

This article was downloaded by: [James Cook University]

On: 23 July 2009

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 906164222]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t792306980>

### Linking Travel Motivation, Tourist Self-Image and Destination Brand Personality

Laurie Murphy <sup>a</sup>; Pierre Benckendorff <sup>a</sup>; Gianna Moscardo <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Business, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Online Publication Date: 19 September 2007

**To cite this Article** Murphy, Laurie, Benckendorff, Pierre and Moscardo, Gianna(2007)'Linking Travel Motivation, Tourist Self-Image and Destination Brand Personality',Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,22:2,45 — 59

**To link to this Article:** DOI: 10.1300/J073v22n02\_04

**URL:** [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J073v22n02\\_04](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J073v22n02_04)

## PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Linking Travel Motivation, Tourist Self-Image and Destination Brand Personality

Laurie Murphy  
Pierre Benckendorff  
Gianna Moscardo

**ABSTRACT.** Despite a growing body of work on destination branding, there has been little investigation of whether or not tourists attribute brand personality characteristics to tourism destinations and whether or not an emotional connection exists based on tourists' perceived self-image and the 'brand personality' of destinations. The aim of this study is to explore the links among four key constructs proposed for the destination branding and choice process—tourist needs, destination brand personality, self-congruity, and intentions to visit and satisfaction with a visit. The results indicate that where tourists can make an association between a destination and a destination brand personality, and where this association is consistent with their desired holiday experience, a high level of congruity will exist between the tourists' self-image and their perceptions of the destination. In turn this self-congruity was related to satisfaction with a visit to the destination but not to intention to travel to the destination. doi:10.1300/J073v22n02\_04 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2007 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS.** Destination branding, brand personality, self congruity, motives, needs, satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

Destination branding appears to be emerging as one of the most compelling tools available to destination marketers seeking a competitive advantage. According to Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003) brands create a perceived distinctiveness by inciting belief, evoking emotions and triggering behaviours because they have social, emotional and identity value to the users. It has been argued that to be effective, destination brands need to establish a brand

personality which creates a link to the tourist's self-image through their needs and motives (Ekinci, 2003). This destination branding approach is very different to the traditional promotion of destinations which use mostly physical attributes and activity opportunities.

The development of destination branding research resembles many other areas of tourism research because it borrows and adapts concepts developed for consumer goods rather than services. Hankinson (2001) argues that creating brands as defined and discussed in the

---

Laurie Murphy (E-mail: [Laurie.Murphy@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Laurie.Murphy@jcu.edu.au)) is Lecturer in the School of Business at James Cook University (Townsville, Queensland, Australia 4811). Pierre Benckendorff (E-mail: [Pierre.Benckendorff@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Pierre.Benckendorff@jcu.edu.au)) is Lecturer in the School of Business at James Cook University (Townsville, Queensland, Australia 4811). Gianna Moscardo (E-mail: [Gianna.Moscardo@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Gianna.Moscardo@jcu.edu.au)) is Associate Professor in the School of Business at James Cook University (Townsville, Queensland, Australia 4811).

traditional marketing literature is a more difficult and complex process when considering destinations and locations. As with other areas of tourism research, questions need to be asked about the extent to which the assumptions of traditional branding applies to tourist destinations.

The present study analyses some of the basic assumptions of branding by examining the relationships among four key variables outlined in the models of destination branding presented by Ekinici (2003) and Hosany and Ekinici (2003). Specifically, the study explores the relationships among tourists' motives, their use of personality characteristics to describe a destination (brand personality) and their perception of the degree of congruity between destination image and self-image (self-congruence). Two outcomes, intention to visit a destination and satisfaction with a destination experience are also included in the analysis. The overall aim of this study is therefore, to explore the links between tourists' needs, brand personality perceptions, self-congruity and behavioural intentions and satisfaction. In particular, the research explores whether perceived brand personality and tourist needs or motives interact and whether these two aspects are jointly associated with self-congruity, which in turn influences behaviour. The following review will consider these aspects in more detail.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Destination Branding*

According to Ekinici (2003), the words 'brand', 'branding' and 'destination image' have appeared in many academic references, with no apparent effort made to distinguish between destination image and destination branding. These concerns are also expressed by Cai (2002) and Konecnik (2004). Ekinici, building on the work of Cai suggests that destination branding constitutes the core of destination image. In turn, it is proposed that the human characteristics associated with the brand, or the *brand personality*, form the core of a successful destination brand. Ekinici suggests that a relationship exists between a destination's image, destination branding and brand personality, and the tourist's self-image. The process of des-

tinuation branding begins when the evaluation of destination image includes a strong emotional attachment. This implies that only branded destinations are purported to be able to establish an emotional link with their potential customers. Ekinici elaborates that successful destination branding involves establishing a mutual relationship between destinations and tourists by satisfying tourists' needs. In establishing this link between destination image and consumer self-image an important factor is brand personality which emphasises the human side of the brand image.

These concepts are further developed by Hosany and Ekinici (2003) and connected to destination choice. The authors argue that an overall destination image is made up of brand personality, affective components, and what is referred to as the cognitive image. Brand personality is linked both directly to the overall destination image, but also to the affective component. This connection reflects the importance of a match between the needs and self-image of the tourist and their perception of the brand personality of the destination. The overall destination image creates an overall attitude towards the destination, which in turn is connected to behavioural intentions and satisfaction. The element of cognitive image recognises that destination images include information about a range of other variables not directly related to brand personality or brand awareness such as travel distance and climate. In this model the key constructs are brand personality, and the connections among brand personality and image and tourists' needs or motives.

### *Brand Personality*

J. Aaker (1997, p. 347) defines brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" and identifies five broad dimensions to brand personality—sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. J. Aaker and Fournier (1995) cite several references relating to the argument that brand personality can help to differentiate brands, develop the emotional aspects of a brand and augment the meaning of a brand to the consumer. According to D. A. Aaker (1996) brand personality is based on the brand-as-person perspective. For some brands, the brand

personality can provide a link to the brand's emotional and self-expressive benefits as well as a basis for customer/brand relationships and differentiation. Brand equity is reflected when consumers agree that the brand has a personality, that it is interesting, and that they have a clear image of the type of person who would use the brand.

### ***Linking Destination Brands to Motives and Self-Image***

The explicit link between brand personality and self-identity in Ekinci's (2003) work reflects a recognition that a focus on product attributes in the branding process is insufficient. There is an increasing acceptance that lifestyle and value systems are of growing importance to consumers. De Chernatony and McDonald (2001) have suggested that a successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely.

The notion of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) 'experience economy' has also invigorated the services marketing literature and implies links between a perceived brand and the lifestyle aspirations of consumers. According to Schmitt and Simonson (1997), contemporary consumers make choices based on whether or not a product fits into their lifestyle or whether it represents an exciting new concept or a desirable experience. According to Caldwell and Freire (2004), a brand must fulfill self-expression needs, not just functional ones. With respect to destination marketing, King (2002) emphasises that travel is increasingly more about experiences, fulfilment and rejuvenation than about 'places and things'. He states that tourism marketers need to reassert themselves in lifestyle marketing and focus more on what the customer would like to see in and of themselves rather than on the physical properties of the product or service being promoted. Similarly, Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2002), reinforce the link between product image and perceived self-image, arguing that consumers are making lifestyle statements. This means that successful destination brand should place more emphasis on promotion of holiday experiences which link key brand values to the aspira-

tions, emotive benefits and self-expression needs of customers. There is a long history of research into travel motives and benefits sought as a basis for segmenting markets according to needs. Frochot and Morrison (2000) reviewed the application of benefit segmentation in tourism. They believe that one of the reasons for the great interest in benefit segmentation in travel and tourism is its focus on travellers' motivations, which have always been portrayed as a critical variable in the decision making process. Traditionally benefit segmentation has been applied to products, while benefits were mainly utilitarian. However, travel and tourism applications have evolved to be most often associated with travellers' motivations. Frochot and Morrison cite Haley (1968), the pioneer of benefit segmentation, who stated that the belief underlying this strategy is that the benefits people are seeking in consuming a given product are the basic reasons for the existence of true market segments.

According to Sirgy and Su (2000), self-congruity involves a process of matching a tourist's self-concept to a destination visitor image. They claim that a consumer's attitude toward a product (and product purchase) is influenced by the matching of the product-user image with the consumer's self-concept. Accordingly, the greater the match between a tourism destination's visitor image and the tourist's self concept, the more likely that the tourist has a favourable attitude toward that destination, and therefore is more likely to visit. Malhotra (1981) developed a scale to measure self and product concepts, comprised of 15 semantic differential items which in effect measure personality characteristics. In Malhotra's approach, which was developed for traditional goods and services, the 15-item scale was used to measure perceptions of products as well as the actual, ideal and social self. Euclidean distances between the profile of the products and the self-concepts were correlated with preference rankings to determine whether respondents had greater preference for products more congruent with their self concepts (Malhotra, 1988). By contrast, Chon (1992), in a study exploring the self-congruity concept as it applies to tourism destinations, asked respondents via a post-visit self-administered mail questionnaire to rate the degree to which a typical visitor to the

destination (Norfolk, Virginia) was consistent with their actual and ideal self-images. Chon found that tourist satisfaction was significantly correlated with self-image/destination image congruity—in other words, tourists who perceived a low discrepancy between a destination's user-image and his or her actual or ideal self-image were more satisfied with the destination. Goh and Litvin (2000) extended Chon's post-visit work using the same scale to determine whether the relationship held when the independent variables were changed to pre-trip visitation interest, rather than post-trip satisfaction. They also employed the traditional Malhotra scale in the same study. Their results indicated that Chon's method found self-image congruity correlated to travel interest and purchase likelihood. However, the results using Malhotra's approach were far from robust. They conclude that further research is required to validate self-image congruity for tourism marketing. Sirgy et al. (1997) also report methodological problems with Malhotra's traditional method. Sirgy and Su propose a new method to measure self congruence in a tourism context, adapted from their work in consumer goods and services settings. This method prompts respondents to think about a particular destination and the kind of person who typically visits. They are asked to imagine this person in their mind and describe this person using one or more personal adjectives. Respondents are then asked to rate how consistent the destination is with their actual and ideal social and self images. They argue that this method of measuring self-image congruence is more predictive than the traditional method because it captures self-congruity more directly, contains less measurement error by not employing pre-determined images, and is more holistic in capturing the self-congruity experience.

### ***Applications of Branding in Tourism and Hospitality***

The literature provides several examples of destination branding efforts deemed to be successful, including Spain (Gilmore, 2002), Wales (Pride, 2002), Oregon (Curtis, 2001), Louisiana (Slater, 2002) and Britain (Hall, 2004). In most published accounts of the destination branding

process, desired brand personality characteristics are identified. For example, Henderson (2000) discusses the New Asia-Singapore branding process and identifies the five personality characteristics comprising the brand; cosmopolitan, youthful, vibrant, modern Asia, reliability and comfort. However, post-launch evaluative research with both residents and visitors suggested that there was limited awareness of the brand and its personality as envisaged by the creators, with little mention of several important brand characteristics and values.

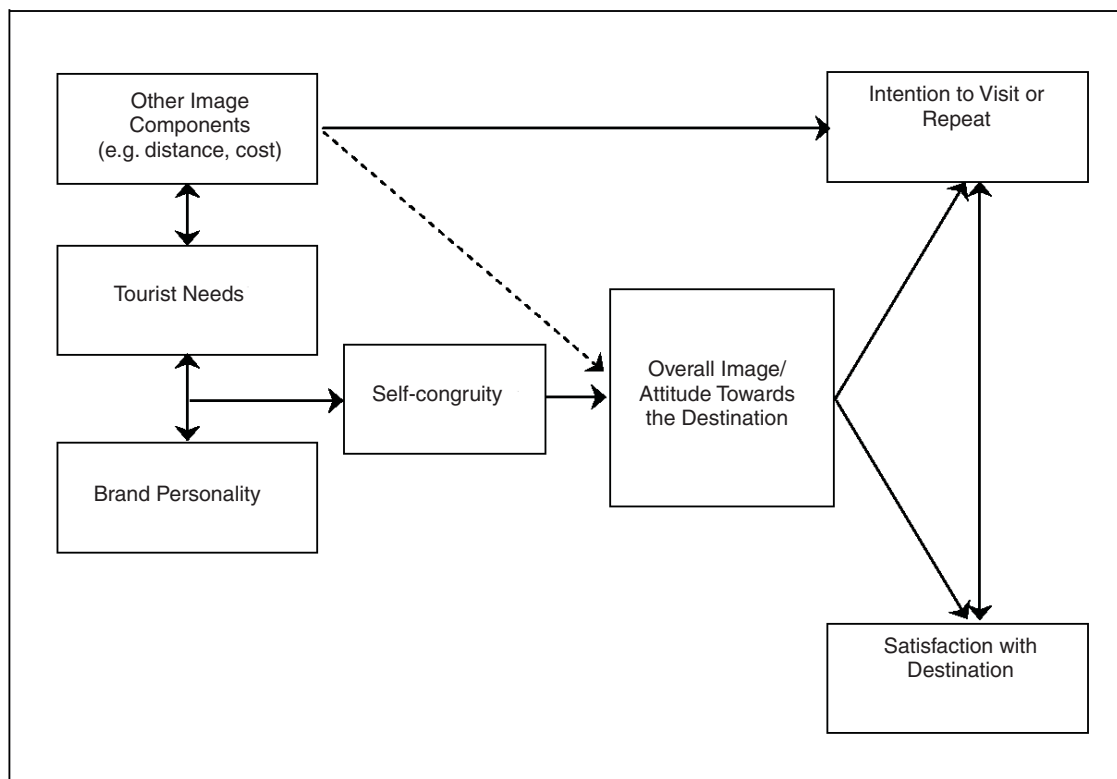
Despite this growing body of work on destination branding in general, particularly at a country or nation level, there has been little investigation of whether or not tourists do attribute brand personality characteristics to tourism destinations and, if so, does this influence their travel behaviour. Hosany and Ekinici (2003) did test the applicability of J. Aaker's (1997) scale to tourism destinations and found three rather than five valid brand personality dimensions, competence, extroversion, and excitement. They did not, however, provide evidence of an emotional connection based on tourists' perceived self-image and the 'brand personality' of destinations as proposed by Ekinici (2003). In addition, there is little evidence in the destination branding literature of the application of the concept beyond the national level to include regional tourism destinations.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

The aims of the study were developed from a preliminary conceptual model of the destination branding and choice process. This model builds upon the work of previous authors by equating destination image with destination attitude, consistent with definitions of destination image as a type of attitude (Pike, 2002). The model (see Figure 1) explicitly connects destination image/attitude to the behavioural intentions and evaluative outcomes (intention to visit or re-visit a destination and satisfaction with the destination). In line with both the traditional approaches to destination choice (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 2005) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1988, 1992), the model argues that intentions are influenced not just by the attitude towards the destination but also by information about constraints and opportunities to travel to the



FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework of the Destination Branding and Choice Process



specific destination. Further, satisfaction depends on the match between the attitude and image and the actual experience of the destination.

The model borrows from Sirgy and Su (2000) and proposes that self-congruity is the construct that connects tourists' needs and brand personality perceptions to their overall destination image/attitude. Tourists compare their needs and aspirations to the personality characteristics they believe the destination offers and the resulting match contributes directly to self-congruity perceptions. In this model, destinations not only require a clear and recognised brand personality to effectively compete with other travel options, but also the personality that is connected to the destination must be able to be related to the needs and desired experiences of the target markets.

### Research Aims

The overall aim of this study was to explore the links among tourists' needs, brand person-

ality perceptions, self-congruity and behavioural intentions and satisfaction as proposed in the preliminary destination branding and choice model presented in Figure 1. The model argues that potential and actual tourist markets should be able to be identified based on their needs. Then if these markets have a perception of the brand personality of a destination that matches their desired experience, they should have high self-congruity, and this in turn should be related to stronger intentions to visit the destination and, for those that have visited the destination, higher satisfaction, as long as the destination meets the expectations associated with the destination image. In addition, the study explores new ground with the application of J. Aaker's (1997) personality dimensions to tourism destinations, and tests the key assumptions about destination branding in a regional destination.

Specifically, the study was guided by the following hypotheses;

- H1. Tourist motivations and destination brand personality perceptions will influence perceptions of self-congruity in relation to the destination,
- H2. Tourist perceptions of destination features other than brand personality characteristics will influence their attitudes towards the destination, as demonstrated in satisfaction with the destination and/or intention to visit, and
- H3. Tourist perceptions of self-congruity in relation to the destination will influence their attitudes towards the destination, as demonstrated in satisfaction with the destination and/or intention to visit.

## METHODOLOGY

The destination under consideration is a popular regional tourism destination in Queensland, Australia—the Whitsunday Islands. This destination has been ‘branded’ by Tourism Queensland, the state destination marketing organisation (DMO). The Whitsunday region received 687,155 visitors in 2003, comprised of 43% intrastate, 29% interstate and 28% international visitors. The Draft Destination Management Plan 2004-2007 for the Whitsunday region (Tourism Queensland, 2004) states that the main appeals and attributes of the destination are exemplified in the image of many beautiful islands and coastline surrounded by a sea of blue. The Whitsunday’s ‘Out of the Blue’ campaign and imagery reflects the importance of the destination’s unique combination of water, reef, islands, coast and activities. The desired brand image/personality is; fresh, vibrant, friendly, relaxed/carefree and confident. It could be argued that the desired brand image/personality is centred on the basic brand personality dimensions of excitement, competence and sophistication (J. Aaker, 1997). The benefits of the destination experience are identified as escape, adventure, relaxation, indulgence and refreshing.

### Procedure

The data presented in this paper were collected as part of a survey conducted in the North Queensland Tourism Region, which is bor-

dered to the south by the Whitsunday region. The project was conducted with the assistance of a ferry operator in the region responsible for transporting international and domestic visitors to a popular day trip attraction, Magnetic Island. In addition, surveys were conducted at a popular tourist ice-cream café located on the main Highway along the North Queensland coast linking Cairns and the Whitsundays. Many international and domestic visitors to the target destination region travel along this highway. This approach also allowed for residents of the North Queensland region to be surveyed, an important local market for the destination under study. The two survey locations also provided an opportunity to access a mix of respondents who had, and those who had not, visited the destination. Respondents were approached in the seating area of the café and on board the 20 minute ferry ride. Those willing to participate were provided with the survey for self-completion. The surveys were collected by research staff upon completion. The number of refusals was recorded, along with reasons for refusal, the most common of which were lack of time, language difficulties and lack of interest. A total of 277 responses were obtained with a response rate of 62%.

### Instrument

Of particular importance to the present study were the sections of the questionnaire measuring tourist needs, destination brand personality characteristics, perceived self-congruity, intention to visit the destination and satisfaction with a visit to the destination region. In addition to these core measures the questionnaire included a series of questions measuring socio-demographic and travel behaviour variables.

Tourist needs were measured by asking for a rating of the importance of nine statements about desired benefits from a holiday in general using a five-point scale from not at all important to very important. The nine statements, which are summarised in Table 3 in the results section, were derived from several studies of expected benefits of holidays and motivations for holidays (Ryan, 1995).

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 1-5 scale how strongly they associated with the destination the 5 brand dimensions and 15 corre-

sponding brand facets identified in J. Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework. The option to state they were not sure was given in order to provide an indication of whether or not there were certain personality characteristics that respondents found more difficult to associate with tourism destinations. The decision was made not to utilise Aaker's entire list of 42 personality traits because of the risk of respondent fatigue given the overall length and scope of the questionnaire.

In an attempt to explore the link between destination brands and self-image/identity, Sirgy and Su's (2000) proposed measures of self-congruity were employed. These measures include all four of the main facets of self-identity; actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image and ideal social self-image. The actual self-image is defined as how consumers see themselves and ideal self-image as how they would like to see themselves. The social self-image is defined as how consumers believe they are seen by significant others and ideal social self-image as how they would like significant others to see them (Sirgy & Su). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements: A Whitsundays holiday is consistent with how I see myself, a Whitsundays holiday is consistent with how I would like to see myself, a Whitsundays holiday is consistent with how I believe others see me, a Whitsundays holiday is consistent with how I would like others see me. Consistent with Sirgy and Su's suggested approach, these rating statements followed an open-ended question asking respondents to visualise and describe a typical visitor to the destination in their own words.

### **Sample**

There were more female (55.8%) than male (44.2%) respondents to the survey, and their average age was 38 years. The majority of respondents were Australian (70.6%), of which 70.6% were from the North Queensland Region and a further 8.1% from the rest of Queensland. Of the 29.4% of respondents from overseas, 45.6% were from the UK and 13.9% from the United States. See Table 1 for a demographic profile of the sample.

Table 1 also provides details of respondents' previous experience with the Whitsundays. Of the 276 respondents 63.8% had visited previously, on average 6.5 times (median = 2). The most recent trip was likely to have been in 2004 (39.3%). The most recent trip, on average, was for 4.2 days, average satisfaction was 8.71 out of 10 and 46.5% of respondents were planning to visit the Whitsundays in the future, the majority in 2004 (71.8%).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The first step in the analysis involved the preparation of variables for inclusion in a series of multiple regression and discriminant analysis models to test the hypotheses. In order to reduce the number of variables for inclusion in the multiple regressions, and to avoid problems with multicollinearity, the 20 brand personality items and the 9 travel motivation items were subjected to principal components factor analyses with varimax rotation. Table 2 provides a summary of the results of the factor analysis of the brand personality items. As can be seen in Table 3 a four-factor solution was obtained with eigenvalues greater than 1 (Table 7). The factors have been labelled Sophisticated + Competent, Sincere, Exciting, and Rugged-based on item loadings.

Table 3 provides the results of the factor analysis of the travel motivations items. In this case a two factor solution was deemed to be the best fit to the data, and the two factors were labelled Novelty and Escape. For both of these factor analyses, factor scores were calculated for the respondents providing 2 motivation and 4 brand personality variables for the multiple regressions. Bivariate Pearson's *r* correlations between the four self-congruity items ranged from .52 to .70 indicating a potential problem with multicollinearity. To resolve this, a single index of self-congruity was computed by simply adding scores on the four scales. In addition to these variables two extra variables were used as proxies for the non-brand personality image dimensions—size of travel group (related to perceptions of the extent to which the destination will suit the needs of others in the travel party) and distance of usual place of residence from



TABLE 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

<b>Characteristic</b>	
Gender (n = 267)	
Male	44.2%
Female	55.8%
Age (n = 262)	
Mean	38
Median	34
Origin (n = 269)	
Australian	70.6%
International	29.4%
<i>Australia</i>	
North Queensland	70.6%
Queensland	8.7%
New South Wales	13.8%
Victoria	3.8%
Other	3.8%
<i>International</i>	
United Kingdom	45.6%
United States	13.9%
Other Europe	8.9%
Germany	7.6%
Canada	5.1%
Ireland	5.1%
Scandinavia	5.1%
France	2.5 %
Other	4.2%
% who have visited previously	64.0%
No. of previous visits (mean)	6.48
No. of previous visits (median)	2.0
Most recent trip in:	
2004	39.3%
2003	32.1%
Average length of most recent trip	4.2 days
Average Trip satisfaction	8.7/10
% who are planning to visit	
When plan to visit:	
2004	71.8%
2005	16.5%
Why don't plan to visit (n=129)	
too far from home/don't live in Australia	20.2%
other places to see/things to do	19.4%
no time	14.7%
too expensive/can't afford	13.2%
have already been there	7.0%
no particular reason	7.8%

the destination (related to perceptions of distance and cost constraints).

These nine variables were then examined in terms of their relationships with two key dependent measures of attitude towards the destination—intention to visit and satisfaction

with the destination. In the case of intention to visit the dependent variable was categorical and so a discriminant analysis was chosen to examine the impact of the independent variables on the whether or not people intended to travel to the destination. Unfortunately this analysis

TABLE 2. Rotated Factor Matrix for Brand Personality Items

	Factors*			
	1	2	3	4
upper class	<b>.814</b>	.012	.102	.233
sophisticated	<b>.813</b>	.143	.244	.193
successful	<b>.699</b>	.420	.217	.078
intelligent	<b>.687</b>	.490	.130	.243
charming	<b>.661</b>	.438	.139	.091
reliable	<b>.585</b>	.521	.291	-.036
up to date	<b>.576</b>	.382	.511	-.011
competent	<b>.521</b>	.455	.463	-.096
honest	.275	<b>.818</b>	.194	.156
sincere	.361	<b>.756</b>	.069	.217
down to earth	.097	<b>.754</b>	.351	.159
wholesome	.201	<b>.722</b>	.404	.094
outdoorsy	.222	<b>.504</b>	.373	.216
exciting	.190	.141	<b>.813</b>	.124
cheerful	.183	.369	<b>.747</b>	-.070
spirited	.148	.302	<b>.674</b>	.397
imaginative	.373	.226	<b>.607</b>	.335
tough	.094	.150	.061	<b>.797</b>
rugged	.471	.142	.128	<b>.625</b>
daring	.073	.156	.573	<b>.611</b>

\*71% of Variance Explained

TABLE 3. Rotated Factor Matrix for Travel Motivation Items

	Factors*	
	1	2
Opportunity to participate in novel experiences	.789	
Experiencing exotic places	.728	
Opportunity to meet new people	.703	
Opportunity to learn about different people and places	.680	
Opportunity to develop and learn new skills	.648	
Go to places I can talk about when I get home	.490	
Spending time with family/friends		.819
Opportunity to get away from the stress of normal duties		.664
Being physically active		.506

\*50% of Variance Explained

could not be completed because of the number of missing cases on the independent variables. This reflects the fact that substantial numbers of respondents expressed difficulty with the individual brand personality items. The sample sizes for the second series of analyses, which were multiple regressions to explore the relationships between the independent variables and satisfaction with the destination, were not as affected by the problem of missing data because the sample did not need to be divided into two groups as was the case for discriminant analysis (i.e., intend and do not intend to visit).

Table 4 presents a summary of the results of the multiple regression analyses. A number of analyses were conducted to test for multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity and no problems were detected. Investigation of the residuals indicated that linear regression analyses were appropriate for the data. Two sets of stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted—one examining the impact of the nine independent variables on satisfaction with the destination and one examining the impact of the travel motive factors, brand personality factors, distance to destination and travel party size

TABLE 4. Results of Multiple Regression Analyses

	Beta	t*
<b>Dependent variable-Satisfaction with the destination</b>		
Distance to destination	.674	5.5
Brand personality-sincerity	.763	5.4
Travel party size	-.429	-3.3
Motivation-escape	-.348	-2.6
<b>Dependent variable-Self-congruity index</b>		
Brand personality-sincerity	-.623	-3.5
Motivation-novelty	-.427	-2.6

\* all significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level

on the self congruity index. This is consistent with a procedure outlined by Asher (1976). In the case of the first regression analyses on satisfaction with the destination, the model presented in Table 4 had an adjusted  $r$  square of .71, suggesting that 71% of the variance in satisfaction with the destination was explained by the four independent variables that were retained—distance to destination, the brand personality factor of sincerity, travel party size and the motivation factor of escape. This function was significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level ( $F = 13.782$ ). The  $t$ -values of these four independent variables were also all significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level. The second set of regression analyses analysed impacts of the independent variables on the self-congruity index. While the resulting model from these analyses was significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level ( $f = 7.6$ ), it explained only 39 percent of the variance (adjusted  $r$  square of .39). The independent variables retained in this model were the brand personality factor of sincerity and the motivation factor of novelty.

These results provide partial support for the first hypothesis in that some travel motivations and some brand personality factors were significantly related to self-congruity. The results provide support for the second hypothesis, indicating strong and significant relationships between destination features other than brand personality and destination attitudes. The results provide no support for a link between self-congruity and destination attitude as expressed in the third hypothesis.

The overall pattern of results did, however, suggest that the proposed conceptual model may be more complex in that self congruity may be a link between motivation and brand personality perceptions for some types of travel

motivations, specifically those related to novelty in the present setting. It was decided therefore to further explore differences within the sample in terms of travel motivation with a particular focus on analysing in more detail the bivariate relationships between the variables in the model.

In order to investigate further the relationships between travel motivation and the other variables, respondents were clustered on the basis of the nine expected benefit items in order to identify groups with similar travel needs. K-means cluster solutions were run for two through four clusters, with the two cluster solution producing meaningful segments of adequate and relatively equal group size (Cluster 1 = 133 respondents, Cluster 2 = 119). Table 5 presents the final cluster centres for the two groups. Cluster 1 respondents placed significantly more importance than those in Cluster 2 on all motives, in particular experiencing exotic places (4.71 vs. 3.66), the opportunity to participate in exciting and novel experiences (4.70 vs. 3.22) and the opportunity to learn about different people and places (4.56 vs. 3.63). This is important given that the novelty motivation factor was a significant contributor to the self-congruity regression model. While Cluster 1 also placed relatively high importance on the opportunity to get away from the stress of my normal routines, (4.70), this was the most distinguishing motivator for respondents in Cluster 2. As a result Cluster 1 has been labelled Novel Learners and Cluster 2 was labelled Escapers.

Novel Learners were significantly younger than Escapers (32.7 vs. 42.6) and were more likely to be from overseas (40.2 vs. 17.8). While most respondents in both clusters were travel-

TABLE 5. Motivation Clusters

	Cluster*	
	1	2
meet new people (t = 9.52)	3.96	2.61
escape stress/routine (t = 2.81)	4.70	4.39
learn new skills (t = 11.03)	3.82	2.37
exotic places (t = 10.34)	4.71	3.66
novel experiences (t = 14.22)	4.70	3.22
physically active (t = 8.34)	4.11	3.09
family/friends (t = 5.39)	4.17	3.42
places can talk about (t = 7.86)	3.81	2.64
learn people/places (t = 8.31)	4.56	3.63

\* significant at  $p = .005$

ling with their spouse/partner, Novel Learners were more likely than Escapers to be travelling alone or with friends, while Escapers were more likely to be travelling with family or in a tour group (See Table 6). There were also differences in the usage of information sources between the two clusters. Novel Learners were more likely than Escapers to rely on information from other travellers (45.9% vs 30.3%), while Escapers had higher usage rates for; articles in newspapers/magazines (42.0% vs 30.1%), accommodation (12.6% vs 4.5%) and previous experience (17.6% vs 9.8%). Friends and family and the internet were the two most important sources of information for both clusters (Table 7).

### ***Differences in Perceived Brand Personality of the Regional Destination***

Respondents rated the degree to which they associated J. Aaker's (1997) 20 Brand Personality Items on a scale where 1 = not at all and 5 = very strongly. They were also provided with a 'not sure' option (Table 8). At least 90% of respondents provided a rating for all the personality items with the exception of sincere (12.3% not sure), competent (11%), reliable (11.9%) and intelligent (11.2%). The reliability of the scale items was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in an overall value of .944 and item alphas ranging from .939 to .947. Respondents in the Novel Learner cluster rated all but two of the brand personality items, sincere and upper class, as being significantly more strongly associated with the Whitsundays than did Escapers.

In order to explore the link between needs/motives and brand personality perceptions, the two clusters were compared on the basis of their factor scores. The results indicate that Novel Learners had significantly higher factor scores than Escapers for the Exciting (.298 vs. 2.271,  $t = 3.167$ ,  $p = .002$ ) and Rugged (.183 vs. -213,  $t = 2.166$ ,  $p = .032$ ) brand personality factors, indicating that they more strongly associated these two dimensions with the Whitsundays. The Novel Learners had stronger perceptions of the brand personality of the destination overall. The results also indicated that the brand personality image that they held was matched in part to the one desired by the DMO with a strong emphasis on excitement. Further, the brand personality perceptions of the Novel Learners were consistent with the types of experiences they sought, again with excitement at the core of both their desired experiences and their brand personality perceptions.

### ***Self-Congruity Levels***

The next step in the analysis was to explore whether this match between needs/motives and destination brand perception for Novel Learners translated into stronger links with their perceived self-image. Novel Learners were more likely than Escapers to indicate that a Whitsundays holiday was consistent with; how they see themselves (2.52, vs. 3.11,  $t = -3.39$ ,  $p = .001$ ), how they would like to see themselves (2.50 vs. 3.14,  $t = -3.628$ ,  $p = .000$ ), how they believe others see them (2.83 vs. 3.55,  $t = -3.84$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and how they would like others to see them (2.77,  $t = -4.099$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

TABLE 6. Profile of Clusters

Characteristic	Novel Learners (n = 133)	Escapers (n = 119)
<b>Gender</b> ( $\chi^2 = 2.83, p = .06$ )		
Male	39.4%	50.0%
Female	60.6%	50.0%
<b>Age</b> (t = -5.626)		
Mean	32.7	42.6
<b>Origin</b> ( $\chi^2 = 14.94$ )		
Australian	59.8%	82.2%
International	40.2%	17.8%
<b>Travel Party</b> ( $\chi^2 = 15.42$ )		
Alone	14.1%	9.8%
Spouse	33.6%	38.4%
Family	14.8%	21.4%
Friends	17.5%	7.5%
Tour group	4.7%	14.3%

TABLE 7. Differences in Information Source Usage

Information Source	Novel Learners (n = 133)	Escapers (n = 119)
Friends/family	50.4%	48.7%
The internet	48.1%	41.2%
Other travellers*	45.9%	30.3%
Travel agent	39.1%	34.5%
Articles in newspapers/magazines*	30.1%	42.0%
Books/library	25.6%	18.5%
Brochures picked up outside region	17.3%	12.6%
Brochures picked up in the region	16.5%	15.1%
Tour operator/company	9.8%	7.6%
Been before*	9.8%	17.6%
Booking/information centres in region	6.0%	10.1%
Accommodation*	4.5%	12.6%
Automobile Association	0.8%	2.8%

\*significant difference at  $p=.05$

It is worth noting the high levels of missing responses and respondents who chose the Not Sure option for these questions. In total, 21% of the respondents either gave no answer or chose Not Sure for the first scale measuring congruity between a holiday at the destination and how they see themselves, 18% did not give a rating for the congruity with how they would like to see themselves, 20% did not give an agreement rating for congruity with how I believe others see me, and 19% did not give a rating for congruity with how I would like others to see me. These high levels suggest some challenges with

the use of these measures and possibly the applicability of brand personality to tourism destinations.

#### ***Relationship Between Self-Congruity Intentions to Visit, and Satisfaction with the Regional Destination***

Despite the fact that Novel Learners had more positive brand perceptions of, and stronger self-congruity ratings with, the Whitsundays as a tourism destination, they were less likely than Escapers to have previously visited



TABLE 8. Aaker's Brand Personality Descriptors\*

Personality Descriptor (1 = not at all, 5 = strongly)	% not sure	Novel Learners (n = 133)	Escapers (n = 119)
<b>Sincere</b>	12.3	3.05	2.78
Down to Earth	5.4	3.57	3.11*
Honest	9.5	3.31	2.95*
Wholesome	7.8	3.71	3.31*
Cheerful	3.9	4.35	4.08*
<b>Exciting</b>	3.9	4.36	3.84*
Daring	6.5	3.78	3.06*
Spirited	4.7	4.07	3.33*
Imaginative	4.3	3.92	3.30*
Up to date	8.0	3.88	3.48*
<b>Competent</b>	11.0	3.84	3.46*
Reliable	11.9	3.73	3.41*
Intelligent	11.2	3.37	2.93*
Successful	7.5	3.94	3.42*
<b>Sophisticated</b>	6.3	3.45	2.90*
Upper class	4.5	3.17	2.96
Charming	5.2	3.76	3.32*
<b>Rugged</b>	6.5	3.42	2.71*
Outdoorsy	5.0	4.21	3.89*
Tough	5.8	2.92	2.45*

\* independent t-tests indicate significantly different at  $p = .05$

(54.2% vs. 73.9% respectively,  $\chi^2 = 10.5$ ,  $p = .001$ ). However, those Novel Learners who had previously visited were significantly more satisfied with their experience (9.06 vs. 8.32 out of 10,  $t = 2.433$ ,  $p = .016$ ). There was no significant difference between the two clusters with respect to intentions to visit. The Novel Learners were much more likely to be international visitors and this supports an argument that their actual travel patterns were more likely to be subject to opportunity constraints. In an open-ended question seeking reasons for not visiting the Novel Learners were more likely to report that the destination was too far from home (17% of responses as compared to 12% of the escapers).

## CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the results from the regression analyses identified that there was partial support for the study hypotheses, indicating a po-

tential relationship between some of the key variables in the proposed destination branding conceptual framework. More specifically, the results indicated that perceived self-congruity with a destination may be linked to motivation and brand personality perceptions. However, further analysis was needed to explore the relationship between motivation, brand personality perceptions, self-congruity, and intention to visit and satisfaction. The resulting motivation-based segmentation of respondents resulted in two segments, the first of which was labelled the Novel Learners because of their emphasis on experiencing new and exotic places, excitement and learning about people, places and new skills. Respondents in this group were younger, more likely to be international, and more likely to get their information from other travellers. They were also significantly more likely to describe the personality of the regional destination as exciting and rugged. For this group there was consistency between the types of holiday experience sought and the

perceived brand personality of the destination and between the perceived brand personality of the region and the main elements of the intended brand image promoted by the DMO. As proposed by the conceptual model set out in Figure 1, this consistency between needs and brand personality perceptions was associated with higher levels of self-congruity on all the measures used in this study. These higher levels of self-congruity were associated with higher satisfaction for those who had been to the region but not with stronger intentions to visit. The pattern of results supports the framework's link between other elements of the destination image such as distance and cost and intention to travel. In the present study it appears that although the Novel Learners reported a strong, positive association between the perceived destination brand personality and their self-image, their intention to visit the destination was mediated by their perceptions of travel constraints and opportunities.

The other market segment identified was labelled Escapers and these tourists were more likely to be older Australian couples who relied more on their previous visits to the region and articles in newspapers for information about the region. This market segment had lower scores on all the personality descriptors and the pattern of results suggested a less strong brand personality perception for this destination and not one closely matched to their desired holiday outcomes. Consistent with the proposed conceptual model, these tourists did not score highly on the self-congruity measures. Lower self-congruity was associated with lower satisfaction for those Escapers who had been to the destination. As with the Novel Learners, the link between self-congruity and intention to visit was not strong, again highlighting the important role of perceptions about constraints and opportunities to travel to the destination region.

The overall pattern of the results supports a number of the assumptions that have been made about the destination branding process. In particular the results support the importance of building a strong association between the destination and a brand personality. The present study however, supports the addition of a condition to this proposal as suggested by Hosany and Ekinici (2003) and Ekinici (2003)—that the

perceived brand personality must also match the needs of the tourists. It is this matching that contributes to perceived self-congruity, which in turn is related to more positive outcomes, consistent with the claims of Surgy and Su (2000). However, given the high non-response/not sure rate, further developments in the measurement of self-congruity in a tourism context is needed, in particular the need to determine whether there exists a portion of the market for whom this concept does not apply.

The results of the present study supported the need to consider all elements of the destination image not just those related to the destination brand and its personality characteristics. In particular, it suggests that measures of perceived travel constraints and opportunities would be valuable additions to any further studies into destination branding. The results also indicate the existence of two potential markets of the regional destination studied. Much of the discussion of destination branding implicitly assumes a single brand personality profile for a destination and there has been little, if any, explicit consideration of the implications for destination branding of marketing for a range of market segments. Arguably most tourist destinations need more than one market to survive. This raises the question of whether or not destinations should or could have multiple brand personalities. It also highlights the need to focus limited marketing resources on those markets for which there is a positive destination brand perception and strong self-congruence.

## REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building strong brands*. New York: Free Press.
- Aaker, J. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.
- Aaker, J., & Fournier, S. (1995). A brand as a character, a partner and a person: Three perspectives on the question of brand personality. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22(1), 391-395.
- Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.
- Ajzen, I. (1992). Persuasive communication theory in social psychology: A historical perspective. M. J. Manfredo (Ed.), *Influencing human behaviour* (pp. 1-28). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Asher, H. B. (1976). *Causal modeling*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Cai, L. A. (2002). Cooperative branding for rural destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 720-742.
- Caldwell, N., & Freire, J. R. (2004). The differences between branding a country, a region and a city: Applying the Brand Box Model. *Journal of Brand Management*, 12(1), 50-61.
- Chon, K.-S. (1992). Self-image/destination image congruity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19(2), 360-376.
- Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Fyall, A., Gilbert, D., & Wanhill, S. (2005). *Tourism principles and practices* (3rd ed.). Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education.
- Curtis, J. (2001). Branding a state: The evolution of brand Oregon. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 7(1), 75-81.
- De Chernatony, L., & McDonald, S. (2001). *Creating powerful brands in consumer, service and industrial markets*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Ekinci, Y. (2003). From destination image to destination branding: An emerging area of research. *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, 1(2), 1-4.
- Frochot, I., & Morrison, A. (2000). Benefit segmentation: A review of its applications to travel and tourism research. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 9(4), 21-46.
- Gilmore, F. (2002). A country—Can it be repositioned? Spain—The success story of country branding. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4/5), 218-284.
- Goh, H., & Litvin, S. (2000, June). Destination preference and self-congruity. In *Travel and Tourism Research Association Annual Conference Proceedings* (pp. 197-203). Burbank, CA: Travel and Tourism Research Association.
- Hall, J. (2004). Branding Britain. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 171-185.
- Hankinson, G. (2001). Location branding: A study of the branding practices of 12 English cities. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(2), 127-142.
- Henderson, J. (2000). Selling places: The new Asia-Singapore brand. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11(1), 36-44.
- Hosany, S., & Ekinci, Y. (2003). An application of the brand personality scale into tourist destinations: Can destinations be branded. *Proceedings of the 34th Annual TTRA Conference* (pp. 1-11). St Louis, USA: TTRA.
- Konecnik, M. (2004). Evaluating Slovenia's image as a tourism destination: A self-analysis process towards building a destination brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(4), 307-317.
- King, J. (2002). Destination marketing organisations—Connecting the experience rather than promoting the place. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8(2), 105-108.
- Malhotra, N. K. (1981). A scale to measure self-concepts, person concepts and product concepts. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(4), 456-464.
- Malhotra, N. K. (1988). Self-concept and product choice: An integrated perspective. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 9(1), 1-28.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A., & Piggott, R. (2002). New Zealand, 100% pure: The creation of a powerful niche destination brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4/5), 335-354.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A., & Piggott, R. (2003). Destination branding and the role of the stakeholders: The case of New Zealand. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(3), 285-299.
- Pike, S. (2002). Destination image analysis—A review of 142 papers from 1973-2000. *Tourism Management*, 23(5), 541-549.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Pride, R. (2002). Brand Wales: 'Natural Revival'. In N. J. Morgan, A. Pritchard, & R. Pride (Eds.), *Destination branding: Creating the unique destination proposition* (pp. 109-123). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Ryan, C. (1995). *Researching tourist satisfaction*. London: Routledge.
- Schmitt, B., & Simonson, A. (1997). *Marketing aesthetics: The strategic management of brands, identity and image*. New York: The Free Press.
- Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T. F., Park, J.-O., Chon, K.-S., Clarborne, C. B., et al. (1997). Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-congruence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 229-241.
- Sirgy, M. J., & Su, C. (2000). Destination image, self-congruity, and travel behaviour: Toward an integrative model. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(4), 340-352.
- Slater, J. (2002). Brand Louisiana: 'Come as you are. Leave Different.(r)'. In N. J. Morgan, A. Pritchard, & R. Pride (Eds.), *Destination branding: Creating the unique destination proposition* (pp. 148-162). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Tourism Queensland. (2004). *Draft Whitsundays Destination Management Plan 2004-2007*. Queensland: Tourism Queensland Corporate Planning.

SUBMITTED: February 1, 2006  
 FINAL REVISION SUBMITTED:  
 August 11, 2006  
 ACCEPTED: September 3, 2006  
 REFEREED ANONYMOUSLY