segmentation, benefit segmentation, and behaviour segmentation (Hudson, 2005). The identification of appropriate market segments is essential in strategic planning and enhances the likelihood of customer satisfaction as the product is more persuasive and targeted to a specific clientele (Hudson, 2005); an element of the marketing mix in which the SLTB has been successful. As these efforts seem to be effective, it is important that the SLTB does not ignore the variety of other markets that visit Saint Lucia. Additional marketing campaigns should remain broad so as to be interpreted by each consumer individually, helping to attract a diversification of tourists who compliment the diversity of amenities available throughout the island.

In order to reduce overall dependency, small island states should not rely on one form of tourism (Wing, 1995). Product differentiation is a key marketing component used to gain a competitive advantage and is achieved through physical attribute differentiation and service differentiation (Hudson, 2005; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The development of a village tourism plan for Saint Lucia can be beneficial for residents, and garners the ability to attract a new market of tourists. Efforts for village tourism have not yet proved successful, as this plan has not yet been

implemented or executed. The increase in niche marketing is another strategy utilized in Saint Lucia to diversify the tourism product. The focus on yacht tourism in Saint Lucia is a creative market to pursue, and has been enhanced by recent renovations to the Rodney Bay Marina, as well as other future slated improvements to national ports in Castries and Vieux Fort. Results indicate a positive effect from the infrastructure enhancements as well as the targeted marketing campaigns, as yacht arrivals have been consistently increasing on a monthly basis throughout the 2008 and 2009 calendar years.

Hosting large-scale events throughout the year such as the Saint Lucia Jazz Festival, Carnival, and the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) compliment the niche tourism initiatives and help offset seasonality by attracting tourists during the summer months. These events also help expose Saint Lucia abroad as the country has the ability to become associated with the events in the mind of the consumer. Destinations engaging in event tourism can benefit from additional tourists as well as increased awareness of the destination (Dimanche, 2002, p. 73); therefore the SLTB has been effectively enhancing the tourism product through the marketing and sponsorship of these events. Morgan et al. (2004) further argued "events can represent a component of the destination's product mix that can be used for tactical leverage" (p. 287). Despite various tourism related issues and barriers including seasonality and limited financial assets (Renard, 2001), successful initiatives have since been executed and marketed to enhance year-round tourist arrivals (Saint Lucia Jazz, Carnival, and ARC) and village based activities with minimal economic leakages (Gros Islet street party and the Anse-La-Raye fish fry). Hosting large-scale events offer additional reasons for visiting a destination that may already be in the consideration set of the consumer. Saint Lucia should continue to host these large events that are distinctive to the island, ensuring an exceptional experience so as to attract new tourists as well as encourage repeat visitation. Highlighting such elements of the marketing mix within various campaigns helps to ensure an authentic brand identity.

6.4 Brand Identity

The brand development process typically takes several years (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). The Saint

Lucia case study revealed the entire re-branding process for the island was completed within a six

month time period. Financial and resource constraints have been deemed to be the culprit for the rapid

brand development process, further charged with the desire to unveil the new brand at the 2009

Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Marketplace conference. It is unfeasible to suggest time

pressure in the brand development process negatively influenced the final product; although, it may

have influenced the manner in which the brand development process unfolded. The appointment of an

exclusive brand development firm caused the inability for effective brand exposure after its inception

due to the constraints noted above. The implications of the new brand identity are discussed

subsequently.

6.4.1 The New Brand Mark

The brand mark itself has great responsibility for a destination as it is charged with representing and

differentiating the destination, attracting consumers, enhancing recognition and influencing

destination choice (Blain et al., 2005; Henderson et al., 2003; van Riel & van den Ban, 2001). The

new brand mark for Saint Lucia is a representation of the topography and the national culture, a true

depiction of the island according to the SLTB. The portrayal of the Pitons, an iconic natural feature of

the island, and the national colours identify and differentiate the island. The Pitons are unique to Saint

Lucia and as they are often featured in advertisements, they have become an icon for the country. The

colours in the brand mark represent the national identity as these are also represented on the national

flag; therefore, the new brand mark is a comprehensive and symbolic depiction of the country.

According to the results of the survey questionnaire, it became apparent that overwhelming

support for the new brand mark was absent. Although the new destination brand mark ranked second

amongst its other two competitors, the oldest logo showcasing a red tropical flower had majority vote

due to its island feel. A positive outcome of the new brand mark was that it was voted as being more appealing than the logo it was designed to replace, suggesting greater effectiveness. The tourists were asked to rank the new brand mark on seven criteria developed to evoke their individual attitudes. Negative attitudes were predominantly more apparent than positive attitudes, except for the statement suggesting the logo is a modern design. Unfortunately, for several of the seven criteria, the neutral response category was chosen the most, suggesting either the tourists were not thinking about their response or that the tourists had no personal preference. These results indicate that the new logo may not have resonated with the sample, indicative of a weak brand mark. Furthermore, as tourists were largely unaware that the brand mark represented the colours of the national flag as well as the iconic Piton Mountains, a lack of general knowledge regarding Saint Lucia could be concluded.

6.4.2 Lack of a Supporting Tagline

The Saint Lucian case study revealed a desired change from having a destination brand with an associated tagline, to a destination brand that can acquire different taglines dependent upon the marketing initiative. The tagline from the old destination brand, simply beautiful, continues to be used in current marketing initiatives ensuring a smooth transition to the new destination brand. Although a tagline can be beneficial as it provides perspective consumers with words that vocalize the available experience, this marketing technique can also be detrimental and limit the brand. As Saint Lucia no longer has one specific tagline adjacent to the new brand mark, there are fewer limitations in marketing of the brand. FutureBrand (2009a) noted how most luxury-oriented brands do not have associated taglines, and that "in absence of a tagline, the brand would use messaging and imagery to communicate" (p. 44). In an advertisement campaign for the 2010 Saint Lucia Jazz Festival, the words "live the music" appeared adjacent to the brand mark. Another campaign advertising legendary getaways to the island displayed the words "live the legend" adjacent to the brand mark. The interchangeable features of this brand mark can be beneficial to the island as it enables the brand to

change with campaigns, appropriately catering to the targeted markets in addition to enhancing the particular product and experience being advertised.

6.4.3 Community Support

Community support of the destination brand should be present in order to maximize the reach and support of the initiative. Clancy (2009) noted "although brands are presumably marketed to an external audience, the content of branding both says a great deal about the state's vision of the nation – who it is or hopes to be – and also speaks to its own citizenry" (p. 2). The destination brand portrays a country abroad and thus it is essential that citizens believe in and are in support of the brand so that the authentic experience advertised is genuine. Pike (2005) noted this as a complexity of destination branding:

> There is a fine balance to be struck between community consensus and brand theory because a top down approach to destination brand implementation is likely to fail. Critically, DMOs lack any direct control over the actual delivery of the brand promise by the local tourism community. Without buy-in from these stakeholders the strategy will flail. (p. 259)

The brand is a direct representation of the nation, acting as an indirect representation of the people. If there is disconnect between the two, then the product advertised does not match the product delivered. Balakrishnan (2009) argued "destinations must start focusing on the service experience and all customer touch points; especially the people as they help deliver the experience" (p. 623). Kerr and Johnson (2005) further stated the support from residents is vital for a destination brand, comparable to the support from employees for the success of a corporate brand.

Necessary training for employees involved in supplying tourism related services will help ensure a satisfactory experience for the tourist, while providing standards for the sector throughout the island. Empowerment through education and training as well as access to resources will encourage interest and participation within the tourism sector, promoting community involvement and reducing foreign employment. The Hotel Trades School, a part of the Sir Arthur Lewis

Community College provides training and education to help govern the quality of service and is an asset to Saint Lucia (Wilkinson, 2003). Greater rural linkages, such as greater use of local products and produce, are feasible through the village tourism endeavour, if proper policy fostering stakeholder participation, long-term management and control are executed. Wilkinson (2003) had identified only 10 to 15 percent of food, mainly fruit, at all-inclusive resorts is locally produced; while this research did not address this particular issue. Therefore, it is recommended to foster sustainable development through the implementation of comparable initiatives.

Greater participation through community meetings would have encouraged citizens to voice their opinions regarding the brand that was chosen to represent the island. The development of village tourism initiatives throughout Saint Lucia further differentiates the vast array of experiences and opportunities available while visiting the island. The ability to foster community involvement in this new form of tourism boasts the ability to improve the sustainability of tourism development; also providing the opportunity to enhance the quality of life of participants through the sales of handicrafts and souvenirs from increased interaction with tourists. The interaction will promote the opportunity for citizens to share stories of their heritage, helping to share and preserve the local heritage (Ind, 2007). As seven regions in Saint Lucia have been identified to be branded according to their unique culture and attractions (refer to Table 1 in Chapter 4), a focus on the community is prominent and further highlights the irony of their exclusion in the branding process.

Field work in Saint Lucia did not measure resident attitudes towards the new destination brand, similar to a study conducted by Clancy (2009) of destination branding in Ireland. Further research concerning the attitudes of citizens towards a destination brand as well as their involvement in the process is warranted.

6.5 Communication of the Brand

The awareness of the new destination brand by Saint Lucians was minimal. A failure to communicate the brand to the general public was addressed in the qualitative interview process, and was identified as a direct consequence of time and financial constraints. Selected individuals were afforded the opportunity to voice their opinions in the beginning of the destination branding process, to help identify the essence of Saint Lucia to the brand developers. Further public input was deemed to be unnecessary as the SLTB consists of professionals who have the best interests of the public in mind. Marketing campaigns highlighting the new destination brand were slated for future release, another limitation attributed to minimal human resources, as well as time and financial constraints. Results from the qualitative interview process showcased great hope for the future of the destination brand; however, the cost of financing the development of the new brand incapacitated the ability to communicate the brand upon its inception.

Brand awareness encompasses the level of knowledge people have or assume of the brand or the destination (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2008). Almost half of respondents (44%) in Saint Lucia were unfamiliar with the current destination brand. Furthermore, more than three quarters of respondents (78.3%) noted having never seen the logo. These results indicate a lack of brand exposure, consequential of time and financial barriers. Brand exposure is critical to foster brand awareness, as Keller (1993) noted "greater brand familiarity, through repeated exposures to a brand, should lead to increased consumer ability to recognize and recall the brand" (p. 10). Although the new brand was developed and had been launched at a large-scale event, follow through with marketing campaigns to further expose the brand were critical for success and did not occur. This was not done due to a lack of financial resources, yet future plans to expose the brand were identified throughout key informant interviews. The implications of this minimal brand communication have been unfavourable for the success of the brand, evident as the majority of tourists were unaware of

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the destination brand. Exposure and support of the brand enhances the ability for people to recognize

the brand and thus develop an immediate association to Saint Lucia when that brand mark is seen in

future advertisements, which can in turn lead to top of mind awareness and a greater desire to travel

to the destination. Brand exposure is facilitated through advertising campaigns that showcase the

destination brand. A positive asset to the SLTB and the tourism sector of Saint Lucia were the two

articles published in well-read tourism magazines in early 2010. This exposure enabled potential

consumers the ability to learn about the island and its focus towards village tourism, as well as view

various images of the island. Exposure of the destination brand has the ability to foster greater brand

associations.

Brand associations need to be strong, favourable and unique (Keller, 1993). Brand

associations increase familiarity through linking the "brands with other people, places, things, or

brands as a means of building or leveraging knowledge that might otherwise be difficult to achieve

more directly through product marketing programs" (Keller, 2003, p. 597). Brand recognition can,

therefore, become more frequent for a potential tourist and positively influence travel decisions. The

development of brand associations for a destination will help raise the exposure of the brand and may

positively influence destination choice. The more items that a brand becomes associated with, greater

brand awareness can be developed. Although the destination marketers identify specific brand

associations, Blichfeldt (2005) noted that brand associations are also determined by the tourists and

the images they choose to affiliate with the brand (p. 394); suggesting difficulty controlling brand

elements as they are subjected to individual interpretation. The author further argued the significance

of the role local residents have as brand associations and their influence on the overall experience of

the tourists and how this is beyond the control of the marketers (Blichfeldt, 2005, p. 397).

Although formal brand associations for Saint Lucia were not uncovered during the time field

work occurred, being showcased on the television series *"The Bachelor"* in early 2010 enhanced the

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exposure of the destination. Anholt (2005b) dictated the power of well-known individuals, "famous people are under constant observation by millions of other people, their actions and preferences have enormous leverage" (p. 120); the publicity for the island by this television series and its contestants certainly helped to promote Saint Lucia and the features available throughout the island. This tourism genre of product placement is similar to the feature of Ireland on the NBC series *"The Today Show"* in 2007 (Clancy, 2009). The author discusses how various promotional images portrayed various tourist attractions focusing on "the old mythical tourist Ireland" (Clancy, 2009, p. 136). Results from Saint Lucia indicated an enormous influx to website hits for the SLTB, similar to what an Irish airline experienced following the American broadcast (Clancy, 2009). Although it is impossible to measure the direct effects such as tourist arrivals caused by this particular media exposure, the images of Saint Lucia portrayed throughout the episodes are likely to enhance recognition of the island for the viewers of the series.

The development of brand ambassadors can also help a destination brand resonate throughout various markets. Although Saint Lucia is a small island state, other destinations can become associated to large corporations, such as national airlines, renowned theme parks, consumer goods, and the image emitted by these corporations (Anholt, 2005b). Therefore, international corporations that are associated to a nation have the ability to influence an outsiders' image and perception of that country. The entirety of branding is complex as it encompasses "the totality of the thoughts, feelings, associations and expectations that come to mind when a prospect or customer is exposed to an entity's name, logo, products, services, events, or any design or symbol representing them" (Lindsay, 2000, p. 3). All aspects of the country become associated to the brand itself and have the ability to influence perceptions and images of a destination; therefore, although brand exposure was minimal, these additional branding elements offer the ability to leverage the presence of Saint Lucia abroad and have the power to be supportive or detrimental to the branding strategy.

6.5.1 Electronic Marketing

The Internet boasts the ability for small companies to go global (Middleton et al., 2009); similarly, small island states like Saint Lucia should utilize the power of the Internet to reach various markets. The SLTB took advantage of this and launched a new interactive and user-friendly website in the fall of 2009, as suggested by FutureBrand. The majority of tourists noted the use of the Internet in their research pre-departure; of these individuals, the majority also noted having visited the official website of the SLTB in search of information prior to their vacation. In light of these statistics, the vitality of a user-friendly website that is easy to navigate and effectively relays important information to interested consumers is apparent. The information provided on the Internet can be influential in the conception of images and perceptions of a destination; therefore, the images portrayed need to be authentic while also evoking a sense of excitement and curiosity. The official website for Saint Lucia comprises a slideshow of images exposing the islands landscapes, beaches, the Carnival, outdoor adventure opportunities, and weddings among others, in addition to an informational video. The brand mark is predominantly displayed on the main page, and subsequently appears throughout all other links available; while the use of colours and design throughout the website is consistent with the colours and design of the brand mark itself. In addition to the new website, the SLTB has also taken advantage of other social networking sites online in order to reach out to different markets and communicate more efficiently.

The benefits from Internet advertising include greater flexibility, cost efficiency, the ability to rapidly change promotional messages in comparison to printed material, and the ability to easily target key markets (Buhalis, 2003; Morgan et al., 2004). An additional benefit having emerged from electronic marketing is the ability to track activity on a webpage over a long period of time, an element the SLTB looks for in online marketing endeavours. The Internet enables continuous

improvements and innovations of the product (Bennett, 1999), a factor necessary due to high substitutability among Caribbean destinations.

Saint Lucia has embraced the notion of electronic marketing initiatives and in doing so the SLTB has greater ability to increase the reach of various marketing initiatives. Furthermore, through the collection of web browsing data, such as time spent on the website and number of times the website is visited, the SLTB is better able to determine the scope and effectiveness of online campaigns. Such information can help determine the degree to which certain initiatives are successful as well as which promotions are more effective than others. Electronic marketing encompasses great potential for a small island state with financial constraints, and can consequently be identified as a best practice of Saint Lucia.

6.5.2 Destination Loyalty

Loyalty is an important construct of branding, comprising attitudinal and behavioural variables, willingness to recommend and likelihood to return (Huang, Cai, & Ismail, 2010, p. 244). Although visitor satisfaction does not necessarily translate into destination loyalty, results from the survey questionnaire identified a large proportion of respondents (42.4%) in Saint Lucia as return visitors. Almost half of the respondents were return visitors, suggesting a probability of destination loyalty to the island. Tourists identified a range of one to more than 16 prior visits to the island, partially attributed to ownership in a time-share or a villa. Furthermore, findings from the survey questionnaire are also favourable regarding the willingness to recommend and the likelihood to return components to destination loyalty. The majority of tourists (97.8%) indicated they would recommend Saint Lucia to friends and family, while almost half of the tourists (42.4%) were return visitors. Results indicated that return visitors were more likely to continue to visit Saint Lucia than first-time visitors. Similar to these findings, Yoon and Uysal (2005) argued visitor satisfaction increases the likelihood of repeat visitation as well as enhances the probability of that individual recommending the destination to other

people. The majority of respondents noted being satisfied with the vacation to Saint Lucia. In order to increase visitor satisfaction, it is important to identify elements that can negatively influence the experience. Tourist dissatisfaction can be attributed to various factors including stress, delays, language barriers, and health concerns (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Ensuring accessibility for tourists and appropriately trained employees will help to reduce frustration among tourists. The reduction of stress is achieved through value provision, a critical element for destinations seeking long-term relationships with tourists (Fyall, Callod, & Edwards, 2003).

Destination image encompasses the cognitive (awareness), the affective (emotion), and the conative (action) components (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, p. 403); all of which influence destination loyalty; therefore, effective marketing campaigns need to be implemented to first initiate a desire to travel. Three underlying advantages to a destination marketing organization (DMO) of destination loyalty include reduced long-term marketing costs, increased travel trade leverage, and word-of-mouth referrals (Oppermann, 2000; Pike, 2008). The influx of first-time visitors will continue to be of importance to Saint Lucia. Lau and McKercher (2004) described the first-time visitor market as being a "volatile, fickle, and expensive market to pursue, with no guarantee of success" (p. 279). Regardless, it is vital that the small island state continues to attract new tourists so the island does not become solely dependent on repeat visitors, while also continuing to maintain arrivals from repeat visitors advocating destination loyalty. Results indicate the island is currently successful in attracting new tourists as a large proportion of tourists (57.6%) included in this research indicated being first-time visitors to the island. According to the results, a balance between first-time and repeat tourists is apparent. Efforts should continue to encourage and attract both tourist groups to Saint Lucia through marketing campaigns and service quality in order to reduce dependency on one type of tourist. These efforts should be monitored to ensure effectiveness and improve on areas in need.

6.6 Continuous Monitoring and Improvement

Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) noted the monitoring of a destination brand facilitates adjustments to the brand implementation; monitoring should be measured through direct indicators such as brand awareness, brand recall, and values attached to the brand by the consumer (p. 183). The authors further recommend internal and external monitoring to asses brand image through techniques such as focus groups and quantitative surveys (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p. 183). Keller (1993) also argues the necessity to monitor brand initiatives:

> marketers should employ tracking studies to measure consumer knowledge structures over time to (1) detect any changes in the different dimensions of brand knowledge and (2) suggest how these changes might be related to the effectiveness of different marketing mix actions. (p. 15)

The continuous monitoring and evaluation of marketing strategies will enable the improvement of ineffective aspects, thus enhancing the return on investment. Monitoring the effectiveness of a branding strategy is a key element to brand management, "you can only manage what you measure" (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p. 183); and is identified as a critical success factor in destination marketing (Baker & Cameron, 2008). The administration of tourist surveys after visitation, at outlets such as the airport, "enable destinations to identify weaknesses and concentrate their corrective action" (Buhalis, 2000, p. 103).

In Saint Lucia, key informants interviewed identified that no such monitoring activities were being conducted. One key informant indicated that such evaluations were unnecessary as the brand had only been launched a few months prior. This lack of monitoring is a limitation for the island as the SLTB is unaware of how the brand has resonated within the mind frame of the tourists in Saint Lucia. This research has provided valuable information concerning tourist attitudes regarding the new destination brand, yet further monitoring initiatives should be implemented. Exit surveys would be beneficial for the SLTB to collect from tourists waiting in the airport, as well as satisfaction surveys

concerning the hotels could be beneficial for service operators. If this information is collected through the private sector, such as a hotel, it is essential that this information be made available to the SLTB in order to analyse and recommend modifications accordingly.

Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) is a strategy to measure the effectiveness of marketing initiatives as determined by the consumer; the four underlying elements include: brand awareness, brand associations, brand resonance, and brand loyalty (Pike, 2008). The lack of brand awareness, minimal brand associations, and inauspicious brand resonance due to lack of supporting resources, suggest low brand equity; however, this is contraindicative of the high return rate by tourists suggesting the destination loyalty construct, signifying brand loyalty. FutureBrand (2009a) further noted a lack of brand equity for Saint Lucia, determined by the interview participants during the market research phase of the brand development process. CBBE for Saint Lucia needs to be enhanced, done so through marketing initiatives exposing the destination and the destination brand as well as the provision of a quality product that sustains visitor satisfaction.

The condition of national infrastructure is another means of communication from the destination to the consumer (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). The slated improvements to the infrastructure in Saint Lucia can be identified as a best practice. The country is seeking to enhance the current product available on the island through various improvements and expansions to road networks, cruise ports and airports. Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) noted the objective to "transform the physical infrastructure in such a way, that it supports the destination brand as much as possible and thus distribute contacts that support and reinforce the brand identity" (p. 186). The infrastructure improvements slated will enhance the experience for the tourist as well as improving the long-term prosperity for Saint Lucians, an integral objective for strategic management of marketing for destinations (Buhalis, 2000, p. 100). Additionally, results from the survey questionnaire indicated that tourists thought the national infrastructure needed to be improved in order to enhance interest abroad.

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Although the slated improvements will take years to complete, the results will be beneficial towards enhancing the tourism product showcased abroad.

6.6.1 Future Directions

FutureBrand (2009a) provided the SLTB with objectives for the present, short-term, and long-term in order to intensify the brand and offset the potential for the brand to become stagnant. These were taken into consideration by the SLTB and new objectives were identified by the SLTB (Table 7).

Table 7: Objectives to deepen the brand over time

	As suggested by FutureBrand (FutureBrand, 2009a)	As identified by the SLTB (FutureBrand, 2009b)
Today: Current State	- Heavily promote festivals and boutique size/nature of island - Considerable shift from current brand platform - Extensive communications/ training of locals -Shift to Discerning in investment and development goals	- Launch new brand - Training/education programs - Press dissemination - Create key tourism initiatives centered around "Discerning"
Tomorrow: Near Term	- Look for local improvements (streetscapes, airport) to further image of nation as one of a kind and premium - Create quality website, utilizing local experts - Deepen offerings (classes, sites, festivals, dining) that deliver the brand experience	- Update destination website and collateral - Promote festivals that further highlight our Discerning image - Participate in key travel shows - Work with co-branding partners
	- Join global premium-like initiatives (for rum, for nature)	- Consider opening Creole museum, cooking schools, rum

		instruction/contest
Future: Long Term	-Encourage locals to open businesses related to their own authentic products and services	- Encourage locals to open businesses related to their own authentic products and services - Develop innovative environments for airport and key attractions

The objectives highlighted above provide a great guideline for tourism development focusing on Saint Lucia's attributes and strengthening the current deficiencies. It is apparent that the SLTB valued the direction from FutureBrand, as the suggested objectives are identified as official goals. Key innovations to the tourism product and promotions targeted to the discerning tourist can help to differentiate Saint Lucia amongst similar regional competitors. Enhancing the cultural experiences available and encouraging authenticity throughout tourism development can also leverage the island as such features are unique to Saint Lucia. Having determined goals for various timelines is imperative for sustainable tourism development, while it also provides guidance for marketing.

As tourism destinations continue to emerge and market unique attributes the competition will continue to augment placing more importance on the branding strategies for differentiation. The distinction between destinations become more relevant to attract consumers, yet as the travel and tourism economy continues to grow this distinction becomes more difficult (Balakrishnan, 2009, p. 623). Effective policies for the tourism industry should be developed and followed to ensure sustainable tourism development. Efforts to develop a National Tourism Policy were initiated in 2002, yet an official document was never approved and thus failed to be formulated and released by the Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) (Wilkinson, 2003).

Tourism policy development will provide guidelines for sustainable development and will help govern the sector throughout the island. Buhalis (2000) noted an objective of strategic management and marketing for destinations is to "optimise tourism impacts by ensuring a sustainable

balance between economic benefits and socio-cultural and environmental costs" (p. 100). The

creation of both short-term and long-term goals and objectives need to be identified to help mitigate

unsustainable and inefficient development. Horizontal relationships among various sectors with

tourism, including agricultural and manufacturing, should be encouraged and enable greater

employment opportunities that are both directly and indirectly associated to the tourism sector. The

intangibility of a destination brand causes further difficulty for management and control, an

omnipresent lack of managerial control and ownership is a potential threat to the nation if it is not

governed (Gudjonsson, 2005; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002). Future tourism development

prospects are highlighted in the island's National Vision Plan; however, the detailed structure and

policies that enforce the course of action are incomplete, consequently amplifying the gap between

policy and practice.

6.7 A Conceptual Model for the Development of a Destination Brand Strategy

Upon reflection of the key implications discussed throughout this chapter, the creation of a conceptual

model to visualize this process was considered to be a valuable asset to academic literature and

countries seeking to develop a destination brand. The relationships between the elements discussed

above are illustrated in Figure 13. It is important to make note that the model is a non-linear

progression for the development of a destination branding strategy. Additionally, it is important to

note that this model is not unidirectional. It is integral that market research continue throughout the

branding process (Balakrishnan, 2009), though this should first be implemented prior to any of the

other steps. Continuous monitoring and improvements will also be made throughout the entire

process, supporting the ability to backtrack and make changes at all stages.

Figure 13: A Conceptual Model for the Development of a Destination Brand Strategy
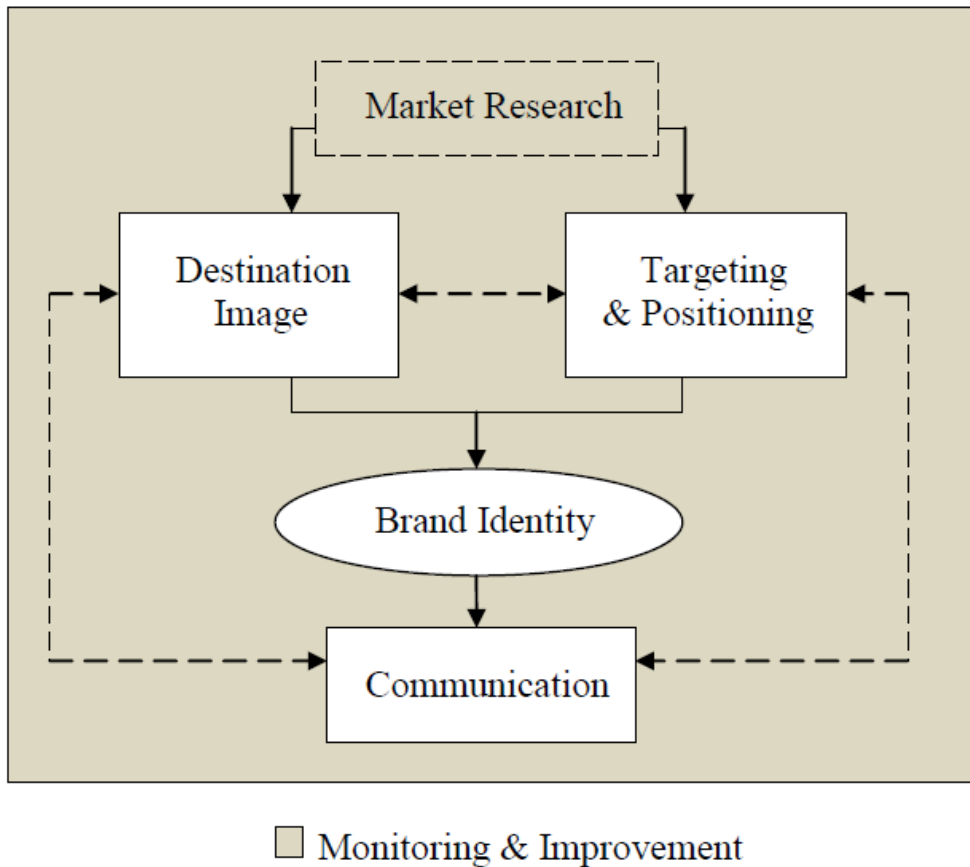
Although this is the process suggested upon the analysis of the results from data collected in Saint Lucia, it has been left as a broad archetype as each phase consists of different elements, which also differs for each destination. There is no specific process for branding a destination that can be applied to all destinations; therefore, as this model has been developed from literature and data collected from a small island state located in a homogeneous region, it is suggested as a guideline for such destinations.

The following chapter is comprised of a summary of the research presented within this thesis. The results of this research have provided insight into the complexity of destination branding, using

Saint Lucia as a case study. Furthermore, conclusions and recommendations for destination branding

in Saint Lucia and abroad will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of this thesis and provide recommendations for the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) regarding the destination branding process. Suggestions for future research in this field of study will be outlined and a few final comments will conclude this thesis.

7.1 Summary of Thesis

This concurrent mixed methods research was undertaken to identify the effectiveness of a destination brand as determined by international tourists visiting the destination. Saint Lucia was chosen as the case study due to its regional homogeneity in addition to the recent launch of a new destination brand in January of 2009. Data was collected through qualitative interviews with key informants and quantitative survey questionnaires administered to international tourists. Various secondary sources and governmental documents were also analysed.

The first objective was to explore how the current destination brand was chosen. Qualitative interviews with key informants at the Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) in addition to two individuals involved in providing tourism related services revealed the appointment of FutureBrand, a brand development firm, as being responsible for the development of Saint Lucia's new destination brand and brand strategy. The original PowerPoint presentations detailing the development process were obtained and showcased the plethora of options for the islands brand mark. The identification of four key brand components: (1) nature and topography, (2) culture and history, (3) diverse attractions, events and activities, and (4) friendly, welcoming people; in addition to the selection of a discerning positioning concept were integral for the design of the brand mark. The brand mark is a portrayal of the island's topography and national identity, portraying the diversity available throughout Saint

Lucia by expanding the reach of the brand that was limited by the "simply beautiful" tagline of the previous brand. The entire re-branding process was completed within six months, as the brand was to be unveiled at a large-scale event hosted by Saint Lucia in January of 2009. The time frame for the design and development of the new brand did not jeopardize the brand-mark itself; however, it can be concluded that this time pressure has had negative repercussions towards the marketing strategy and the communication of the brand due to a lack of resources.

The second objective was to evaluate tourists' perceptions and images of the destination. This was measured through the data obtained by the administration of survey questionnaires to international tourists visiting Saint Lucia. Results indicate a highly favourable image of the island and that the majority of respondents would recommend the island to friends and family. Saint Lucia was perceived to be different than the other surrounding Caribbean islands due to its lush rainforest, the culture and friendly locals, the topography, the safety and relaxation, the beauty, and the stage of development. Expectations of the trip prior to departure were partially formed by research using the following mediums: the Internet, travel magazines, travel guides, word-of-mouth, and travel agencies. It is essential to ensure information is current and accurate on the official website for the SLTB as numerous respondents visited this website. It can be concluded that Saint Lucia is perceived in a positive light by international tourists, and this is partially attributed to positive word-of-mouth advertising from friends and family who have visited the island and enjoyed their experience.

The third objective was to explore the relationship between tourists' perceptions and destination choice. This was also determined through the analysis of the data collected from the survey questionnaires. Four primary reasons for choosing Saint Lucia as the destination included relaxation, climate, scenery, and location. The majority of tourists noted awareness of the following features: weather, geographic location, currency, and tourist attractions. Features that were identified as being immediately associated with Saint Lucia include beaches, the Pitons, the rainforest, and

water sports. First time visitors to the island immediately associated beaches with the island, while repeat visitors associated the Pitons, Carnival, and golf as prominent features that were at the top of mind. Destination personalities that were attributed to the island included: beautiful, peaceful, cheerful, romantic, lively, and intriguing, further suggesting a positive perception of the island. All of these elements contribute to destination choice acting as pull factors for the island and increasing tourist motivations. The positive perception possessed by international tourists is beneficial to the islands tourism economy. Marketing initiatives should capitalize on the elements described above to further enhance the image of Saint Lucia abroad.

The fourth objective was to evaluate the extent to which the destination brand influenced destination choice. This objective was also measured through the analysis of the data collected through the quantitative survey questionnaires. Considering an overwhelming lack of awareness of the new destination brand by international tourists, it is concluded that the destination brand did not have any role in influencing destination choice. This is further warranted as the majority of respondents noted that they were not influenced by any advertising to choose Saint Lucia as their destination. Qualitative interviews with key informants identified a lack of brand exposure due to financial constraints and a lack of time and human resources to effectively communicate the brand. In regards to the brand mark itself, unfavourable attitudes were identified more often than favourable attitudes. It can be concluded that greater brand communication is needed in order to enhance top of mind awareness of Saint Lucia abroad.

Upon reflection of the results obtained through data collection in Saint Lucia, a conceptual model for the development process of a destination brand was suggested. This thesis has outlined the requirement of the destination branding process to include six essential stages to enhance destination brand effectiveness. These stages include market research, destination image, targeting and positioning, brand identity, communication of the brand, and continuous monitoring and evaluation

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throughout. This process will not ensure destination brand effectiveness; rather the presence of each of these elements will help generate an inclusive branding strategy. This form of strategy will help mitigate short-term solutions and encourage long-term strategies that are unique and suitable to the destination and embrace the national identity.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for the future direction of the branding strategy for the island of Saint Lucia are suggested below. As the destination branding development process has been completed, the recommendations concern future initiatives to enhance the brand.

It is recommended to engage in monitoring and improvement initiatives of the brand to better gauge its effectiveness. This can be accomplished through stakeholder meetings and visitor surveys. Stakeholder meetings should include representatives from the national, regional, and local levels, as well as both private and public operators. Visitor satisfaction surveys should be collected at the airport prior to departure and at the hotels. This data should be made available to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to help determine weaknesses of the tourism product, as determined by the tourists who have experienced and invested in the product.

It is also recommended to enhance exposure of the brand through effective niche marketing initiatives that showcase the diversity and unique attributes of Saint Lucia. Promotional efforts should continue to include the iconic Piton Mountains and Drive-in volcano, as well as features that further optimize the diversity of the island such as the culture, the friendly locals, the rainforest and the waterfalls. It is vital that the promotional campaigns highlight the diversity of the island to better differentiate Saint Lucia among other regional competitors offering similar opportunities.

Finally, it is recommended to work towards transforming the destination brand into a national brand. It is necessary to identify quality standards for the products that will receive this mark, as well as short and long-term goals to ensure the process of this transformation remains on track.

7.3 Future Research

This research addressed a gap in current academic literature combining two fields of study. However, several limitations and delimitations were present and have thus exposed additional areas that warrant future research.

This research did not consider the attitudes of local residents towards the new destination brand. Further research in Saint Lucia with this focus could be beneficial for determining the resonance of the brand within the local community. It is also recommended that future research regarding perceptions and attitudes of a destination brand be inclusive of both the tourists as well as the local community.

It is also suggested that further academic research of this genre occur at a variety of other destinations to determine any similarities within the brand development process. Acquiring a broad base of destination branding case studies encompassing the tourists perceptions could provide guidance for sustainable tourism development as well as marketing initiatives to better emphasize the positive attributes of a destination.

7.4 Final Comments

The central conclusion that resulted from this research was the need for greater exposure of the destination brand to propel the island as a discerning tourist destination abroad. Destination branding is much more complex than a logo and a tagline; it introduces new challenges and opportunities, it is inclusive of numerous internal and external elements, and it is open to individual interpretation. It is vital that a destination brand embody an authentic and unique representation of the national identity to spark the curiosity of potential consumers while also persuading repeat visitation. Finally, it is necessary to capitalize on the opportunities presented to a destination by the destination brand. Differentiation is critical for each destination, particularly so for destinations located within a

homogeneous region. This research advocates that within the growing global tourism market,

destination brands possess great power.

Appendix A: Interview Guide

<u>**Interview with St. Lucia Tourist Board Staff**</u>

Respondent:
Date:
Location:

<u>**St. Lucia Tourist Board background**</u>
1. When was the St. Lucia Tourist Board established
2. What is the goal and mission of the St. Lucia Tourist Board?
3. How many individuals are members of the St. Lucia Tourist Board?
4. Are there any organizations that work closely with the St. Lucia Tourist Board?

<u>**Brand Development:**</u>
5. What is the current brand of St. Lucia?
6. What is the current logo of St. Lucia?
7. How was the St. Lucia destination brand determined?
8. In what year was this branding strategy launched?
9. What is the goal of this branding strategy? What message is being delivered through the brand?
10. How long did the entire brand development process take from start to finish?
11. Who/What company is responsible for the current brand of St. Lucia?
12. Which stakeholders were included in the brand development process?
13. Were citizens of St. Lucia involved in the branding strategy? If not, why was this not considered to be important?
14. How was the brand funded?

<u>**Brand success and brand future:**</u>

15. Does the St. Lucia Tourist Board continue to monitor the success of the current brand? If so, how is this done? What is the purpose of this monitoring?
16. Since the implementation of the St. Lucia tourist destination brand, have there been any noticeable changes to the visitor demographic?
17. Are there any plans to make changes to the current brand? If so, what do these changes involve?

<u>**Predominant activities and target markets:**</u>

18. What is the ideal target market for St. Lucia? What demographic is the brand targeting?
19. Is there one feature or activity that is more heavily marketed than others? If so, why and how was this activity chosen?
20. How is St. Lucia marketed internationally? In what countries are marketing efforts concentrated and why?

Recommendations for further research:

21. Can you recommend anyone else who may be useful to my research?
22. Can you suggest any documents, such as plans or studies, concerning tourism development of which I may obtain a copy?

Thank you for your time and insight.

Appendix B: List of Interview Participants

	Interview Participant	**Description of Interview Participant**	**Date of Interview**
Interview 1	Owen Augier	Tourism Transport Supplier	July 21, 2009
Interview 2	Dr. James Hepple	Tourism Consultant	July 31, 2009
Interview 3	Anonymous	Government Official	August 4, 2009
Interview 4	Wanda Octave	Director of Marketing	August 5, 2009
Interview 5	Dainea Augier	Corporate Communications Manager	August 10, 2009

Appendix C: Tourist Questionnaire

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SECTION A:
What attracted you to visit St. Lucia

---

1. Have you ever previously visited St. Lucia? (*check one box*) ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If <u>yes</u>, how many times have you visited? _____

2. Did you travel to St. Lucia because of: (*check <u>all</u> that apply*)
    ☐ White Sand   ☐ Culture/History   ☐ Flora/Fauna   ☐ Music
    ☐ Climate   ☐ Food   ☐ Good Price   ☐ Wedding
    ☐ Beautiful Scenery ☐ Activities   ☐ Location   ☐ Nightlife
    ☐ Family/Friends   ☐ Relaxation   ☐ Scuba Diving ☐ Exoticism
    ☐ Other (*if other, please specify*_____)

3. What was your general level of knowledge regarding St. Lucia <u>*prior*</u> to your arrival?

No Knowledge			Very Knowledgeable	
1 –	2 –	3 –	4 –	5

4. Which of the following features were you aware of? (*check <u>all</u> that apply*)
    ☐ Geography   ☐ Weather   ☐Activities   ☐ Festivals & Events
    ☐ Attractions   ☐ Currency   ☐ Transportation ☐ Laws
    ☐ Other (*if other, please specify*) _____

5. How did you plan your trip? (*check <u>all</u> that apply*)
    ☐ Travel Agent   ☐ Internet   ☐ Friend/Relative did it for me
    ☐ Other (*if other, please specify*)_____

6. Did you do research about St. Lucia prior to your departure? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    If <u>yes</u>, where did you search? (*check <u>all</u> that apply*)
    ☐ Internet   ☐ Travel Magazine   ☐ Other Literature   ☐ Travel Guide
    ☐ Friends/Relatives that have visited the island   ☐ Travel Agent
    ☐ Other (*if other, please specify*)_____

    ➡ If you <u>did</u> search on the *Internet* for information prior to your arrival;

    Did you visit the official St. Lucia Tourism website?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    Did you read any online blogs regarding St. Lucia?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    ➡ If <u>yes</u> to *any* of the above, did this research help you understand what to expect for your vacation to
    St. Lucia?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. Were you influenced by any advertising to travel to St. Lucia? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    If <u>yes</u>, where did you notice this advertising? *(check <u>all</u> that apply)*
    ☐ Internet   ☐ Travel Magazines   ☐ Other Magazines   ☐ Travel Guide
    ☐Television   ☐ Newspaper   ☐ Radio   ☐ Travel Agent
    ☐ Brochure
    ☐ Other *(if other, please specify)*_____

8. If St. Lucia were a person, would you think of the country as being: *(check <u>all</u> that apply)*
    ☐ Lively   ☐ Peaceful   ☐ Cheerful   ☐ Depressing
    ☐ Romantic   ☐ Unromantic   ☐ Intriguing   ☐ Uninteresting
    ☐ Beautiful   ☐ Unattractive   ☐ Dangerous   ☐ Fragile
    ☐ Other *(if other, please specify)*_____

SECTION B: Satisfaction with St. Lucia

1. How satisfied are you with your trip to St. Lucia? *(Please circle your answer along this 5 point scale for each statement)*

	Extremely Unsatisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Service	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	
Accommodation	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	
Activities	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	
Weather	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	
Landscape / Beaches	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	
Trip Overall	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	

2. When thinking of your *expectations prior* to your travels to St. Lucia, your current experience is exactly what you had imagined and expected: *(Please circle your answer along this 5 point scale)*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Do you intend to return to St. Lucia in the near or distant future: ☐ Yes   ☐ No
If <u>no</u>, please specify why not: _____

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate the importance for each of the following features for your trip to St. Lucia. (1 being the least important, 5 being the most important). *(Please circle your answer along this 5 point scale)*

Beaches	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5		All-inclusive package	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Climate	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5		Price/Quality ratio	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Calm/Tranquility	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5		Island atmosphere	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Culture/History	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5		Beautiful scenery	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Activities available	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5		Geographic location	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

5. Would you recommend St. Lucia as a destination to friends and family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Reflecting on your experience in St. Lucia thus far, would you change anything? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please specify what: _____

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SECTION C:
The St. Lucia Destination Brand

</div>

1. Do you understand what destination branding is? ☐ Yes ☐ No

For your information,
Destination branding includes development of a slogan and a logo that identifies the destination. It is a
marketing technique that captures the tourists' attention and should spark their curiosity for the destination.

2. Please *circle* your favourite logo from the following 3 destination brands of St. Lucia:

Please explain *why* you like this logo the most: _____
_____

3. Based on your experience in St. Lucia thus far, if you were able to make suggestions to the Tourism Board –
   what island features do you think St. Lucia should be promoting?
   _____
   _____

4. When you envision St. Lucia, what do you immediately think of: *(check all that apply)*

☐ The Pitons	☐ Beaches	☐ Scuba Diving	☐ Jazz Music
☐ Sulphur Springs	☐ Waterfalls	☐ Botanical Gardens	☐ Tourist Resorts
☐ Carnival	☐ Rainforest	☐ Golf	☐ Water sports
☐ Weddings	☐ Spas	☐ Soft Adventure	

   ☐ Other *(if other, please specify)*_____

5. Do you believe that St. Lucia differs from other Caribbean islands? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   If yes, *how* do you think St. Lucia is differentiated?_____
   _____
   _____

6. How would you describe the image that you have of St. Lucia?

Highly Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Indifferent	Favourable	Highly Favourable
1	2	3	4	5

7. What is your level of knowledge concerning the current St. Lucia destination brand promoted?

No Knowledge	Very Knowledgeable
1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	

8. The following questions are in regards to the current St. Lucia Tourism logo:

Have you seen this logo before (other than on the previous page)?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
If yes, *where/what form of media outlet* do you recall seeing the logo?_____
_____

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral				Strongly Agree
I like the logo	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo entices me to visit St. Lucia	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo grabs my attention	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo represents the island well	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The use of different colours is appealing	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo is a modern design	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo portrays the island's natural beauty	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	
The logo portrays the diversity of the island's culture	1	- 2	- 3	- 4	-	5	

Were you aware that the colours in the logo are the colours of the national flag?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Were you aware that the logo represents the famous Piton Mountains?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

SECTION D:
Demographic Information

Please specify: *(check one box)*

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age: ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 or over

3. What is the highest level of education you have attained?
   ☐ Did not finish high school   ☐ High school diploma
   ☐ Some College/University   ☐ College Diploma/University Degree
   ☐ Graduate degree (Masters, PhD)   ☐ Other _____

4. What is your country of residence? _____

5. Please indicate your accommodations while visiting St. Lucia:
   ☐ All-inclusive resort   ☐ Cruise Ship passenger   ☐ Visiting friends/relatives
   ☐ Other *(if other, please specify)* _____

Thank you very much for your time!
Please provide any additional comments in the box provided

Enjoy your stay in St. Lucia ☺

Appendix D: Questions for Travel Agents

Date:
Travel Agency:

Is there any advertising for Saint Lucia visible outside the travel agency	Y	N
Is there any advertising for Saint Lucia visible inside the travel agency	Y	N
Is the travel agency aware of Saint Lucia (location/climate/attractions)	Y	N
If Yes, what information can they provide:		
Can the travel agent provide tangible information (brochure/guidebooks)	Y	N
If Yes, what:		
If No, is Saint Lucia featured in any Caribbean literature available:	Y	N
Has the travel agent been to Saint Lucia	Y	N
If Yes, how was their experience:		
Does the travel agency keep records/statistics regarding how many customers they send to Saint Lucia annually?	Y	N
How often do customers inquire about Saint Lucia:		
How often does the travel agent suggest Saint Lucia:		
How many customers travel to the Caribbean annually through this agency:		

Other Comments:

Appendix E: Transition to Four Prominent Themes

Fifteen Emerging Themes	Seven Prominent Themes	Four Prominent Themes
Branding	Branding	Branding
Simply Beautiful/Tagline	Simply Beautiful/Tagline	
Positioning		
Marketing		
Niche Markets	Marketing	Marketing
Tourist Markets	Budget/Financial Constraints	
Competition		
Jazz Festival/Special Events		
Budget/Financial Constraints		
SLTB	SLTB	The Role of Tourism Entities
CTO/CHTA/MOT/SLHTA	CTO/CHTA/MOT/SLHTA	
Government		
Tourism		
Future Development	Future Tourism Development	Future Tourism Development
Tourism Development		

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