

Destination Brand Love: Tourists' Relationships with the Places they Visit

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Business Administration
in the Faculty of Humanities

2016

Kathryn Louise Swanson

Manchester Business School

List of Contents

Section Number	Section Title	Page Number
	Abstract	6
	Declaration	7
	Copyright	8
	Acknowledgment	9
	The Author	9
Chapter 1	Introduction	10
1.1	Purpose of DBA Research	10
1.2	Theoretical Foundations and Research Context	13
1.2.1	Branding	16
1.2.1.1	Place Branding	18
1.2.1.1.1	Destination Branding	23
1.2.2	Consumer Behaviour	26
1.2.2.1	Consumer Behaviour in Relation to Place	30
1.2.2.1.1	Place Love and Attachment	33
1.2.3	Brand Love	36
1.2.4	Destination Brand Love	42

1.3	Research Design	43
1.3.1	Tourist Interviews	46
1.3.2	Tourist Photos: Volunteer-Employed Photography	46
1.3.3	Tourist Collages	47
1.3.4	Data Analysis	48
1.3.5	Investigator Triangulation and Respondent Validation	51
1.3.6	Key Informant Interviews	51
1.4	Outline of Publications	52
Chapter 2	Publication #1 – Research Note: Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists	57
Chapter 3	Publication #2 – Methodological approaches to capturing the tourist viewpoint through virtual platforms and data	58
Chapter 4	Publication #3 – I love this place! Tourists’ destination brand love	59
Chapter 5	Conclusion	60
5.1	Meeting of Objectives	60
5.2	Synthesis of Findings	61
5.3	Contribution to Theory	69
5.4	Contribution to Practice	70
5.4.1	Key Informant Research Insights	70

5.4.2	Toward Improved Practice in Destination Branding and Marketing	74
5.5	Limitations and Directions for Future Research	77
	References for Chapters 1 and 5	79
	Appendix 1 (Publication #4): Place branding: Are we wasting our time? Report of an AMA special session	94
	Appendix 2 (Data Analysis Details and Examples)	95

Total word count = 48,045

List of Tables for Chapters 1 and 5 and Appendix 2

Table 1.1 - Comparison of Chosen Destinations	45
Table 1.2 - Structure of Thesis	52
Table A.1 – Content Analysis of Orlando Photos	99
Table A.2 – Content Analysis of Minneapolis Photos	100
Table A.3 – Content Analysis of Las Vegas Photos	101
Table A.4 – Content Analysis of Non-word Orlando Collage Images	102
Table A.5 – Content Analysis of Non-word Minneapolis Collage Images	103
Table A.6 – Content Analysis of Non-word Las Vegas Collage Images	104

List of Figures for Chapters 1 and 5

Figure 1.1 – Branding Literature Review	14
Figure 1.2 – Consumer Behaviour Literature Review	14
Figure 1.3 – Brand Love	15
Figure 1.4 – Destination Brand Love	16
Figure 1.5 – Place Branding Approaches and Conceptualizations	20
Figure 1.6 – Hierarchy of Consumer Emotions	27
Figure 5.1 – Destination Brand Love Model	64

Abstract

The University of Manchester

Kathryn Louise Swanson

Doctor of Business Administration

Destination Brand Love: Tourists' Relationships with the Places they Visit

2016

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore the concept of brand love within the context of places as tourism destinations. Three main objectives emerge from this aim: 1) To examine the utility of the concept of brand love within the context of tourism destinations; 2) To examine how brand love is manifest among tourists in a variety of different tourism destination products; and 3) To develop, and analyse the implications of, a conceptualization of brand love within the context of tourism destinations, from both practical and academic perspectives.

These objectives are met through research involving the cases of three tourism destinations in the United States: Orlando, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Las Vegas, Nevada. A variety of methodological techniques, including semi-structured tourist interviews, volunteer-employed photography (VEP), and tourist collage creation, were implemented to achieve the research objectives above. However, emerging as a consequence of the research process, an evaluation of these techniques as means of studying tourism and tourists is included in the thesis as well, and this in effect acts as a fourth objective and outcome of the study:

4) To examine the potential for data collection from virtual platforms, or put more simply, “virtual data,” in tourism research.

The topic of this thesis is multidisciplinary and draws from literature in the fields of marketing, psychology, tourism, and geography. Within these broad fields, areas of literature of particular relevance are branding and consumer behaviour.

I chose to submit my DBA thesis in an alternative format due to my interest in publishing work in outlets that are read by tourism academics and practitioners with the intent that the findings of my research may be useful in academia and practice. The three publications that form its central basis are: a research note on place brand love which puts the project in its broader theoretical context; an academic journal article outlining and critically evaluating the methodological approach to the work; and a book chapter in a forthcoming edited collection on the topic of place branding which reports and analyses the empirical findings of the work. A fourth publication is included as an Appendix in the thesis. This comment piece reports on an Oxford-style debate that I organized at the 2014 *American Marketing Association Summer Educators' Conference*.

Theoretical contributions of the thesis include: 1) An extension of the brand love concept to destination brands through the identification of 13 place-related themes; 2) An identification of the different types of love the participants experience for destinations, namely *philia*, *storge* and *eros*; 3) The development of a theoretical model of destination brand love, in terms of how and why it forms amongst tourists; and 4) An analysis of virtual data collection in tourism. Through key informant interviews, contributions to practice were identified in terms of the potential of the research findings to contribute to tourism businesses, and particularly destination management organizations.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Copyright

- i.** The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- ii.** Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made **only** in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- iii.** The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
- iv.** Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=487>), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations>) and in The University’s policy on Presentation of Theses.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Professor Dominic Medway and Professor Gary Warnaby for supervising my research; Professor Jikyeong Kang for her leadership of the DBA program; the individuals who volunteered their time to participate in and contribute to my research; and my family for their love and support.

The Author

Katie Swanson is a researcher at Manchester Business School. Her research interests include tourists' relationships with destinations and their brands. Prior to joining Manchester Business School, she worked in industry positions, most recently for The Walt Disney Company. Katie holds a Master of Tourism Administration degree from The George Washington University School of Business in Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a Spanish minor from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Chapter 1: Introduction

*“I have just returned from New Zealand and I can’t shake this feeling like I have discovered a beauty in a country that connected me to my truest self. I feel cheated somehow by not being there. Please take me back New Zealand. I’m yours. Sincerely,
Monique.”*

- New Zealand Nomination on Lovemarks website (Saatchi & Saatchi, 2012)

1.1. Purpose of DBA Research

There is a fundamental problem confronted by tourism businesses each day: Places are increasingly viewed as in competition with one another (Medway, Warnaby, & Dharni, 2011), and there is an ongoing concern regarding globalization contributing to homogenization of destination brands which fail to capture the unique identities of the destinations they represent (Jamrozy & Walsh, 2008). Furthermore, not only is it difficult for any individual destination to stand apart from the others in that environment, it can be a challenge to entice the population even to travel for pleasure at all. For example, 42% of Americans did not use any vacation days in 2014 (Weingus, 2015). In an increasingly globalized world, with constant demands on individuals’ time as well as numerous options for entertainment in one’s home environment, enticing potential tourists to visit any destination, let alone a particular destination, can be a significant challenge. This fundamental research problem is addressed in this thesis.

Notwithstanding the above, in 2015, there were 1,184 million international tourists globally (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2016), and international tourism receipts have exceeded \$1,100 billion in recent years (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2014, 2015). Each day, tourists all over the world interact with destinations.

Some visit a destination for the first time, and others visit their favourite place for the one-hundredth time. And, each day, these tourists develop relationships with the destinations they visit and, often, the place brands that represent them. Some, like Monique above, will fall in love with the destination they visited and dream of returning. Others may develop negative feelings and never return. Every visitor to a tourism destination presents an opportunity for those charged with managing it and its brand, as part of the overall destination management process (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005), to facilitate an experience that results in an avid fan of the destination who returns and promotes it passionately to his or her friends.

But, how can this be done? This research explores the possibility that one potential answer may lie in the concept of brand love, or “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). The concept of place brands, or “socially constructed meaning systems” (Warnaby & Medway, 2013, p. 348), has been accepted by - and taken on as an area of responsibility by - various destination management organizations (Blain et al., 2005). As individuals are able to experience the emotion of love for places in general (Ahuvia, 1992), and tourists are able to experience it for tourism destinations specifically (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Causevic, & Odeh, 2014), perhaps the concepts of brand love and place (or destination) love could come together and be experienced by tourists in the form of “destination brand love.”

I originally became interested in this topic for a variety of reasons. I studied psychology as an undergraduate student and have a long-standing interest in the psychology of consumers. In my Master’s program, I studied marketing in a tourism context, another area of passion. From a very young age, I had a specific fascination for The Walt Disney Company and how it has fostered love for its brands, character

franchises, and tourism destinations. I worked for Disney after my Master's program and saw first-hand the benefits to an organization of having consumers who love its brands. In choosing a topic for my DBA, I saw an untapped research opportunity in the investigation into the concept of brand love in a tourism destination context. Specifically, the special connection that visitors have with Disney theme parks spurred my interest in this area. Given the beneficial outcomes of brand love discussed later in this chapter, I had a desire to investigate brand love in a tourism destination context with the aim to contribute to academic literature and also make tourism destination marketers aware of a concept that could potentially help them deepen relationships with their visitors and increase visitation.

The overall aim of this thesis is, therefore, to explore the concept of brand love within the context of places as tourism destinations. Three main objectives emerge from this aim:

- 1) To examine the utility of the concept of brand love within the context of tourism destinations
- 2) To examine how brand love is manifest among tourists in a variety of different tourism destination products
- 3) To develop, and analyse the implications of, a conceptualization of brand love within the context of tourism destinations, from both practical and academic perspectives.

These objectives are met through research involving the cases of three tourism destinations in the United States: Orlando, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Las Vegas, Nevada. A variety of methodological techniques, including semi-structured tourist interviews, volunteer-employed photography (VEP), and tourist collage creation, were implemented to achieve the research objectives above. However, emerging as a consequence of the research process, an evaluation of these techniques as means of

studying tourism and tourists is included in the thesis as well, and this in effect acts as a fourth objective and outcome of the study:

4) To examine the potential for data collection from virtual platforms, or put more simply, “virtual data,” in tourism research.

As the introduction and conclusion sections of this document form part of an alternative format DBA submission, certain sections of their content are repeated in the self-contained publications that comprise the thesis. This is an accepted and expected practice for alternative format submissions at DBA and PhD level (The University of Manchester Research Office Graduate Education Team, 2014). The remainder of the introduction chapter consists of three main sub-sections: Theoretical Foundations and Research Context, in which a review of the literature that informs the thesis is provided; Research Design, which details the methodology of the research; and Outline of Publications, which outlines the structure of the thesis and describes the three publications authored for the alternative format thesis submission.

1.2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Context

The topic of this thesis is multidisciplinary and draws from literature in the fields of marketing, psychology, tourism, and geography. Within these broad fields, areas of literature of particular relevance are branding and consumer behaviour. The discussion of branding literature will include a review of place branding generally and tourism destination branding specifically (also referred to as simply “destination branding,” meaning place marketing to tourists (Warnaby, 2009, p. 413)) (see Figure 1.1). The discussion of consumer behaviour will include a review of brand communities and will lead to a review of consumer behaviour in relation to place. Specifically, place love and place attachment will be discussed (see Figure 1.2). Finally, the concept of brand love,

informed by both branding and consumer behaviour (see Figure 1.3), will be discussed. In total, this review will lay the foundation for the researched area in this thesis, destination brand love, at the intersection of brand love and destination love (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.1. Branding Literature Review.



Figure 1.2. Consumer Behaviour Literature Review.

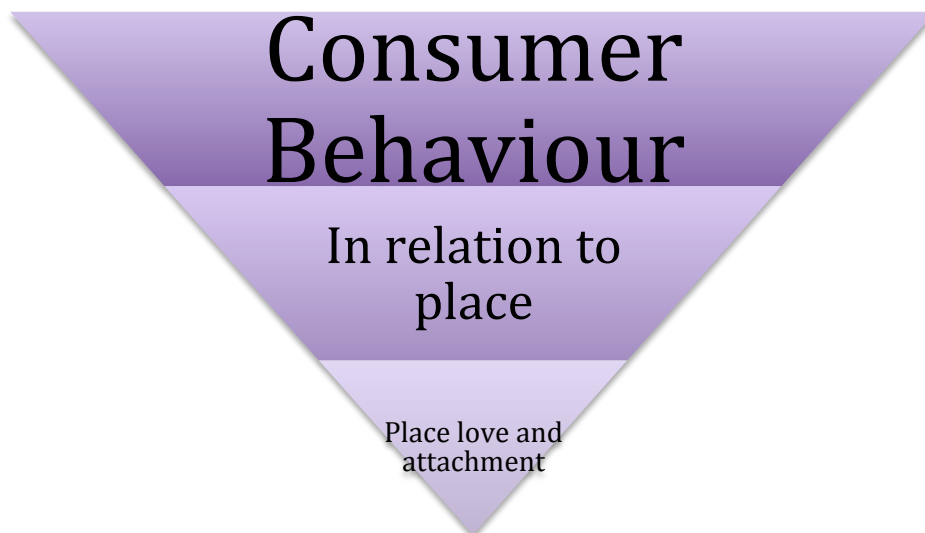


Figure 1.3. Brand Love.

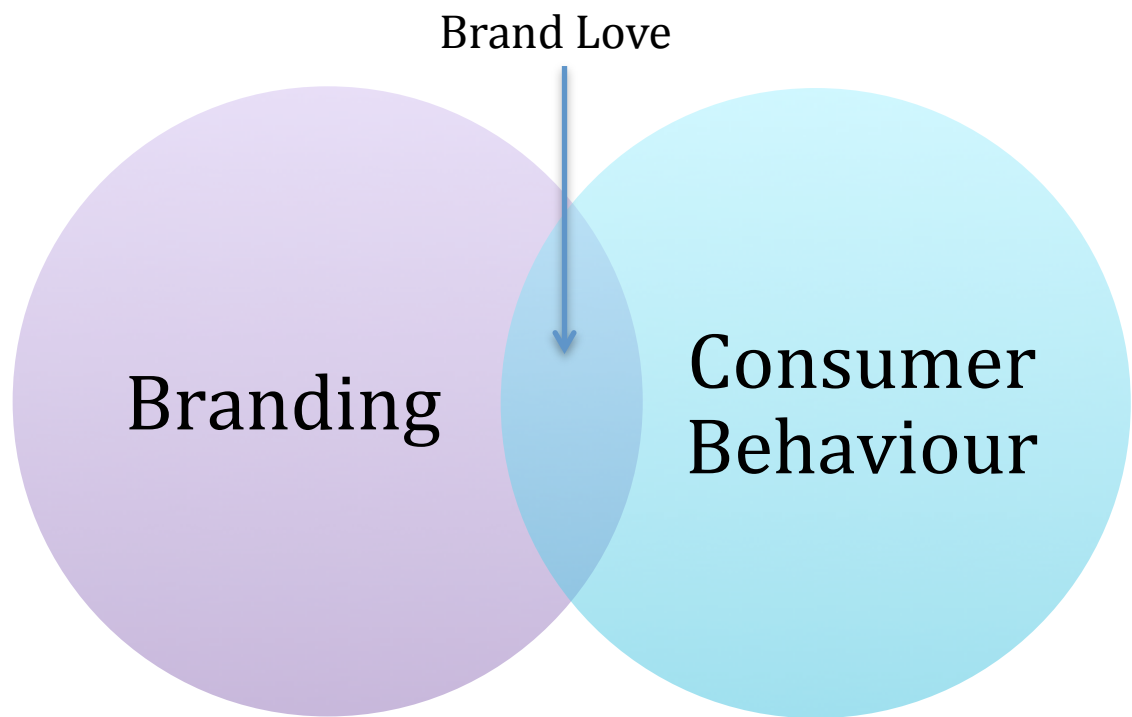
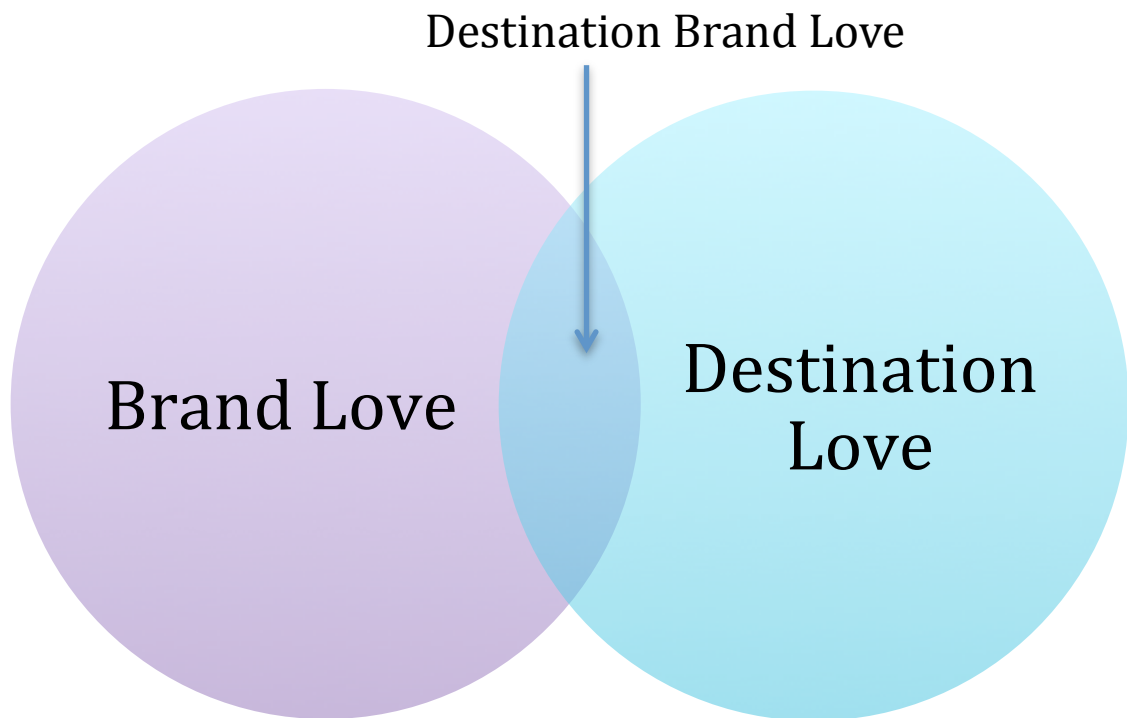


Figure 1.4. Destination Brand Love.



1.2.1. Branding. As stated above, branding is one of the broad literature areas that informs this thesis. In this section, a brief discussion of branding in general will be provided, followed by more detailed accounts of place branding overall and the marketing and branding of tourism destinations specifically.

In today's world, brands are a pervasive part of many societies (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998), and much research has been conducted on the concept of branding. In the traditional branding literature, which focuses on the product brand (Hankinson, 2004), common conceptualizations of the brand include: brands as communicators, brands as perceptual entities, brands as value enhancers, and brands as relationships (Hankinson, 2004). The view of brands as communicators is quite common and in line with the American Marketing Association's definition of a brand: "a name, term, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group

of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (cited in Hankinson, 2004, p. 110). The brands as perceptual entities conceptualization is concerned with a brand’s image and views brands as connecting to consumers’ emotions, reason, and senses, whereas the brands as value enhancers conceptualization focuses on a brand’s value as a corporate asset (Hankinson, 2004). This value enhancer conceptualization has received substantial attention such as in the widely-cited customer-based brand equity model by Keller (1993). Finally, the brands as relationships conceptualization characterizes brands as having personalities and the ability to form relationships with consumers (Hankinson, 2004). Fournier (1998) adopts the brands as relationships conceptualization by arguing that brands can have relationships with consumers, and Aaker (1997) argues that brands can have personalities. The four conceptualizations of the brand are linked, not independent of one another (Hankinson, 2004). For example, the brand as communicator conceptualization is linked to that of the brand as value enhancer in that the success of differentiating goods or services can result in brand equity.

de Chernatony and Riley (1998, p. 436) conceptualize the brand as a multidimensional construct that “represents the matching of functional and emotional values devised by a firm with the performance and psychosocial benefits sought by consumers.” This theory of the brand is also related to the brands as relationships conceptualization, as it views brands as being co-produced by organizations and consumers (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998).

A wide variety of advantages to branding have been studied (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003) and can include benefits in terms of relationships with customers as well as relationships with other companies. For example, branding can result in loyalty of customers and their enhanced perceptions of the product, and customers may be less likely to respond to competitors’ marketing tactics or to abandon the brand in the event of price

increases (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Furthermore, marketing communications efforts may be more effective (customers may be more responsive to them) when coming from a strong brand (Keller, 2009). Branding also can be beneficial to companies in terms of opening up licensing opportunities and having more cooperation with other companies such as intermediaries, and companies with strong brands may enjoy larger margins (Keller, 2009).

Given the variety of potential benefits of branding in general, the concept has been applied beyond the traditional consumer product brand. Within the branding literature, an area of particular relevance to this thesis is that of place branding, which will be discussed next.

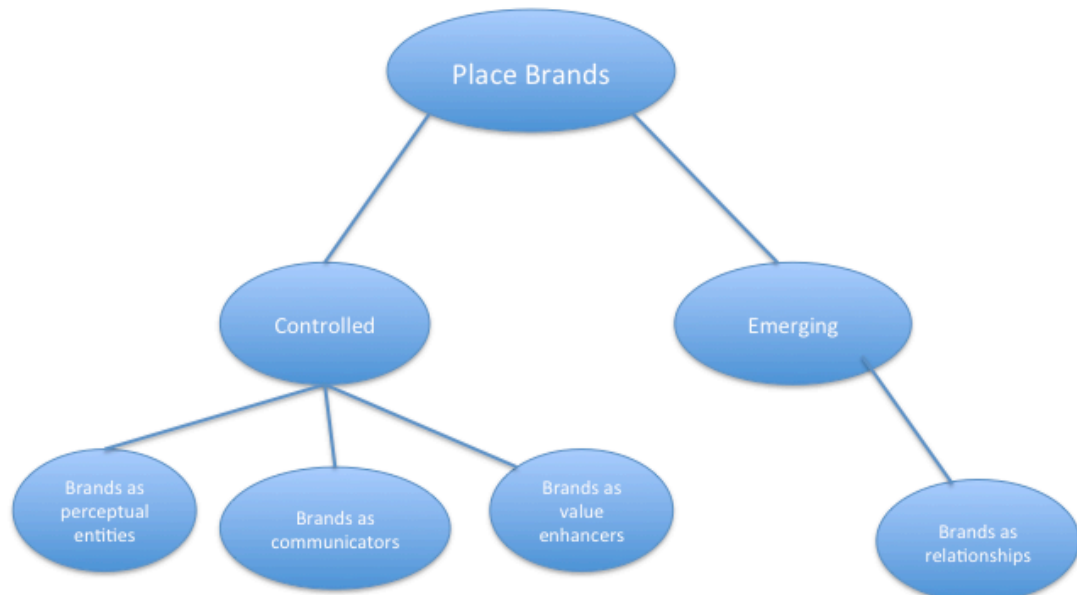
1.2.1.1. Place branding. Since the 1980s, the marketing of places has gained recognition in terms of both practical application and corresponding academic inquiry (Gertner, 2011; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008), and places have increasingly been viewed as in competition with each other (Medway et al., 2011). Furthermore, national economic development has become a market concern and not only an issue of public policy (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Areas of focus from this development in place marketing often include: developing a market for exports branded as originating in that place, attracting companies to locate in the place, drawing residents to move to the place, and enticing tourists to visit (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Place branding has origins in that first area of focus, in research concerning the “country of origin” (COO) effect which refers to the influence of mandatory disclosure of a product’s country of origin on potential consumers’ attitudes toward that product (Herstein, 2011; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). From there, a global shift took place in that many places’ main assets were no longer the products created there but rather the actual place itself (Herstein, 2011). In this environment, research evolved to studies on the brands of places themselves at various spatial scales.

In recent years, places have been increasingly viewed as brands (Hankinson, 2015; Lucarelli & Berg, 2011) and have been defined in terms of “socially constructed meaning systems” (Warnaby & Medway, 2013, p. 348) and also as “a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design” (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 70). These definitions distinguish a place brand from the place itself, as a place is a “meaningful location” or a “site of history and identity” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 5). The main facets of place are materiality and tangibility; realm of meaning; and place as practice, performance, or lived experience (Cresswell & Hoskins, 2008). In other words, places have a real physical presence, they have meaning to people, and they are consistently being experienced and created.

Researchers are divided in their approaches to and conceptualizations of place brands. The popular approach is to view place branding as something that brand managers “do to a place” and attempt to control it through strategy, etc. (Medway, Swanson, Delpy-Neiorotti, Pasquinelli, & Zenker, 2015, p. 66). Those with this view have often adopted the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization in an attempt to measure a brand’s image or attributes through survey work, or the brands as communicators conceptualization with a goal of controlling the brand strategy, or the brands as value enhancers conceptualization in an effort to develop place brand equity (Hankinson, 2004). An alternative approach to place brands, however, is critical of these traditional approaches, and views place brands as ideally emerging through co-creation with place consumers (Medway et al., 2015). This approach is more in line with the brands as relationship conceptualization (Hankinson, 2004) discussed earlier. These two approaches

and their corresponding conceptualizations are depicted in Figure 1.5 and explored in more detail below.

Figure 1.5. Place Branding Approaches and Conceptualizations.



In the place branding literature, the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization is the most popular (Hankinson, 2004). This view often focuses on the image of a place (Hankinson, 2004). For example, Kotler and Gertner (2002) argue that the image of a country is crucial to that place both as a “product” itself in its efforts to attract tourists, businesses, and residents and as a brand name for products made in that country such as French perfume. At the same time, these authors also make use of the brands as communicators conceptualization by drawing on the American Marketing Association’s definition of a brand discussed above (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

In the practitioner or applied world of place branding, the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization has received attention as well. For example, Simon Anholt’s work on nation brands and his Nation Brands Index focus on the images of nations (Anholt, 2009a; GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, 2009). In this work, he argues that

the activities in which countries engage lie in six main areas: tourism promotion, exports of products and services, government policy, inward investment, cultural activities, and behaviour of people. These, it is suggested, come together to create those places' images in the minds of others (Anholt, 2009a). Others have created place brand ranking systems as well. For example, the Saffron European City Brand Barometer has an image ranking system (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) involving places' assets and related "buzz" (Michael & Sedghi, 2014). In general, brand images of places are quite resilient and difficult to change. People tend to form opinions and stereotypes about a place and are not easily persuaded to alter their views (Anholt, 2009a; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). However, it has been argued that with carefully designed and managed work, places can manage to slowly evolve their images (Anholt, 2009a; Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

While the perceptual entities conceptualization of brands is the most common in the place branding literature, the other conceptualizations are used as well. For example, Konecnik and Gartner (2007) and Gartner and Ruzzier (2011) both adopt the brands as value enhancers conceptualization by focusing on customer-based brand equity for places. Customer-based brand equity is defined as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 8), and components of brand equity can include brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand awareness/associations (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Brand equity outcomes can be defined as "the profit potential of a brand" (Chaudhuri, 1999, p. 137), and favourable outcomes can include sales, profit, and market share (Chaudhuri, 1999). This concept has been applied to place brands specifically (see, Gartner and Ruzzier (2011); Konecnik and Gartner (2007)). The authors of these articles do still draw on the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization as well, however, by discussing the importance of a place's image.

A different group of researchers is critical of the overly controlled approach to place branding. They acknowledge that there has been extensive debate regarding whether places can be branded at all (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012) and whether place branding is a worthwhile endeavour (Medway et al., 2015; Warnaby & Medway, 2013). They also recognize that, while there is a growing body of literature supporting the concept of place branding, the practice of branding a country, for example, plays only a minor role in the brand of that nation due to the many other factors that influence the brand of a country (Fan, 2006). Even some who espouse the concept of place branding do issue a word of caution that place brands are more complex than brands associated with corporations, and thus corporate branding tactics should not be blindly applied to places (Anholt, 2009a). In particular, common corporate strategies to develop a clear and simple image may be appropriate only as an initial strategy for a place trying to establish its brand and then should be abandoned in favour of a strategy aimed at capitalizing on the inherent diversity, complexity, and richness of places (Anholt, 2009b).

At the same time, although the critical group of researchers maintains that it is important to keep in mind how place brands are different from consumer brands (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005), they still acknowledge evidence to suggest that some broad strategies employed in corporate branding can be useful for place brands as well (Kavaratzis, 2004, 2010). While places should not be thought of as a type of complex corporation, the tools used by corporations do include useful ideas for place brand management and marketing. For example, some corporate brands draw on the corporation's culture when determining values, and this concept can be relevant to places (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Researchers who are critical of the controlled approach to place branding take a more collaborative, emergent approach (Medway et al., 2015; Warnaby & Medway,

2013). Hankinson (2004), for example, argues that the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization is limiting to place brands and that the brands as relationships conceptualization, which views brands as having the ability to form relationships with consumers, is more appropriate for place brands. As places are dependent on service encounters (Warnaby & Davies, 1997), are experiential in nature, and involve a wide range of stakeholders, the relationship view is more realistic and productive (Hankinson, 2004). Indeed, Warnaby (2009) and Warnaby, Bennis, and Medway (2011) also emphasize the relationship nature of the place brand (both through its relationship with consumers and other stakeholders and its ability to facilitate relationships among stakeholders) through the service brand-value-relationship triangle.

A sub-area of place branding in general is place marketing to tourists which is sometimes referred to as “destination branding” (Warnaby, 2009, p. 413). This sub-area will be discussed next.

1.2.1.1.1. Destination Branding. It appears that, in practice, the controlled approach to branding, and the brands as perceptual entities conceptualization in particular, is common specifically in the practice of destination branding as well. In a survey of representatives from destination management organizations regarding their understanding of what destination branding is and the rationale for doing it, the most common theme was that of image, and in particular the image visitors have of the destination (Blain et al., 2005).

Two important characteristics that distinguish tourism from consumer products are stakeholder interdependency and intangibility (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006). Because of the complexity and interdependency of the stakeholder relationships involved with a destination, individuals tasked with managing a destination brand must do so with more limited control than a brand manager at a consumer products company. Put otherwise,

governments, industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others have different roles and responsibilities in relation to tourism, and all of their actions affect each other and the brand of a destination. Indeed, sometimes differing political and cultural agendas can result in a fragmented message from, and view of, a place (Desforges & Maddern, 2004), and the success or failure of a particular stakeholder group's efforts to tell a place's story as that group sees fit can have far-reaching ramifications for the fate of the place (Cresswell & Hoskins, 2008), impacting the work of those responsible for its marketing and promotion. Additionally, partly due to the complex stakeholder interdependency, the boundaries and borders of some places are debatable, which further complicates the situation and can result in "fuzzy" places (Warnaby, Medway, & Bennison, 2010, p. 1366). In this environment, van den Berg and Braun (1999) argue that often for places, organizing capacity is necessary in order for marketing to be successful. They espouse a structure that includes strategic networks among public organizations, private organizations, political leaders, and society, and they describe the importance of clear vision and leadership (van den Berg & Braun, 1999). An example of this has been demonstrated in European town centre management schemes, which can often facilitate and encourage cooperation in the marketing of a place (Forsberg, Medway, & Warnaby, 1999; Hogg, Medway, & Warnaby, 2004; Stubbs, Warnaby, & Medway, 2002), including helping to market historical cities to tourists.

The intangibility, and thus complexity, of the place product is a second feature that distinguishes destination branding and marketing from that seen in many other industries such as consumer goods (Kotler et al., 2006). Consumers must purchase a ticket or right to an experience without the opportunity to hold it in their hands, and that is a unique challenge for tourism and other service industries. Additionally, sometimes the benefits that a tourist receives from an experience while on holiday are intangible, which can

present a challenge for those marketing a destination and its brand. For example, tourists sometimes experience a sense of time slowing down and a complete absorption when encountering wildlife, and these experiences can be psychologically beneficial (Curtin, 2009) but perhaps more difficult to convey in marketing effort. Indeed, marketing that involves a notion of a change in the speed of time can be quite complex (Brewis & Jack, 2005). Some tourists also have an interest in a heritage experience at a destination which is intangible, and this can sometimes present a challenge to destination managers who need to balance the heritage with a more current image of the destination (Vidal González, 2008).

In addition to stakeholder interdependency and intangibility, a third important challenge that a manager of a destination brand must address is the extent to which other tourists influence the experience of an individual and, thus, the destination brand itself. In essence, customers are part of the “product” offering in service settings such as tourism, so they co-produce or co-create the offering in conjunction with the service provider (Kotler et al., 2006). Thus, individual visitors have an impact on the experience of others simply by their presence and contribution to the “product” offering at the destination. For example, an individual looking to experience a family-friendly and relaxing vacation may be disturbed by groups of college students on vacation during their spring break. Similarly, the group of college students may not enjoy themselves at a destination filled with small children. To address this phenomenon, Medway and Warnaby (2008) and Medway et al. (2011) discuss the concept of “demarketing” a place. This can take the form of “selective passive place demarketing,” whereby, through targeting certain groups and emphasizing particular characteristics of a destination over other characteristics, certain groups are attracted to the place and others are discouraged from visiting (Medway & Warnaby, 2008, p. 644).

This concept also highlights another challenge of destination brand managers: that of multi-selling, or selling a place differently to different audiences based on an understanding that tourists visit a place for varying reasons (Warnaby, Bennison, Davies, & Hughes, 2002). Places do not have just one purpose (Anholt, 2009a), and branding and marketing strategies must reflect this level of complexity.

The sheer number of other tourists at the location also can influence the experience of a visitor. If a destination has limited natural resources that it wants to maintain for visitors and residents to enjoy for many more years, brand managers may want to manage the demand both to preserve the environment and to ensure that the tourists who do visit have a pleasant and uncrowded experience. Medway and Warnaby (2008, p. 644) refer to this type of strategy as “general passive place demarketing,” and it usually involves minimal promotion of the place in general.

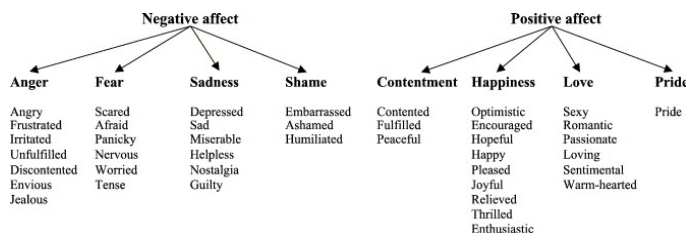
The factors of stakeholder interdependency, intangibility, and other visitors are critical in considering how a destination might build strong relationships with its visitors and experience a “fanatic” following enjoyed by some consumer brands. When thinking about the more emergent view of place branding and specifically the brands as relationships conceptualization, another area of literature of particular relevance to the discussion is consumer behaviour, and especially that in relation to place.

1.2.2. Consumer Behaviour. Consumer behaviour is an area of relevance to this thesis. This area is immense, and an exhaustive review of its literature is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, emphasis will be placed on specific components of consumer behaviour that are most relevant to the topic. In this section, research on consumers’ emotions will be discussed as well as how those emotions impact on behaviour in terms of loyalty and participation in brand communities. Following this, the discussion will move

to consumer behaviour in relation to place and specifically place love and attachment.

The area of consumers' emotions has been researched extensively, and Laros and Steenkamp (2005) provide a review of a wide range of conceptualizations. Some of these are broad in their classifications of emotions, such as positive versus negative. Others are more specific in their categorization by including emotions such as love and joy. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) conclude that these varying conceptualizations can be integrated into a hierarchical model. This model consists of three levels: a superordinate level consisting of positive and negative affect; a basic level which contains four positive (contentment, happiness, love, and pride) and four negative (anger, fear, sadness, and shame) emotions; and a subordinate level with a variety of specific emotions (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). This model appears in Figure 1.6 below.

Figure 1.6. Hierarchy of consumer emotions (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005, p. 1441)



As is evident from Figure 1.6, “love” is a basic-level emotion with other, subordinate-level emotions beneath it. An understanding of the emotions that consumers can experience is important to this thesis.

The emotions that consumers experience have been shown to have an impact on their behaviour as well. For example, consumers' emotions can influence their satisfaction response (Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002), their response to advertising (Holbrook & Batra, 1987), and their purchase behaviour (Sherman & Mathur, 1997). Emotion also plays a

large role in consumer behaviour in the form of loyalty and participation in brand communities.

Brand loyalty has been conceptualized and categorized in a variety of ways over the years. For example, some have drawn a distinction between repurchasing behaviour and brand loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973); some discuss loyalty in phases including cognitive, affective, conative, and action (Oliver, 1999; Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010); and others distinguish between attitudinal and behavioural loyalty (Kumar & Shah, 2004; Mechinda, Serirat, & Gulid, 2009; Velázquez, Saura, & Molina, 2011). While many different conceptualizations are still used in the literature, there appears to be a growing consensus, specifically in tourism marketing, of a multidimensional conceptualization that includes both attitudinal and behavioural components (Velázquez et al., 2011).

It is well-established that satisfaction alone does not necessarily lead to loyalty (Velázquez et al., 2011). Many loyalty programs in areas such as hotels and cruises are ultimately ineffective, and what is needed and often missing is an emotional component to the relationship and deeper personal involvement (Mattila, 2006; Morais, Kerstetter, & Yarnal, 2006). The “loyalty” developed through loyalty programs is often strictly behavioural and does not turn into true loyalty without affective commitment (Mattila, 2006). Repeat purchases without attitudinal influences is sometimes referred to as “spurious loyalty” or “inertia” (Dick & Basu, 1994, p. 101). One way consumers demonstrate a true loyalty with affective commitment is through brand communities.

Within the consumer behaviour literature, an area of research relevant to this thesis has emerged in the 21st Century, that of the brand community. There are many definitions of the concept of community in general, but three main markers of community are consciousness of kind (a connection that members feel toward each other and a difference

that they feel toward those outside the community), rituals and traditions (which further and perpetuate the culture of that community), and shared moral responsibility (a sense of duty that members feel toward the community and its other members) (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001).

The concept of “brand community” was introduced by Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) and can be defined as “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). In this original study, the authors researched the concept of the brand community through interviews and analyses of online fan pages and concluded that brand communities display the three common markers of communities discussed above. These brand communities can assist in a company’s relationship marketing efforts, and they also foster brand loyalty through inherent peer pressure on members (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001). Furthermore, the types of brands that tend to be more likely to foster brand communities are those that can create communities that offer transformative experiences to their members (Muñiz & Schau, 2005).

Subsequent studies have continued the line of research on brand communities. For example, Schau and Muñiz (2002) find that there are a variety of ways in which a member of a brand community can participate in online environments, from not declaring their identity to revealing much about their personal identity in conjunction with their brand community membership. McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) argue for a customer-centric model of brand community, and they contend that fostering brand communities can be a beneficial use of resources for a marketer due to the emotional investment and commitment that result from brand community membership (McAlexander et al., 2002). The brand community concept has even been compared to religious devotion (Muñiz & Schau, 2005) and cult behaviours (Belk & Tumbat, 2005).

1.2.2.1. Consumer behaviour in relation to place. Consumer behaviour specifically in the context of places is of particular relevance to this thesis. One topic studied in this area is that of tourist motivation, or what entices an individual to visit a destination. A popular way of studying this area is a “push and pull” model, where “push” factors are considered to be the motivations of tourists to visit a destination (“internal forces” of an individual), and attributes of the destination are considered “pull” factors (Mohammad & Som, 2010, p. 41). Mohammad and Som (2010) compiled work of previous researchers and came up with 25 “push” items categorized into eight dimensions of tourist motivation: fulfilling prestige (such as increasing social status), enhancing relation (such as enhancing communication with a the local community), seeking relaxation (such as being away from home), enhancing social circle (such as meeting new people), sightseeing variety (such as seeing tourist spots), fulfilling spiritual needs (such as relaxing spiritually), escaping from daily routine (such as desiring to be somewhere else), and gaining knowledge (such as gaining knowledge about the destination). An understanding of the psychological motivators and internal drives that fuel an individual’s desire to visit a particular location (and return to that destination) is important for relationship-building in the context of place brands and developing loyalty among visitors.

One challenge for place brands in terms of behavioural loyalty, however, is that while some visitors enjoy familiarity and lack of surprises, there are also individuals who tend to be more variety-seeking and want to try out many different destinations. Perhaps related to this tendency, in their study of Hong Kong visitors to international destinations, McKercher and Guillet (2011) concluded that it is rare for individual tourists to revisit international destinations. However, arrivals from specific markets are generally stable over time, which indicates a broad level of brand loyalty from types of consumer groups. Other evidence suggests, however, that the impact of variety-seeking behaviour depends

on the timeframe. In particular, among satisfied and non-regretful visitors, those with high variety-seeking tendencies have lower intentions to revisit a place in the short term than those with low variety-seeking tendencies, but this difference does not maintain for long-term revisit intentions (Sánchez-García, Pieters, Zeelenberg, & Bigné, 2012). In other words, both low and high variety-seeking visitor types may have an interest in revisiting destinations, but these returns likely will operate on different time scales. These findings regarding variety seeking and repeat visit intention present an opportunity for destinations to tap into the psychology of what may influence an individual to fall in love with and be loyal to a destination. One area that may provide insight into destination loyalty is an application of the concept of brand communities discussed earlier to a place context, and this can be considered in terms of both resident and visitor communities.

The concept of community in a general sense has connections to place. An example of markers of community with specific application to residents of a place is that Smith and Phillips (2001) found strong efforts among people who had recently moved to Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, UK, to develop consciousness of kind. They did this through engaging in activities and joining Parish Councils and also through differentiating themselves from those living on moor tops by describing how they lived and acted differently from one another. The majority of them also appreciated that the village had developed in such a way that it was clear physically when one entered and left. Several new residents also made efforts to further the culture and rituals by reviving the old church even if they did not want to worship in it (Smith & Phillips, 2001).

To the extent that places are viewed as brands, as discussed in the previous section, and given the application of the concept of community in general to places, the idea of a place brand community presents an interesting paradox. Returning to the definition of a brand community above, the members of such a group would not be geographically bound

(i.e. they could be residents and/or tourists), but they would be geographically focused in their affinity for the place or the brand associated with it. An example of this type of brand community forming around a place arguably occurred after riots in Manchester, UK, in 2011. Approximately 1,000 volunteers helped clean up after the disturbance and subsequently, an “I love Manchester” campaign was created that aimed to capitalize on the groundswell community that had formed (Warnaby & Medway, 2013). This idea of rallying around a destination has taken place during natural disasters as well, and some have even suggested that place branding can be a useful tool in repairing the brand of a place that has suffered some form of atrocity and become a “dark” destination (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012, p. 101). For example, after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, the image of the city as a tourism destination worsened (Pearlman & Melnik, 2008; Ryu, Bordelon, & Pearlman, 2013), and one of the local efforts made to repair the damage done and reposition the New Orleans place brand was a campaign that encouraged visitors to, “Come fall in love with New Orleans all over again” (Chacko & Marcell, 2008, p. 231).

In tourism research, the idea of “visitor communities” has emerged as an application of the brand community concept specifically to destination brands. The visitor community is defined as “a group of inbound travellers who, in the course of consuming hospitality and tourism services, actively seek or are given an opportunity to share that consumption experience with other tourists” (Levy & Hassay, 2005, p. 60). Accordingly, Levy and Hassay (2005) find that it would be beneficial for place brand managers to create opportunities for visitors to form communities and build relationships, both during their vacations as well as pre- and post-vacation times (through online forums, for example).

Resident communities of tourism destinations can have varying relationships and interactions with visitor communities. Gibson and Davidson (2004) note that several

studies have focused on negative interactions between these two community types. However, they found that the majority of residents in the place they studied believe that tourism is important to the economy and identity of the place and that it has contributed to the quality of life there. Furthermore, the majority of residents felt that a benefit of tourism was the chance to meet interesting people (Gibson & Davidson, 2004). Research results regarding whether there are reasons why some resident-visitor community interactions are positive and some are negative vary. Brunt and Courtney (1999) did not find a relationship between type of resident and attitudes toward tourism, but note that this is an uncommon finding and that other researchers have found relationships between attitudes of residents toward tourism and variables such as length of residence and birthplace (Brunt & Courtney, 1999).

When brand communities form around a place, it may be that place consumers are using that community as an outlet for a love and/or attachment they feel for that place. Place love and attachment will be discussed next.

1.2.2.1.1. Place love and attachment. An area of consumer behaviour of particular relevance to this thesis is love that consumers form for places. Ahuvia (1992) found that places in general, and also cities in particular, are entities that some people claim to love in a “real” or “true” form and not just in a loose sense of the term. In studies on tourists’ emotions, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) and Hosany et al. (2014) found that tourists can (and do) use “love” to represent their emotional experiences with a destination, and those who had previously visited a destination reported higher scores of love for the place than first-time visitors. A related area of literature from environmental psychology of relevance to the above is that of place attachment, defined as “the bonding of people to places” (Manzo, 2003, p. 47). Research suggests that the place attachment construct is related to, but distinct from, positive emotions in a tourism context (Hosany et al., 2014). Insights

into the place attachment concept may be drawn from Heidegger (1971) when he defines “dwelling” as “. . . the manner in which mortals are on the earth” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 2) and when he describes the character of dwelling as “sparing and preserving” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 3). In other words, it refers to being at peace and free (Heidegger, 1971). Humans build because they are naturally dwellers (Heidegger, 1971); thus, it would seem natural that attachments form to those built places. Manzo (2003) states that research has been conducted on people’s relationships to their homes and neighbourhoods and also to nature, but he identifies a research gap regarding other places and encourages further research into people’s relationships with a variety of places that extend beyond the home, local environment, and nature.

In one study focusing on individuals’ home environments, Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) found that people can be attached to places at different spatial scales including the home, the neighbourhood, and the city. However, they displayed a weaker attachment to the neighbourhood than the other two. Social attachment was stronger than physical attachment to places, women were more attached to places than men, and place attachment increased with age (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). Rubinstein and Parmelee (1992) also emphasize the significance of place attachments to older individuals in particular. Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) found that women tend to form more social relationships in a place, which is a predictor of place attachment, and that length of residence is an indirect predictor of place attachment through local ties that the person forms. (Although the authors are careful to highlight that people can develop an attachment to a place even if they have been there for only a short period of time.) The effect of age on place attachment was indirect through its relationship to length of residence and also to education. People with lower education levels had higher place attachment. Additionally, participation in local activities was a direct predictor of place attachment (Rollero & De

Piccoli, 2010). Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, and Hess (2007) found that both natives and non-natives can form attachments to places at different spatial scales (neighbourhood, city, and island). This study confirmed that intensity of the attachment is lowest at the neighbourhood level in both natives and immigrants (Hernández et al., 2007).

In a review of place attachment literature over the past forty years, Lewicka (2011) states that there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the process of the development of place attachment. There is extensive research on predictors of place attachment (including length of residence, building size, and ownership status), but little is known about why those variables are predictors (Lewicka, 2011). For example, what are the psychological processes involved? One process-related area recommended for additional research attention is the link between place attachment and self-continuity (Lewicka, 2011).

Within place attachment literature, a sub-area has emerged in the area of tourists' attachment to places that are tourism destinations. Two important predictors of destination attachment appear to be travel to the destination as a family tradition and attractiveness of the destination (Lee, 2001). Satisfaction with the destination, past experience with the destination, and the age of the tourist at the time of his/her first visit can also predict attachment in some situations (Lee, 2001). Indeed, nostalgia, a concept related to tradition and past experience, has been highlighted as playing a key role in tourism in various contexts (Carson, 2004; Fairley, 2003; Goulding, 2001). Research also indicates that components of the concept of involvement, defined as "the perceived personal importance and/or interest consumers attach to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of a good, service, or an idea" (Gross & Brown, 2008, p. 1141), may predict components of the concept of place attachment as well (Gross & Brown, 2008). Prayag and Ryan (2011) confirm that involvement is an antecedent to place attachment and add that destination

image is an antecedent as well. Furthermore, time appears to play an important role in the development of attachment to a destination. In particular, individuals may initially have an attraction to a place (due to its physical beauty, for example), but ultimately develop a deeper, emotional connection and attachment over time (Salamone, 2006). Tsai (2012) conceptualizes place attachment as a state that must be nurtured through a holistic tourist experience, consisting of the components of “emotional pleasure, cognitive stimulation, psychological growth, self-expressiveness and communal awareness” (Tsai, 2012, p. 148).

Regarding consequences of place attachment, it is an antecedent to visitor loyalty in the form of intention to revisit and intention to recommend the destination (but satisfaction mediates this relationship) (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). Yuksel et al. (2010) also confirm that place attachment determines loyalty intentions and state that this relationship is direct and also indirect by being mediated by satisfaction. Tsai (2012) extends this line of research and finds that place attachment is an important driver of actual revisit behaviour. Thus, while research is not extensive in this area, it appears initially that place brand managers’ resources may be well placed if used to foster place attachment among its visitors.

As shown in Figure 1.3, the concept of brand love draws from both branding and consumer behaviour literature. This specific area will be discussed next.

1.2.3. Brand Love. Since the early 1990s, scholars and companies alike have studied relationship marketing and how companies can build brand loyalty among their customers (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Building two-way, meaningful relationships with customers and truly understanding their needs can significantly enhance a company’s performance (Fournier & Avery, 2011). However, as relationship marketing and initiatives to build strong brand loyalty have become more commonplace among companies, it has also become increasingly difficult to stand out, and brands have become more

homogeneous (Clancy, 2001). Some organizations, however, have managed to form deep relationships with their consumers to the point those consumers would say that they “love” the brand of the company in question.

In this climate, an area in marketing and consumer psychology of particular relevance to this thesis, that of brand love, has emerged. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) define “brand love” as “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name.” It is considered a mode of satisfaction that some satisfied consumers experience. One key attribute of brand love is that it involves an actual, “. . . integration of the brand into the consumer’s identity” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). In their research, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) introduced this new marketing construct and found the following:

- When satisfied consumers feel greater brand love, they are more loyal to the brand and engage in more positive word-of-mouth. In other words, they are more committed to repurchasing the brand and more likely to tell other people about it.
- Hedonic (as compared to utilitarian) products as well as self-expressive brands (those that contribute to shaping consumers’ identities) have positive effects on brand love. In other words, products that are fun or pleasurable have positive effects on brand love, as do those that contribute to and/or reflect who a person is.
- Hedonic products have a negative effect on brand loyalty, but this can be mitigated by increases in brand love. Hedonic products can be related to a desire to seek variety, which can negatively affect brand loyalty, but if

brand love increases brand loyalty, that increase can mitigate the negative effects of the tendency toward variety seeking.

- Self-expressive brands also have a positive effect on positive word-of-mouth. Talking with others about a brand can be part of the process involved when brands are used by consumers to form their identities.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) studied consumer packaged goods in their research. Several studies have followed this original article, and the majority also focus on consumer products (Albert, Dwight, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2011; Bauer, Heinrich, & Martin, 2007; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). These studies have refined and added to the brand love concept. Research on potential sub-categories of brand love, such as romantic brand love (consisting of intimacy and passion components of love) has begun as well (Sarkar, Ponnampalasa, & Murthy, 2012).

Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) concluded that there are seven main elements of the brand love concept:

- Self-brand integration (including having frequent thoughts about the brand and it being involved with a consumer's real and desired identities)
- Passion-driven behaviours (including wanting to invest in and use it and having a history of using it)
- Positive emotional connection (more than only positive feelings to the point of an attachment)
- Long-term relationship (including a plan to have a continued relationship in the future)
- Positive overall attitude valence
- Attitude certainty and confidence (and feeling strongly about those

attitudes)

- Anticipated separation distress (in the event that the brand ceased to exist)

Additionally, they added the findings that quality belief is an antecedent to brand love and that resistance to negative information (in addition to the earlier findings of brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth) is an outcome of brand love (Batra et al., 2012). The authors also reported that 100% of participants claimed that they “love” or “sort-of-love” at least one brand (Batra et al., 2012, p. 3). Batra et al. (2012) also add a note of caution regarding the fact that many previous studies on brand love have used theories of interpersonal love; while those theories are useful to some extent, they tend to omit some variables that are important to understanding brand love and include others that are unimportant in the context of brands (Batra et al., 2012). Thus, it is important to not simply apply theories of interpersonal love to brands. (Indeed, Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on (2012) found that the theory of parasocial, or one-sided, relationships has more explanatory power for brand love than the interpersonal relationship theory.) Finally, the authors make it clear that “brand love” should be viewed as a long-term relationship as opposed to a transient emotion, as that is how consumers tend to conceptualize their love for a brand (Batra et al., 2012).

Roy, Eshghi, and Sarkar (2013) subsequently developed a theoretical framework for brand love regarding its antecedents and consequences. The authors propose that individual romanticism, positive brand experience, consumer delight, and consumer satisfaction have a positive impact on brand love, and materialism has a negative impact on brand love. They also propose that brand love consequences include positive word-of-mouth and loyalty and that brand love mediates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Roy et al., 2013). The authors suggest that future research test the theoretical

model empirically. This would provide further insight into the strength of the impact of the various constructs in the model.

In the business world, the concept of consumers' love for brands has received attention from books about *lovemarks* (Roberts, 2005, 2006), a concept also addressed in the academic literature (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). The *lovemarks* concept comes from the idea that brands increasingly lack differentiation and have become outdated. Consumers started out buying products many years ago, then trademarks came along, and trademarks developed into brands. The next step in this evolution is *lovemarks*. *Lovemarks* are “the brands, events, and experiences that people love,” and their consumers are “loyal beyond reason” (Roberts, 2006, p. 15). According to Roberts (2006), a brand must first have a strong foundation of respect (coming from a solid reputation, quality performance, trust, etc.) before a *lovemark* can evolve. A brand supposedly moves into the *lovemark* category when it includes the three qualities of mystery, sensuality, and intimacy (Roberts, 2006).

Pawle and Cooper (2006) tested the *lovemarks* theory empirically and confirmed much of it. They used a variety of qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate consumers' relationships with brands, and they determined that intimacy was the factor that most strongly influenced future purchase intention, followed by mystery and then sensuality (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). They also found support for the importance of respect. Additionally, the authors reported that, depending on the product category, *lovemarks* are between 1.6 and 2.3 times more likely to be bought than conventional brands (which are respected but not loved) (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). This article focused on consumer products categories (i.e., cars, cereal, and magazines), but the authors state they have conducted studies on other categories and in multiple geographic areas.

While there is a small amount of brand love research that includes service industries (Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky, & Bechara, 2012), or focuses on services

alone (Tsai, 2011), this research is limited. In the research by Reimann et al. (2012), participants were asked to select brands with which they had close relationships and that they loved. As some of the participants chose product brands and some chose service brands, this lends support to the idea that the concept of brand love applies to service brands. The researchers found, through both self-reported and neurophysiological data, that emotional arousal for a loved brand decreases over time but that inclusion of the brand into the self, or feeling like the brand is part of oneself, increases over time (Reimann et al., 2012).

Tsai (2011) developed the Strategic Management of Service Brand Relationships model and found that, in a services setting, brand love is antecedent by six relationship components: satisfaction of affective attributes (the degree to which the brand is responsive and caring); uniqueness (the extent to which the consumer perceives that the brand provides a unique experience); trust (the level of credibility and integrity that a brand has); self-concept connection (the extent to which the consumer relates to the brand's image and meaning); privilege (the extent to which the consumer perceives the service experience of the brand to be special); and delight (the level of pleasure a consumer receives from the brand). Service brand commitment, along with brand love, act as dual-mediators for those six components (plus two more, brand-switching cost and utilitarian attributes) on service brand loyalty (in a positive direction). Service brand commitment is also an antecedent of service brand love (Tsai, 2011). In this case, service brand loyalty was defined as an intention to repurchase the brand and a willingness to recommend it to others (Tsai, 2011). Given the small amount of research on brand love in service-related settings, there is a "gap" for original contributions. Indeed, Batra et al. (2012) specifically identify services as an area needing research in order to generalize

their findings on brand love. This gap includes place brands, specifically in terms of how they function as tourism destination brands.

1.2.4. Destination Brand Love. As shown in Figure 1.4, the concept of destination brand love draws from both brand love and destination love. The research streams on place love, place attachment, and brand love raise a question regarding the extent to which tourists are influenced by an attachment to or love for a *destination itself* versus a love for a *destination brand*. Are tourists mainly influenced by a love for the place product itself, a love for the brand values associated with that place, or a combination of these?

The research presented in this thesis aims to deliver a fuller understanding of the concept of destination brand love and provide further insight into tourists' attachment to (Moore, Rodger, & Taplin, 2013; Prayag & Ryan, 2010, 2011; Tsai, 2012) and love for (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany et al., 2014) destinations. This could add a layer to academic debates regarding the complex and multi-faceted nature of the relationships between tourists and the places they visit (Hinch, 1998), which, in turn, can affect the tourist experience (Mossberg, 2007). A better understanding of place brand love may also have impact for place management generally, and tourism marketing specifically, in terms of how places promote themselves. For example, different marketing communication tools might have varying utility depending on the extent to which individuals are influenced by place brand love and/or place attachment. It is therefore critical for both researchers and professionals to fully realize how and why place consumers develop relationships with places, as without that foundational understanding marketing and promotion activities will be ill-informed. This research provides a step in the direction toward this enhanced understanding of tourists' relationships with the destinations they visit, and the literature presented in this chapter in the areas of branding and consumer behaviour lays the

foundation for the doctoral work undertaken in the area of destination brand love.

1.3. Research Design

In making methodological decisions for the research, literature in several fields in addition to tourism (including management, marketing, anthropology, and psychology) was consulted, and this literature stems from a variety of ontological and epistemological standpoints. There is debate regarding how emotions can and should be studied. Interpretivist researchers maintain that emotions should be studied as “lived experience” and that this requires certain research strategies, such as live dialogue, narratives, taped musings, etc., in order to provide a “richer” picture of the situation (Sturdy, 2003, p. 88). Thus, researchers in this field would advocate the use of qualitative methods. Indeed, when considering love specifically, some even go as far as to say that there is no way of studying it other than through language and how one speaks and writes about it because one knows emotions only intuitively and thus cannot use “precise terms” to communicate them (Sturdy, 2003, p. 89). Put another way, some consider emotions as beyond the “purview” (Reddy, 1997, p. 327) of those who experience them. Equally, in the business world, the extensive use of quantitative methods in research on emotion has been questioned for its inability to provide adequate insights (Roberts, 2005). Yet in spite of this, much of the work on brand love thus far has been largely or partially quantitative in nature (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Bauer et al., 2007; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Sarkar et al., 2012), often using survey or questionnaire-based methodologies grounded in positivist and deductive epistemological approaches.

By contrast, a critical realist perspective, which incorporates both realist and interpretive components (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2008), was adopted for the doctoral research in this thesis. Researchers working from this perspective would typically maintain that there is an external reality yet acknowledge the difficulty of gaining access

to it, and they would often address this difficulty by adopting several perspectives and through triangulation of methods (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Such a perspective is appropriate for this thesis due to the challenges outlined above in accessing information about emotions such as love from potential study participants.

Taking into account the epistemological perspective detailed above, it was determined that a variety of qualitative methods would be the most effective means of collecting the necessary empirical data for the thesis. Triangulation of these methods (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) was deemed appropriate. Indeed, in qualitative tourism research, triangulation is considered important and useful in helping to demonstrate how various data sources converge toward identified findings (Decrop, 1999).

The research was based around the cases of three tourist destinations in the United States: Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was envisaged that any potential replication of results across these case studies would help toward some collective inferences and understandings from the findings (Yin, 2009). A variety of criteria were used in selecting the destinations, as it is desirable to have certain key consistencies across the destinations yet also have differences amongst them in an effort to ascertain that the phenomenon that is observed represents that phenomenon more generally (Warnaby et al., 2002). For consistency, three major cities in the United States were selected. Additionally, all three destinations enjoy a substantial proportion of repeat visitors or tourists. For differences, the destinations are geographically dispersed, and the main activities in which tourists engage differ among the three destinations. In addition to the commonalities and differences for the destinations, access and feasibility issues were considered in making final selections. Table 1.1 summarizes key characteristics.

Table 1.1

Comparison of Chosen Destinations

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Annual visitors (mil)</u>	<u>% Repeat</u>	<u>Location in USA</u>	<u>Distinctive activities</u>
Orlando	55	70	Southeast	Theme parks
Las Vegas	39	84	Southwest	Gambling, entertainment
Minneapolis	27	73	Midwest	Family/friends, shopping, sports

Note: Data compiled from D. Courtenay (personal communication, January 23, 2013); GLS Research (2011); Hanstad (2012); Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Research Department (2012); Visit Orlando (2011, 2012).

A pilot study using the methodology described below was first conducted and consisted of four adult residents of the United States who claimed to “love” Orlando, Florida. (The screening question “Do you love Orlando?” was used in order to take part in the pilot study.) Questions and instructions were subsequently revised for the main study for purposes of clarity, etc., based on the process of the pilot study. Adult residents of the United States participated in the main research as well. Respondent ages varied (from 23 to 86 years old), and six to seven individuals participated for each destination for a total of 20 respondents. Both genders were represented (60% female, 40% male). Non-probability sampling in general, and purposive sampling in particular, is considered appropriate in qualitative research (Saunders, 2012). Accordingly, participants were selected through personal contacts in a snowball manner, but were required to have been a tourist to the relevant destination for a non-business main purpose, and needed to agree that they “love” the destination, irrespective of how they might later define or articulate that. (The screening question “Do you love the destination?” again was used in order to take part in

the study.) World Tourism Organization definitions were used in order to determine whether individuals qualified as tourists (World Tourism Organization, 2007).

1.3.1. Tourist Interviews. Interviews were conducted in person (usually at the participants' homes) or via Skype (depending on the geographical locations of the researcher and participant). Interviews followed a semi-structured format and used, as a general guide, a list of questions informed by the literature, tested in the pilot study, and revised for the main study. Interviews lasted 45 to 75 minutes each.

1.3.2. Tourist Photos: Volunteer-Employed Photography. The same respondents were asked to participate in a volunteer-employed photography (VEP) (Garrod, 2008) activity during their next trip to the destination being researched. It has been suggested that sometimes emotions are difficult to express in words, and asking respondents to produce an image is a projective technique for data collection that provides a "different way in" when investigating a research question and also engages the brain differently (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p. 178). Additionally, photography is a common way that tourists capture their relationships with places and thus was considered important to include in the research (Edensor, 2000). Furthermore, inclusion of data from participants that, in most cases, would be produced at the time the tourism experience was occurring allowed for a time period other than post-travel to be explored. Respondents were given the following instructions:

"During or after your upcoming trip to (destination), please return to me photos that you feel encapsulate and demonstrate your love for (destination). Please also provide a brief commentary with each photo, including the main subject of the photo and the main reason it was taken."

These instructions regarding the photo commentary were based on insights from MacKay and Couldwell (2004). As a contingency, respondents who were not planning a trip to the

given destination within the appropriate time frame for the research were instructed to use photos from one or more previous trips.

1.3.3. Tourist Collages. For purposes of method triangulation (Decrop, 1999) and because of the potential difficulty of emotions such as love to be expressed verbally, a second projective technique, collage creation, was used. This has been used in both brand and tourism research (Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010; Prebensen, 2007), and results suggest that collages can tap into knowledge in different ways to other (primarily verbal) techniques such as free association and storytelling. Further, collage creation appears to be effective at revealing information about consumer-brand bonds and relationships. It is also most effective with experiential brands, such as tourism destination brands, as opposed to common household products, etc. (Koll et al., 2010). Thus, Prebensen (2007) used collage creation, amongst other techniques, to gain insight into tourists' images of a destination.

Projective techniques such as collage creation capture, "the tendency to imbue objects or events with characteristics or meanings which are derived from our subconscious desires, wishes or feelings" (Gordon & Langmaid, 1988, p. 94). These types of techniques, such as word and picture associations, can help researchers access emotional reactions to brands and discover participants' feelings about brands which can sometimes be hard to articulate (Gordon & Langmaid, 1988).

Respondents were asked to participate in a group session made up of others involved with the research for the same destination. Each group consisted of three to five participants. They were asked to bring with them a few hard copies of photos of previous vacations to the destination being researched. In situations where respondents lived in geographically dispersed areas, the group sessions were conducted in a mixed in-person and virtual, or entirely virtual, format through the use of Skype or Google Hangout. Respondents were provided with a variety of magazines on topics such as tourism and

travel, entertainment, and general interest (these were mailed to the virtual respondents ahead of time), along with paper, glue sticks, tape, scissors, markers, and pens (the virtual respondents provided these themselves). In situations when respondents could not gather together at a specified time for a group session, they were given magazines and instructions and asked to create a collage when their schedules allowed. These participants posted their collages to the researcher upon completion.

Respondents were instructed to create a collage that demonstrated and encapsulated their love for the destination and to use the materials provided to do so. They were asked to also identify in writing on the back of the collage each image used and to state why they chose those images. Other studies have asked participants to identify pictures to aid in interpretation (Koll et al., 2010) or to explain their choices (Prebensen, 2007). Respondents were allowed to talk with each other while making their collages, and, after the collages were finished, each respondent was asked to present his or her collage to the others. During presentation and discussion, the respondents held up their collages to the computer camera. Individuals who created a collage on their own were unable to present their work to others but provided a more detailed written description to the researcher.

1.3.4. Data Analysis. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis using the template technique (King, 2012). The template technique utilizes hierarchical coding (King, 2012), and this was used to organize the themes into a template. Specifically, I took the following steps to analyse and organize the data, based on King (2012):

- 1) I read through the pilot study transcripts.

- 2) I went back through each transcript and highlighted sections of text and words that stood out as relating to potential themes, and I wrote code names next to the highlighted sections.
- 3) I looked through all of the highlighted and coded transcripts and pulled out the codes, wrote them down, and organized them into a hierarchy of themes and sub-themes. As per King (2012), a theme was identified as such when repetition was involved.
- 4) I chose to display the template in a list format (King, 2012). This template from the pilot study transcripts served as my initial template.
- 5) Once I collected data for my main study, I read through each transcript.
- 6) I went back through each transcript and, using my initial template as a guide, I highlighted and coded sections of text and words that related to themes identified in my initial template. When other potential themes outwith of the template were identified, these were highlighted and coded as well.
- 7) I went back through the transcripts alongside of the initial template and made modifications and additions to the template as appropriate in order to result in my final template and themes. A template example is provided in Appendix 2, as is a highlighted and coded section of a transcript.

Advice and instruction regarding analysis of participant-generated visual data is limited (Vince & Warren, 2012). Two potential options, however, are content analysis of the images and thematic analysis of the textual data associated with the images (Vince & Warren, 2012), and both of these techniques were implemented. The thought process behind content analysis is that frequency is related to significance in objects or settings in

images, and patterns can be used to develop themes (Vince & Warren, 2012). I took the following steps to analyse the photos:

- 1) I looked through the photos from the pilot study and wrote down initial reactions regarding potential categories and sub-categories of types of objects and settings.
- 2) I went back through the photos and recorded how many of them included an object from each category and sub-category.
- 3) I recorded this data in a table format and, for each category and sub-category, calculated how many photos out of the total photos had an object or setting relating to that category.
- 4) To aid me in finalizing this table, I read through the participants' written descriptions provided with each photo.
- 5) I then went back through the written descriptions and highlighted words and phrases that related to potential themes and categories.
- 6) I made additions and modifications to the table as necessary based on the textual data. This resulting table served as my initial content analysis organizational system, and, as it functioned well, decided to use it in the main study.
- 7) I repeated the process above for each tourism destination in my main study. The content analysis tables are provided in Appendix 2, as is a sample of a photo.

For the collages, I repeated the analysis process used for the photos. I constructed the content analysis tables based on the number of non-word images in each collage. When words were included in the collage, I analysed those thematically along with the written

descriptions provided by participants. The content analysis tables are provided in Appendix 2, as is a sample of a collage.

1.3.5. Investigator Triangulation and Respondent Validation. For purposes of investigator triangulation (Decrop, 1999), two independent reviewers (one, a personal contact of the researcher, representing a typical visitor perspective, and one, a former colleague of the researcher, representing an industry perspective) reviewed the data, discussed their reactions with the researcher, and read (and provided feedback on) the research findings. This provided a form of confirmability testing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, half of the participants (a mix of male and female) were approached and invited to read a summary of the research findings for their respective destinations and provide feedback. All approached respondents agreed and completed this task, which served as credibility testing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

1.3.6. Key Informant Research. A simultaneous and supplementary research stream involving key informants from the tourism industry was conducted as well. It was envisaged that, as this is a DBA thesis, industry professionals could provide an additional layer of insight into tourists' relationships with destinations as well as speak to the potential relevance of the thesis topic, and practical applicability of its findings, to tourism businesses. This research stream consisted of two phases. In the first, the candidate interviewed two key informants in each of the three destinations for a total of six informants. For each destination, one key informant held a senior marketing position for the local convention and visitors' bureau, and the other served on that organization's board of directors and held a senior position at a local hotel company. All interviews were conducted in person at the individuals' offices, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically using the template technique (King, 2012) in the same manner as the tourist interviews described above. In the second phase, three of those six

individuals read a draft of Publication #3 submitted as part of this thesis, and then provided feedback via e-mail or telephone regarding the potential applicability of the findings to tourism businesses.

1.4. Outline of Publications

I chose to submit my DBA thesis in an alternative format due to my interest in publishing work in outlets that are read by tourism academics and practitioners with the intent that the findings of my research may be useful in academia and practice. The structure of this alternative format thesis is detailed in Table 1.2 below as well as an outline of the three publications that form its central basis: a research note on place brand love which puts the project in its broader theoretical context; an academic journal article outlining and critically evaluating the methodological approach to the work; and a book chapter in a forthcoming edited collection on the topic of place branding which reports and analyses the empirical findings of the work.

Table 1.2. Structure of Thesis.

Chapter 1		
Introduction		
Purpose of the DBA project, theoretical foundations and research context, research design, and brief outline of the three publications.		
Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Article 1	Article 2	Book Chapter
<p>Title</p> <p>Research Note: Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists</p> <p>Co-authors</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Methodological approaches to capturing the tourist viewpoint through virtual platforms and data</p> <p>Co-authors</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>I love this place! Tourists' destination brand love</p> <p>Co-authors</p> <p>Dominic Medway</p>

<p>N/A</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>Articulate an argument for a potential new research stream in the area of place brand love</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing relevant literature on brand love, place attachment, and place brands 2. Explain a gap in the existing literature that could be filled by research on “place brand love” 3. Articulate why filling the gap would be a worthwhile exercise for academics, practitioners, and consumers. 4. Present preliminary findings from an extensive study on place brand love <p>Methods</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Tourist interviews, photos, and collages</p> <p>Article Main Sections and Structure</p> <p>Theoretical Context, Early Stage Research Findings on Place Brand Love</p>	<p>Dominic Medway</p> <p>Gary Warnaby</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>Examine the potential for data collection from virtual platforms in tourism research</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a meta-analysis of virtual data collection techniques used by tourism researchers within the subject’s leading academic journals 2. Demonstrate how virtual data collection techniques can be applied in qualitative methodological approaches to tourism, using the research project from which this paper is drawn as an exemplar 3. Offer a thematic deconstruction and critical appraisal of such techniques in the context of a broader discussion on the future possibilities for virtual data collection in tourism research. <p>Methods</p>	<p>Gary Warnaby</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>Explore the concept of brand love within the context of a destination</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine whether brand love themes apply to tourists’ relationships with destinations 2. Examine whether brand love themes fully encapsulate tourists’ love for various destinations 3. Develop a framework for tourists’ love for destinations <p>Methods</p> <p>Interviews, photos, and collages</p> <p>Thematic and content analysis for objectives #1 and #2; narrative analysis for #2 and #3</p> <p>Chapter Main Sections and Structure</p> <p>Introduction, Theoretical and Conceptual Background, Methods, Discussion and Conclusion</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Journal</p> <p>Swanson, K. (2015). Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists. <i>Journal of Place Management and Development</i>, 8(2), 142-146.</p>	<p>Tourist interviews, photos, and collages</p> <p>Article Main Sections and Structure</p> <p>Introduction, Literature Review (including Literature Review Methods and Literature Review Findings), Methodology of Case Study, Analysis of Methodology, Discussion and Directions for Future Research</p> <p>Target Journal</p> <p>Presented as an extended abstract for the Travel & Tourism Research Association 2015 International Conference, and subsequently developed into a full paper for a journal</p> <p>First Choice:</p> <p><i>Tourism Management</i> (Impact Factor of 2.377, ABS 2010 Rank of 4)</p> <p>Second Choice:</p> <p><i>Journal of Travel Research</i> (Impact Factor of 1.884, ABS 2010 Ranking of 3)</p> <p>Estimated Date of Submission</p>	<p>Publication</p> <p><i>Handbook of Place Marketing and Branding</i> (edited by Adriana Campelo Santana; published by Edward Elgar)</p> <p>Date of Submission</p> <p>April, 2016</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	Extended abstract January 15, 2015 (completed) Journal article June, 2016	
Chapter 5		
Conclusion		
Meeting of objectives, synthesis of findings, contribution to theory, contribution to practice, limitations and directions for future research		

The three publications detailed in Table 1.2, while independent of each other, tie together to demonstrate the contributions of the doctoral work in its entirety. The research note published in the *Journal of Place Management and Development* lays the foundation for the research by outlining the theoretical context of the study and highlighting an area of potential academic and business interest, place brand love. The methodology article written for potential publication in *Tourism Management* highlights the methodological contributions of the research, as an innovative utilisation of virtual data collection was implemented in the study. Finally, the book chapter in the *Handbook of Place Marketing and Branding* details the empirical contributions of the research through a conceptualization of tourists' love for destinations and their brands.

I am the sole author of the research note. For both the *Tourism Management* article and the book chapter, I am the first author, and the two co-authors are my supervisors, Dominic Medway and Gary Warnaby. I conducted the research study independently and wrote the majority of the content of these two pieces. The conclusion of the thesis, Chapter 5, summarizes its content and findings, discusses academic and managerial implications, and provides directions for future research.

A fourth publication is included in Appendix 1 of the thesis. This comment piece, published in the *Journal of Place Management and Development*, reports on an Oxford-style debate that I organized at the 2014 *American Marketing Association Summer Educators' Conference*. The debate, titled “*Place Branding: Are We Wasting Our Time?*” focused on the utility of the practice of place branding. While not directly part of my doctoral research study, it was organized as part of my development in the DBA program and demonstrates my progression into the academic community.

Chapter 2

Publication #1

Research Note: Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists



Journal of Place Management and Development

Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists

Kathryn Swanson

Article information:

To cite this document:

Kathryn Swanson , (2015), "Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists", Journal of Place Management and Development, Vol. 8 Iss 2 pp. 142 - 146

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-05-2015-0012>

Downloaded on: 21 July 2015, At: 06:58 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 34 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 9 times since 2015*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

Yi-De Liu, (2015), "Major event and city branding: An evaluation of Liverpool as the 2008 European Capital of Culture", Journal of Place Management and Development, Vol. 8 Iss 2 pp. 147-162 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-02-2015-0007>

Janne Lindstedt, (2015), "A deliberately emergent strategy – a key to successful city branding", Journal of Place Management and Development, Vol. 8 Iss 2 pp. 90-102 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-12-2014-0029>

Kirill Lvovich Rozhkov, Natalya Il'inchna Skriabina, (2015), "Places, users, and place uses: a theoretical approach to place market analysis", Journal of Place Management and Development, Vol. 8 Iss 2 pp. 103-122 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-10-2014-0024>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by

Token:JournalAuthor:BF17CC77-24EF-4D0D-B0E2-736D78244F79:

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists

Kathryn Swanson

Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Received 29 May 2015
Revised 29 May 2015
Accepted 1 June 2015

142

Abstract

Purpose – The purposes of this paper are to outline the theoretical context for the study of brand love in the context of places and to report preliminary findings from an extensive study on place brand love.

Design/methodology/approach – Three places were chosen for the research: Orlando, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Las Vegas, Nevada. A study sample of 20 consumers engaged in a variety of methodological techniques including semi-structured consumer interviews, volunteer-employed photography and consumer collage creation.

Findings – Thirteen primary themes through which participants articulated their love in respect of the places under study were identified. These can be grouped into four categories: antecedents, relational themes (involving relationships between others, oneself and the place), experiential themes (relating to the experience of being at the place) and outcomes.

Originality/value – ‘Brand love’ is an aspect of branding that has not been explored in the context of places, and preliminary results indicate that this may be a useful concept for both academics and practitioners to investigate further.

Keywords Marketing, Consumers, Brand love, Place branding

Paper type Research paper

Theoretical context

Since the 1980s, the marketing of places has gained recognition in terms of both practical application and corresponding academic inquiry (Gertner, 2011; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008) and, as a consequence, places have been increasingly viewed as brands (Hankinson, 2015; Lucarelli and Berg, 2011). Notwithstanding extensive debate regarding whether places can be branded at all (Amujo and Otubanjo, 2012) and whether place branding is a worthwhile endeavour (Medway *et al.*, 2015), place brands have been defined in terms of “socially constructed meaning systems” (Warnaby and Medway, 2013), and a number of conceptualizations have been promulgated (Hankinson, 2015). Various aspects of mainstream branding have been transposed to a place context, including brand image (Blain *et al.*, 2005), brand equity (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011) and brand communities (Levy and Hassay, 2005). One aspect that has not been examined for places is “brand love”, or “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name” (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

In the marketing discipline, there is work demonstrating that consumers can develop relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998) and even develop feelings of “love” for brands (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) introduced the “brand love” construct and found that, when satisfied consumers feel greater brand love within



consumer packaged goods categories, they are more loyal to the brand (in terms of being committed to repurchasing it) and engage in more positive word-of-mouth. Also, hedonic products and self-expressive brands have positive effects on brand love. Several studies have followed, the majority of which have focussed on consumer products (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2011; Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010). Batra *et al.* (2012) concluded that the brand love concept includes: self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviours, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence (strength) and anticipated separation distress. Additionally, quality belief is an antecedent to brand love, and resistance to negative information is an additional brand love outcome (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, 100 per cent of participants claimed that they “love” or “sort-of-love” at least one brand (Batra *et al.*, 2012).

In terms of places, this raises a number of research questions. First, do place consumers, and specifically tourists, relate to the notion of place brands? Second, if place brands have resonance with consumers, then do they exhibit love for these, as witnessed in the context of service settings (Tsai, 2011)? Existing research indicates that places are entities that some people claim to love in a “real” or “true” form (Ahuvia, 1992), and tourists in particular can have feelings of love for destinations (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Hosany *et al.*, 2014). This, however, leads to a third research question; namely, if the notion of place brand love resonates with consumers, then how does this relate to analogous concepts such as place attachment, or “the bonding of people to places” (Manzo, 2003), and other seemingly interchangeable terms from the environmental psychology literature, including “sense of place” (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001)? Place attachment has been discussed in this journal (de Azevedo *et al.*, 2013) and others (Lee, 2001; Prayag and Ryan, 2011), and place attachment has been shown to have positive outcomes specifically for tourism as a business activity, including intention to revisit and recommend a destination to others (Prayag and Ryan, 2011); loyalty intentions (Yuksel *et al.*, 2010); and actual revisit behaviour (Tsai, 2012). Many of these outcomes could easily be related to the typical benefits of branding in terms of adding value for organizations and consumers, building consumer loyalty and reducing consumers’ perceptions of risk (de Chernatony and Riley, 1998).

The above discussion emphasizes a need to understand the nature of distinctions between the concepts of place attachment and place brand love. In a tourism context specifically, clarifying this would have important implications for thinking about how tourists choose places to visit. For example, is it love of the place itself and place attachment that primarily influence them, or is it a love of the brand values associated with the place in question, or is it a combination of these things? A key issue here may be whether the intention to visit a place is for the first time, in which case the place *brand*, as perceived by the potential consumer, may come more into play; or if it is a return visit, in which case traditional notions of place *attachment* may be more influential in the decision-making process. Certain places (e.g. Venice, Las Vegas, New York, Paris, etc.) capitalize on their image associations as iconic destinations, to the extent that the toponym alone can trigger a brand-like association in the mind of the potential tourist or place consumer (Medway and Warnaby, 2014). Indeed, there are many who have never been to such places, but love what they stand for (as manifest through cinematic, photographic, musical and fictional representations), or their “brand” values, so much that they wish to visit.

In summary, research that delivers a fuller understanding of the concept of place brand love would provide further insight into tourists' attachment to (Prayag and Ryan, 2011; Tsai, 2012; Prayag and Ryan, 2010; Moore *et al.*, 2013) and love for (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Hosany *et al.*, 2014) destinations. This will add an important layer to academic debates regarding the complex and multi-faceted nature of the relationships between tourists and the places they visit (Hinch, 1998), which, in turn, can affect the tourist experience (Mossberg, 2007). A better understanding of place brand love may also have impact for place management generally in terms of how places promote themselves. For example, different marketing communication tools might have varying utility, depending on the extent to which individuals are influenced by place brand love and/or place attachment. It is therefore critical for both researchers and professionals to fully realize how and why place consumers develop relationships with places, as without that foundational understanding marketing and promotion activities will be ill informed.

Early stage research findings on place brand love

In response to the above-identified gap and the research questions posed, an extensive research study on place brand love was conducted by the author, the preliminary results of which are reported here. The overall aim of the study was to explore the concept of brand love within the context of a place. Three tourism destinations were chosen for the research: Orlando, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Las Vegas, Nevada. Data were collected between October 2012 and January 2014. This included a variety of methodological techniques including semi-structured consumer interviews, volunteer-employed photography and consumer collage creation. Participants were required to have been a tourist to the destination for which they were being interviewed for a non-business main purpose. Six to seven participants per destination engaged in the research, resulting in a study sample of 20 people. Thirteen primary themes through which participants articulated their love in respect of the places under study were identified. These can be grouped into four categories: antecedents, relational themes (involving relationships between others, oneself and the place), experiential themes (relating to the experience of being at the place) and outcomes.

Antecedents included a variety of "basics" of a quality destination, such as the variety of activities in which to engage, people who make visits special (e.g. service personnel), favourable weather and easy logistics. These basics facilitated the relational and experiential themes. Relational themes included family and friends in the destination and experiential themes included affective states identified amongst participants, such as feelings of escape or mystery whilst at the destination. Outcomes included anticipation (and avoidance) of separation distress from the destination studied and resistance to any negative information about it. The data further revealed that whilst primary themes relating to the formation of love for the study destinations were relatively consistent, there were still some thematic nuances in how love was expressed for each of these places. Additionally, the love that tourists felt for the destinations examined does not appear exclusionary. Specifically, a given tourist can get different benefits out of their unique relationships with a variety of destinations, and this leads to the suggestion that there may be different types of love for different places.

To conclude, at this early stage, a key takeaway from the study discussed above is that place consumers do relate to the notion of place brands; but also, that the love that those consumers experience in relation to places is a complex mix of love for the place

itself and love for the brand values associated with the place. Over the next two years, more extensive reporting of the research outlined within this note will endeavour to untangle these complexities further.

References

- Ahuvia, A.C. (1992), "For the love of money: materialism and product love", in Rudmin, F.W. and Richins, M.L. (Eds), *Meaning, Measure, and Morality of Materialism*, The Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT.
- Albert, N., Dwight, M. and Valette-Florence, P. (2008), "When consumers love their brands: exploring the concept and its dimensions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 61 No. 10, pp. 1062-1075.
- Amujo, O.C. and Otubanjo, O. (2012), "Leveraging rebranding of 'unattractive' nation brands to stimulate post-disaster tourism", *Tourist Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 87-105.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2011), "Brand love", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 1-70.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2012), "Brand love", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 76 No. 2, pp. 1-16.
- Bauer, H.H., Heinrich, D. and Martin, I. (2007), "How to create high emotional consumer-brand relationships? The causalities of brand passion", in ANZMAC, Dunedin.
- Bergkvist, L. and Bech-Larsen, T. (2010), "Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 17 No. 7, pp. 504-518.
- Blain, C., Levy, S.E. and Ritchie, J.R.B. (2005), "Destination branding: insights and practices from destination management organizations", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 328-338.
- Carroll, B.A. and Ahuvia, A.C. (2006), "Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love", *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 79-89.
- de Azevedo, A.J.A., Custódio, M.J.F. and Perna, F.P.A. (2013), "Are you happy here? The relationship between quality of life and place attachment", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 102-119.
- de Chernatony, L. and Riley, F.D. (1998), "Defining a 'brand': beyond the literature with experts' interpretations", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 14 No. 5, pp. 417-443.
- Fournier, S. (1998), "Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 343-353.
- Gartner, W.C. and Ruzzier, M.K. (2011), "Tourism destination brand equity dimensions: renewal versus repeat market", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 50 No. 5, pp. 471-481.
- Gertner, D. (2011), "Unfolding and configuring two decades of research and publications on place marketing and place branding", *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 91-106.
- Hankinson, G. (2015), "Rethinking the place brand construct", in Kavaratzis, M., Warnaby, G. and Ashworth, G.J. (Eds), *Rethinking Place Branding: Comprehensive Brand Development for Cities and Regions*, Springer, Heidelberg.
- Hidalgo, M.C. and Hernández, B. (2001), "Place attachment: conceptual and empirical questions", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 273-281.
- Hinch, T. (1998), "Ecotourists and indigenous hosts: diverging views on their relationship with nature", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 120-124.

- Hosany, S. and Gilbert, D. (2010), "Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 513-526.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Causevic, S. and Odeh, K. (2014), "Measuring tourists' emotional experiences: further validation of the destination emotion scale", *Journal of Travel Research*, pp. 1-14..
- Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G. (2008), "Place marketing: how did we get here and where are we going?", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 150-165.
- Lee, C.C. (2001), "Predicting tourist attachment to destinations", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 229-232.
- Levy, S.E. and Hassay, D.N. (2005), "Visitor communities", *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 57-72.
- Lucarelli, A. and Berg, P.O. (2011), "City branding: a state-of-the-art review of the research domain", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 9-27.
- Manzo, L.C. (2003), "Beyond house and haven: toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 47-61.
- Medway, D., Swanson, K., Delpy-Neiorotti, L., Pasquinelli, C. and Zenker, S. (2015), "Place branding: are we wasting our time? Report of an AMA special session", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 63-68.
- Medway, D. and Warnaby, G. (2014), "What's in a name? Place branding and toponymic commodification", *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 153-167.
- Moore, S.A., Rodger, K. and Taplin, R. (2013), "Moving beyond visitor satisfaction to loyalty in nature-based tourism: a review and research agenda", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 667-683.
- Mossberg, L. (2007), "A marketing approach to the tourist experience", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 59-74.
- Prayag, G. and Ryan, C. (2010), "The relationship between the 'push' and 'pull' factors of a tourist destination: the role of nationality – an analytical qualitative research approach", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 121-143.
- Prayag, G. and Ryan, C. (2011), "Antecedents of tourists' loyalty to Mauritius: the role and influence of destination image, place attachment, personal involvement, and satisfaction", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 1-15.
- Tsai, S. (2011), "Strategic relationship management and service brand marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 Nos 7/8, pp. 1194-1213.
- Tsai, S. (2012), "Place attachment and tourism marketing: investigating international tourists in Singapore", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 139-152.
- Warnaby, G. and Medway, D. (2013), "What about the 'place' in place marketing?", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 345-363.
- Yuksel, A., Yuksel, F. and Bilim, Y. (2010), "Destination attachment: effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 274-284.

Corresponding author

Kathryn Swanson can be contacted at: kathryn.swanson@mbs.ac.uk

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

Chapter 3

Publication #2

Methodological approaches to capturing the tourist viewpoint through virtual platforms
and data

Methodological approaches to capturing the tourist viewpoint through virtual platforms and data

Katie Swanson^{1*}, Dominic Medway¹ and Gary Warnaby²

**¹Manchester Business School
Booth Street West
Manchester
M15 6PB
UK**

**²The School of Materials
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
UK**

**** Corresponding author***

Introduction

The rapid development of Internet-based capabilities and associated virtual platforms over the past twenty years has greatly expanded the methodological possibilities available to social science researchers (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). For tourism research in particular, where potential participants may be geographically dispersed, such technological advances have the potential to overcome certain spatial and temporal barriers to gaining insights from the tourist population. The collection of data derived from virtual platforms has relevance to both quantitative and qualitative methods. Regarding the former, Internet applications such as Survey Monkey and Qualtrics allow accessibility to tourist populations for survey work, without the need for the researcher to be physically present at the point of data collection, and avoiding reliance on mail-out survey techniques which involve mail time and postage costs.

However, with a growing focus on qualitative methods for gaining insight into tourists' affective states and behaviours (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001), the potential for virtual platforms is broadened beyond Web-enabled survey techniques into a variety of social media applications that are ideally suited to capturing tourist discourses in the form of their narratives and stories about holidays, the places they visit and would like to visit. This paper is primarily concerned with these more qualitative forms of enquiry, as it is based on a multiple case study of tourists' attachment to destinations and their associated destination brand love, which relates to issues of affective state. However, the findings of this study are not the focus of discussion; rather, we are more concerned with analysing how this work was done.

Specifically, in undertaking our research, it became clear that there were several methodological issues requiring attention in terms of our research design, and which held considerable relevance for the more general scope of tourism research. In discussing and analysing these issues, we claim a methodological contribution to the tourism research literature. The aim of our paper, therefore, is to examine the potential for data collection from virtual platforms, or put more simply, "virtual data," in tourism research. In undertaking this, our contribution is threefold: First, we provide a meta-analysis of virtual data collection techniques used by tourism researchers within the subject's leading academic journals. Second, we demonstrate how virtual data collection techniques can be applied in qualitative methodological approaches to tourism, using the research project

from which this paper is drawn as an exemplar. Third, we offer a thematic deconstruction and critical appraisal of such techniques in the context of a broader discussion on the future possibilities for virtual data collection in tourism research. In the conclusion, we discuss the paradoxical potential of virtual data collection to better capture, yet also impact on, the tourist experience, particularly within the realms of embodiment.

Literature Review

The development of Internet technologies over the last two decades has led to the growth of data collection on virtual platforms, and the use of virtual data (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014), both in academic and corporate contexts. To examine this phenomenon in academic studies of tourism, a meta-analytic review of the leading tourism journals was conducted.

As noted in *Tourism Management* (Jamal, Smith, & Watson, 2008), tourism journal ranking is complex, and different ranking systems may be more relevant in certain situations and contexts. Accordingly, five journal ranking systems were consulted for our review: the Australian Business Dean's Council (ABDC), the Association of Business Schools (ABS), Google Scholar, SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)/Scopus, and Thomson Reuters Web of Science (WoS). The four leading journals selected were *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR), *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (JST), *Journal of Travel Research* (JTR), and *Tourism Management* (TM). Rankings, scores, and impact factors for the journals are summarized in Table 1.¹

¹ The only four journals in the ABDC "Tourism" category with a score of A* are *Annals of Tourism*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Management*, and *Journal of Travel Research*, and these four journals are also in the top five Google Scholar "Tourism & Hospitality" category. Journals with a "3" or "4" score from ABS consist of *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, and *Journal of Travel Research*. The top three Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management journals as ranked by SJR are *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, and *Tourism Management*. Finally, the top four (based on impact factor) non-sports journals in the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism category in Web of Science are *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Management*, and *Journal of Travel Research*. Thus, due to the overlap of titles in the five ranking systems, those four journals were selected for the review.

Table 1

Rankings, Scores, and Impact Factors of Chosen Journals Across Five Ranking Systems

Journal	ABDC Score	ABS Score	Google Scholar Rank	SJR Rank	WoS Rank; Impact Factor
ATR	A*	4	3	1	2; 2.795
JST	A*	1	4	2	4; 2.392
JTR	A*	3	5	N/A	6; 1.884
TM	A*	4	1	3	5; 2.377

The three researchers independently developed a list of key terms relating to the topic of virtual data collection, which might be employed to search the four chosen journals. These three independent lists were subsequently compared, and repeated terms were removed. A list of 21 search terms was finalized, and these were then used to search the four journals across their title, abstract, and key word fields. Eleven of the search terms (online interview, virtual interview, internet interview, online focus group, virtual focus group, internet focus group, Skype, Google Hangout, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter) produced no results. The remaining search terms (online community/ies, online review(s), user-generated content, social media, e word-of-mouth (eWOM), travel blog, netnography, GPS, Facebook, and Flickr) did produce results in three of the four journals (all but the Journal of Sustainable Tourism). The abstracts of the returned results were reviewed, and studies that did not actually use virtual data collection as part of their method were eliminated², leaving 65 remaining in Table 2. These 65 studies do not account for every publication reporting on virtual data collection in tourism. Rather, Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of virtual data collection in tourism research as reported in leading tourism journals.

Table 2 is organized horizontally into three broad virtual data categories, termed “pre-existing,” “real-time occurring,” and “solicited.” Pre-existing and real-time occurring data are secondary to the researcher, whereas solicited data would be considered primary and therefore involves direct interaction with tourists and their awareness of participation in

² For example, Munar and Jacobsen (2014) study social media usage amongst tourists, but their data is collected on-site at an airport. Equally, Mistilis, Buhalis, and Gretzel (2014) report on a non-virtual gathering of tourism stakeholders during which social media was discussed.

research, as indicated in the second column. The other columns refer to the source of the virtual data (column 3), and the data analysis approach used (column 4). The final column indicates those studies pertaining to various combinations of the virtual data categories, data sources and data analysis approaches.

Table 2: Summary of Virtual Data Collection in Tourism Research

Virtual data category	Tourist interaction?	Virtual data source	Data analysis approach	Publications
Pre-existing	No	User-generated content (e.g., social media sites, online reviews, photo-sharing sites, blogs, online communities)	Quantitative (e.g., modelling, analytics)	(Chaves, Gomes, & Pedron, 2012; Duverger, 2013; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; Li, Law, Vu, Rong, & Zhao, 2015; Liu & Park, 2015; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012; Luo & Zhong, 2015; Nieto, Hernández-Maestro, & Muñoz-Gallego, 2014; Önder, Koerbitz, & Hubmann-Haidvogel, 2014; Park & Nicolau, 2015; Phillips, Zigan, Santos Silva, & Schegg, 2015; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013; Vu, Li, Law, & Ye, 2015)
			Qualitative (e.g., thematic coding, narrative)	(Arsal, Woosnam, Baldwin, & Backman, 2010; Cabiddu, Carlo, & Piccoli, 2014; Cong, Wu, Morrison, Shu, & Wang, 2014; Lo & McKercher, 2015; Månsson, 2011; Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007; Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011; Shakeela & Weaver, 2012; Tseng, Wu, Morrison, Zhang, & Chen, 2015)
			Combined	(Cabiddu et al., 2014; Crotts, Mason, & Davis, 2009; Kotus, Rzeszewski, & Ewertowski, 2015; Magnini, Crotts, & Zehrer, 2011; Stepchenkova, Kim, & Kirilenko, 2014)
Real-time occurring	No	User-generated content	Qualitative	(Goulding, Saren, & Lindridge, 2013; Janta, Lugosi, Brown, & Ladkin, 2012; Mkono, 2013; Osman, Johns, & Lugosi, 2014; Shakeela & Weaver, 2014; Small & Harris, 2014; Tavakoli & Mura, 2015; Woodside, Cruickshank, & Dehuang, 2007; Wu & Pearce, 2014b)
Solicited	Yes	Online surveys	Quantitative	(Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013a, 2013b; Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalfú, 2010; Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015; Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Guimarães et al., 2015; Huang, Chou, & Lin, 2010; Illum, Ivanov, & Liang, 2010; Janta et al., 2012;

GPS Tracking	Quantitative	Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; Kim, Lee, & Hiemstra, 2004; Lee & Hyun, 2015; Llodrà-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015; Lyu & Hwang, 2015; Nieto et al., 2014; Paris, 2012; Qu & Lee, 2011; Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014; Stienmetz & Fesenmaier, 2015; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a, 2004b) (Hallo et al., 2012; Kotus et al., 2015; Orellana, Bregt, Ligtenberg, & Wachowicz, 2012; Shoval & Isaacson, 2007; Shoval, McKercher, Ng, & Birenboim, 2011; Tchetchik, Fleischer, & Shoval, 2009; Wolf, Hagenloh, & Croft, 2012)
Online experiment/ simulation	Quantitative	(Lee & Gretzel, 2012; Murphy & Chen, 2014; Sparks & Browning, 2011; Sparks, Perkins, & Buckley, 2013; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009)
Interviewing/chats (online or in-person)	Qualitative	(Lo & McKercher, 2015; Tavakoli & Mura, 2015; Wu & Pearce, 2014b)

N.B. A study may appear more than once in the table as appropriate.

Pre-existing data

Studies using pre-existing data typically rely on information that is publicly available through the Internet at the point at which the research process begins. Such research does not involve direct interaction with tourists and pulls data from sources such as online review websites (Liu & Park, 2015), travel blogs (Magnini et al., 2011) and online communities (Arsal et al., 2010). Depending on the purpose of the study, some researchers have analysed this type of data quantitatively through modelling, analytics, etc., (Duverger, 2013; Phillips et al., 2015) and others have employed qualitative approaches such as thematic coding of textual data (Arsal et al., 2010; Cong et al., 2014). Other studies combine both qualitative and quantitative analysis (Cabiddu et al., 2014; Crotts et al., 2009). All these studies provide valuable, quickly accessible, and inexpensive insights into tourists' opinions, emotions, and behaviour, yet can be restricting for researchers in that they are at the mercy of data that happens to be available, which does not necessarily assume the format or content preferred. This is analogous to some of the disadvantages of using secondary data more generally (Cowton, 1998).

Real-time occurring data

The distinction between pre-existing data and real-time occurring data is a subtle one concerning the timing of data production in relation to the research process. The former, as already indicated, represents an information source that is available at the point at which the research process begins. By contrast, we would argue that real-time occurring data continues to emerge from virtual sources as it is studied. In the papers reviewed, the main utilization of such data occurred in the form of netnography - a term developed by Kozinets (2002) to capture the application of ethnography to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Netnography has been used to examine the tourist experience (Rageh, Melewar, & Woodside, 2013). The advantages of this include the fact that it involves a way of capturing data that emerge in an organic and non-directed sense from tourists, and in doing so may reveal things about their perceptions of the tourist experience and affective state that might not be gained through more formal data collection methods (Rageh et al., 2013). The collection of such data is also cost-effective and efficient (Kozinets, 2002). This data is usually best suited to qualitative analysis approaches such as thematic coding and discourse analysis (Kozinets, 2002). A downside to real-time occurring data is that the researcher does not prescribe the topic/content of any participants' contributions (Wu & Pearce, 2014a) and is therefore at the mercy of what

happens organically online. However, two netnography studies in Table 2 also incorporate solicited data involving online interviewing/chats (Tavakoli & Mura, 2015; Wu & Pearce, 2014b), which helps overcome this problem (see below).

Solicited data

A third category of data uncovered in the review of literature is solicited by tourism researchers, and necessarily involves a degree of interaction with tourists. A common means of collecting these data is through online surveys, and the number of studies involving such an approach is likely to be much greater than those uncovered through this literature review. However, as noted above, the publications listed in Table 2 should be considered indicative. Such studies often use e-mail or social media to recruit participants (Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Dijkmans et al., 2015) and analyse data through quantitative approaches involving statistical manipulation (Liu & Park, 2015; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). Another form of solicited data collection is GPS tracking, where researchers typically ask tourists to carry GPS devices and study their behaviour and movement patterns (Shoval & Isaacson, 2007; Tchetchik et al., 2009). Like online survey data, that from GPS tracking is often analysed quantitatively (and also through mapping in the case of GPS). A benefit of these types of study is that the researcher can solicit data directly from participants, and at the point of consumption of the tourist experience if this is important for the research questions asked. Solicited data can also be collected via online experiments and simulations to study tourists' behaviour (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Sparks et al., 2013), the results of which are also usually analysed using quantitative approaches. Solicited data can also involve online interviewing/chats, which are typically subject to qualitative analysis approaches involving thematic coding and narrative analysis (Tavakoli & Mura, 2015; Wu & Pearce, 2014b).

An advantage of soliciting data virtually is that study participants can, theoretically, take part from almost anywhere in the world (Hung & Law, 2011). Counter to this, however, not everyone has equal access to the Internet, which could exclude some relevant voices from participating (Hung & Law, 2011). Indeed, lack of online access has implications for the production and representative validity of all categories of virtual data in tourism research.

Mixed formats

As already indicated, some studies involving virtual data collection have a mixed format in which researchers use pre-existing or naturally occurring data, but also engage with tourists to comment on that data (i.e., a solicited approach). One study employed this technique whereby photos from social media were accessed, and tourists who posted those photos were then contacted and interviewed regarding that data (Lo & McKercher, 2015). Another approach is to combine netnographies of naturally occurring data with solicited primary data collection such as online interviews/chats (Tavakoli & Mura, 2015; Wu & Pearce, 2014b) or online surveys (Janta et al., 2012). It appears that these mixed techniques could achieve benefits of both naturally occurring data in terms of its organic and non-directed nature, and solicited data, in terms of the ability to ask tourists specific questions relating to the research objectives of the study in question.

As indicated in Table 2 (column 3), tourism researchers have used a variety of sources for the virtual data gathered from tourists. In Table 3 these are disaggregated by the data type and the specific online applications and tools employed for data collection.

Table 3:
Virtual Data Gathered from Tourists

Broad data source employed	Data types	Online applications/tools
User-generated content	Blogs/online communities/ online forums	Special-interest online discussion threads located via search engines, such as Google and Yahoo!
	Social media sites	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
	Online review sites	TripAdvisor, Yelp
	Photo-sharing sites with geo-tagging	Flickr
GPS	N/A	Wearable GPS loggers given to tourists
Online surveys*	N/A	Survey Gizmo, inQsit
Experiment/online simulation	N/A	University private sites

N.B.: Recruitment for online surveys often occurs online, too, via e-mail invitations and posts on online communities (Amaro & Duarte, 2015), and surveys can be built on the Qualtrics web platform (Ayeh et al., 2013b) and are sometimes hosted on university websites.

As evident in Table 3, tourism researchers have undertaken virtual data collection via tools that exist only on virtual platforms (such as social networking sites and online forums), as well as via tools that already exist in a non-virtual context (such as surveys and photographs), but enacted here in a virtual manner (e.g., using online sites/tools such as Survey Gizmo and Flickr, respectively).

Reasons for virtual data collection

The literature retrieved for the above meta-analysis reveals five key reasons for using virtual data collection in tourism research:

Volume/Diversity. One reason cited for using virtual data collection is related to the volume and diversity of available information on the Internet (Cong et al., 2014; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012), which makes it an efficient resource for tourism researchers looking for workable amounts of data on a wide variety of topics.

Access. A second reason for employing virtual data collection relates to access. Much Internet-based data is easily accessible and publicly available (Cong et al., 2014; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012), which is highly convenient for researchers. Furthermore, in tourism, where participants are often geographically dispersed, it may be easier to access participants virtually than in person, emphasising the relative geographical/spatial flexibility of virtual data collection approaches. On the downside, however, there may be an issue with trying to collect data from tourists at the point of consumption of the tourist experience in remote contexts where Internet access is poor.

Efficiency. Another common reason mentioned for the employment of virtual data collection relates to efficiency. Given the Internet's large volume and diversity of easily accessible data, this makes collecting virtual data time-efficient, and it can facilitate rapid insights on new topic areas (Wu & Pearce, 2014b) through search engine capabilities.

Budget. Related to efficiency is budget. It can be more cost-effective to utilize virtual data collection than more traditional approaches (Illum et al., 2010), which may require travel costs to conduct face-to-face research, or postage costs for survey work.

Research Question. The fifth reason cited for using virtual data collection is that the research question relates specifically to tourist behaviour online. For example, Luo and Zhong (2015) looked at communication characteristics of electronic word-of-mouth, and Schroeder and Pennington-Gray (2014) investigated international tourists' use of social media during a crisis.

In summary, from the 65 studies examined, the most common reasons cited for using virtual data relate to practical matters such as efficiency, ease of access, and budget constraints. Less mentioned are the benefits that virtual data collection may have over other approaches. For example, Guimarães et al. (2015) incorporate virtual data collection to avoid “coverage bias” through being better able to reach certain members of the target population. Another study, outwith the 65 reviewed, discusses the environmentally conscious appeal of virtual data collection, which cuts down on travel between researcher and participants (Hanna, 2012). Both of these studies hint at a potential for virtual data collection to serve a wider purpose than is often recognised in tourism research. There is an absence of discussion in the literature on temporal flexibility; specifically being able to interrogate the tourist at different times *throughout* the tourism process (Smith, Xiang, Pan, Witte, & Doherty, 2015). Virtual data collection arguably increases this flexibility compared to non-virtual data collection methods. For example, it is often easier to invoke a Skype call for an interview than to arrange one offline. Clearly, there is an opportunity to explore how such applications and associated virtual technologies can enhance qualitative research inquiry generally (Moynan, Derr, & Lindhorst, 2015) which could have particular relevance to tourism (Hanna, 2012).

Methodological Context

As noted above, the research on which this paper is based explored the concept of tourists' love for destination brands. The brand love concept has emerged over the last decade. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) define it as “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name.” Whilst tourists' emotions relating to destinations have been researched (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany, Prayag,

Deesilatham, Causevic, & Odeh, 2014), the concept of “love” for destination brands has not. Academic enquiry into brand love has a predominantly positivistic and quantitative focus (e.g., Albert, Dwight, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Sarkar, Ponnampalath, & Murthy, 2012). However, taking the view that emotions such as love should be studied using phenomenological modes of enquiry (Sturdy, 2003), we determined an inductive, exploratory approach involving qualitative methods would be most appropriate to research the love of destination brands in a tourism context, potentially delivering deeper insights than would be possible with quantitative methods alone.

The research employed a contrasting case study approach (Yin, 2009), involving tourists of three vacation destinations in the United States: Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. As appropriate for qualitative research (Saunders, 2012), participants were selected in a snowball manner. Six participants took part in the research as tourists of Minneapolis, seven as tourists of Orlando and seven as tourists of Las Vegas, making a total of 20. All were adult residents of the United States (60% female/40% male), with ages ranging from 23 to 86. Participants were required to have been a tourist visiting the relevant destination for non-business purposes, and needed to initially agree that they “love” the destination. It was felt this love for the destination could well translate into love for the destination brand, which itself might be constructed within the tourist’s mind from various facets of the destination offering and the tourist’s experience of these. However, as noted above, the findings of this research study are not the focus of the discussion below; rather, this paper is more concerned with how the research was done.

In qualitative tourism research the triangulation of methods is a common strategy for developing empirical validity (Decrop, 1999). Accordingly, three contrasting data collection tools were employed: semi-structured tourist interviews, volunteer-employed photography (VEP), and tourist collage creation. All data collection was carried out by the first author. Most critical to the focus of the current paper, at an early stage it was decided that the use of virtual technologies and platforms would be useful tools in maximising the engagement of the study’s tourist participants in the completion of research tasks, particularly as they were often located in geographically distant locations at the time of data collection, both from each other, and from the researcher.

Tourist interviews

Interviews were conducted at participants' homes. Nine interviews involved the researcher visiting the participant to conduct the interview, whilst 11 were undertaken virtually via Skype. This was purely dependent on the researcher's geographical propinquity to a participant's home at the time an interview was scheduled to take place. The Skype interviews arguably fit into the broad category of solicited virtual data in tourism research (see above). The interviews followed a semi-structured format and used, as a general guide, a list of questions informed by the literature and trialled and revised in a pilot interview (not reported). Interviews lasted 45 to 75 minutes each.

Volunteer-employed photography

Emotions can be difficult to express in words (Sturdy, 2003), so asking participants to produce images of their "loved" tourist destination with a camera (i.e., engage in VEP – see, Garrod, 2008) provided a "different way in" (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p. 178) to investigating the research question. Photography is also a common way for tourists to capture their relationships with destinations (Edensor, 2000) and, equally, can be used by consumers to record their relationships with brands (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012). Participants were asked to take photos on their next trip to the destination in question and return them electronically as soon as possible with a "brief commentary" explaining "the main subject of the photo and the reason it was taken". Instructions regarding the commentary were based on insights from MacKay and Couldwell (2004), and were critical in identifying participants' affective state and emotions, including potentially love, when the picture was taken. Most photos and comments were returned virtually via e-mail or text message (two participants returned a few hard copies), again fitting into the broad category of solicited virtual data in tourism research. Unlike the interviews, VEP represented participant data collected whilst the tourism experience was occurring, thus sometimes allowing data to be collected in "real-time" as opposed to after the event. We discuss later in the paper the potential benefits virtual methods can deliver in this manner, by bringing the point of researcher enquiry close to the point of tourism consumption.

Tourist collages

Again, considering the potential difficulties for people to express emotions verbally, collage creation was used. This technique has been used in brand and tourism research (Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010; Prebensen, 2007), and results suggest that collages,

and subsequent discussion of their contents with their creators, can tap into knowledge that might not be revealed in more direct enquiry techniques such as interviewing. Indeed, as a projective technique, collages are identified as effective at revealing information about consumer-brand bonds and relationships and tapping into consumers' "subconscious desires, wishes or feelings" (Gordon & Langmaid, 1988, p. 94). It has also been suggested that collage-based research is particularly useful at exploring people's relationships with experiential brands such as tourism destination brands (Koll et al., 2010).

For the collage creation, participants were asked to participate in a group session made up of others from the same tourist destination. They were asked to bring with them copies of photos of previous vacations to the destination being researched. Reflecting the fact that respondents lived in geographically dispersed areas, group sessions were conducted in a mixed in-person/virtual, or entirely virtual, format through the use of Skype or Google Hangout. Participants were provided with a variety of magazines on topics such as tourism and travel, entertainment, general interest, etc., (these were mailed to the virtual participants ahead of time) and paper, glue sticks, tape, scissors, markers, and pens (virtual respondents provided these themselves).

Participants were instructed to create a collage that demonstrated and encapsulated the love they felt for the destination. On the back of their collage, they were asked to reflect, in writing, on why they chose and used the images within it. Other studies have asked participants to identify pictures (Koll et al., 2010) or to explain their choices (Prebensen, 2007) in this manner. When collages were finished, each participant presented their creation to the others, after which all respondents had time to discuss it. During presentations and discussion, participants held up their collages to the computer camera so that there was mutual sharing of information between those occupying virtual and non-virtual space.

Participant feedback on virtual method

All 20 tourist participants completed their interviews and collages, and 18 provided photos. After the research process, they were asked to provide written feedback via e-mail on the advantages and disadvantages of using Skype and/or Google Hangout during their interview and/or group session. They were also asked to provide their general reactions to using these virtual technology interfaces as research participants. This feedback was

analysed thematically, and showed strong parallels to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model for consumers (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012) which has been applied in tourism research (Escobar-Rodríguez, & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014). Accordingly, in Table 4, respondent feedback is organised according to the constructs that can affect acceptance of technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, and experience and habit (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The second column provides a definition of each of these constructs. The third column includes potential positives of the virtual method used in the study, and the fourth column consists of explanations and participant quotes regarding these positives. The fifth and sixth column include potential negatives of the virtual method used in the study and examples/participant quotes, respectively.

Table 4:
Participant Feedback on Virtual Method Organized by UTAUT Model Constructs

	Definition (Venkatesh et al., 2012)	Positives	Explanation/ Participant Quote	Negatives	Explanation/ Participant Quote
Performance Expectancy	Benefits consumers will receive in terms of performing activities when using a technology	Communicate using visual and verbal cues	“I think Skype is almost to the point of being like an interview in the same room”	Operational issues: computer connectivity, video resolution, sound quality	Two participants had microphone problems during a group session, could not be heard, and thus were distanced
Effort Expectancy	A consumer’s ease of use of a technology	Low effort to use the virtual interface	“User-friendly,” “convenient,” “efficient”	Effort needed to set up an account and initially learn about a program	“Since I am not Internet savvy, it was time-consuming to open an account and become familiar with using it”
Social Influence	Consumers’ belief that others wish them to use a technology with which they may not be familiar	Satisfaction gained from pleasing others	Participants appeared to feel satisfied that they were being “good” participants and pleasing the researcher	Sense of peer pressure; ethical implications regarding ensuring participants do not feel pressured by the process of	No direct evidence, yet some participants appeared nervous regarding using the virtual interface and mentioned their “bad hair day” or lack of make-up as there

				virtual data collection	would be a recording for their participation.
Facilitating Conditions	Consumers' perceptions of the support and resources available to them in relation to the technology used	N/A – training not provided to participants	N/A	Absence of technology support may have led some to feel ill-at-ease	A participant reported feeling initially distracted during a collage session because she was unfamiliar with the platform and afraid she was doing something wrong
Hedonic Motivation	The extent that consumers enjoy using a certain technology	Pleasure derived from the educational and skill-building nature of trying a virtual interface with which they were not familiar	“Google hangouts (sic) was also a cool thing to use. This was my first time being introduced to this program and I liked it. It really was great to be able to see everyone as we made the collage. I really enjoyed listening to the others when they presented [too].”	Some participants alluded to enjoying the chosen platforms less than other, similar platforms	“I like Skype overall, but iChat is better.”
Price Value	Consumers' perceptions of the benefit of using certain technologies compared to	Participants appeared to perceive the cost of the technology as free	Participants alluded to the “convenience” and “efficiency” of their	N/A – none reported	N/A

	their cost	since they all already had computers and Internet connections; use of technology also appeared to reduce the perceived cost of time	virtual sessions with the researcher and that the chosen platforms are “cost-efficient”		
Experience and Habit	Experience relates to the amount of time that has passed since a consumer first used a technology, and habit relates to the consumer’s prior behaviour and the extent to which s/he views that behaviour as automatic	Some participants indicated prior experience with the virtual applications, some to the extent of habitual usage	These individuals appeared to view the technologies favourably	Some participants indicated no prior experience, down to a degree of resistance or “laggardism” (after Rogers, 2010)	“Probably just me and the way I am, but: I am a telephone person.”

Researcher reflections on virtual method

For the research exercise detailed in this paper, the researcher was also a consumer of the technology applications used. Thus, researcher reflections on the virtual data collection can also be categorised according to the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2012) as has been done in Table 5, using the same structure as Table 4.

**Table 5:
Researcher Reflections on Virtual Method Organized by UTAUT Model Constructs**

	Positives	Explanation/Example	Negatives	Explanation/Example
Performance Expectancy	Enhanced viability of the study	Due to geographical distance, it would have been impractical to include many of the participants without Skype and Google Hangout without losing the visual component.	Technology failures negatively impact the flow and momentum of virtual data collection and distract the narrative focus of participants. The virtual platform can become a disruptive force if it underperforms technically.	One Skype interview transcript had four breaks in the conversation when the connection was interrupted.
	Being able to read body language and visual cues	Analysis was enhanced by being able to draw on the visual subtleties (Hanna, 2012) of a physical as well as spoken narrative.		
	Almost no non-technical breaks in the conversation. Participants may be more engaged and focused on the task at hand than in non-virtual, face-to-face formats.	Participants took Skype as an opportunity to remove themselves from non-technical distractions so they could concentrate fully on the technology and the interview at hand. During in-person interviews, in contrast, there were many non-		

		technical interruptions such as dogs needing to be let out or spouses entering the room.		
Effort Expectancy	Virtual data collection was efficient for the researcher	The researcher saved time by not making travel arrangements and traveling to participants' locations	Some coordination was required to use virtual platforms	The researcher spent some time sending materials to virtual participants and ensuring they had access to and knowledge of the appropriate technology programs, but this required much less time than would have been involved with traveling
Social Influence	Virtual data collection techniques are becoming more commonplace	Researchers may receive encouragement to explore virtual data collection and take advantage of its benefits	Sense of peer pressure	Researchers may feel obligated to use virtual data collection even if it is not best suited for their research questions
Facilitating Conditions	N/A – training not provided to researchers	N/A	Lack of training may impact the speed with	If no training is provided to researchers or participants,

			which new virtual data collection approaches are adopted in a field such as tourism.	researchers may feel uncomfortable using virtual data collection due to their own lack of knowledge and the necessary reliance on participants' abilities to navigate the virtual technologies used and their access to quality equipment and Internet connections
Hedonic Motivation	<p>Enhanced level of excitement for the researcher over non-visual technologies such as phone</p> <p>Interesting to engage with virtual interfaces for the purposes of research</p> <p>Avoidance of negative researcher feelings of infringement on participants' personal, physical</p>	It was enjoyable for the researcher to connect virtually with participants with whom visual interaction would otherwise be impractical	There may be a reduced level of excitement for the researcher in connecting virtually with participants when compared to in-person contexts	It can be quite enjoyable and valuable to visit participants in person in their home environments.

	space (Hanna, 2012).			
Price Value	<p>The technologies have a low cost</p> <p>Reduced costs to the environment in terms of fewer “fieldwork miles” travelled</p>	<p>The research budget was very limited and the participants were geographically dispersed, so using low-cost technologies was beneficial</p>	<p>Equipment costs (e.g., computer, Internet connection, etc.)</p>	<p>These were fixed rather than varying according to the number of participants, however.</p>
Experience and Habit	<p>The researcher had experience with, and habitually used, the technologies used in the study</p>	<p>The researcher felt comfortable during data collection. As virtual technologies become more commonplace and mainstream, it is likely more researchers will be naturally inclined to incorporate them into their studies.</p>	<p>Researchers who do not have experience with virtual technologies may be more hesitant to use them.</p>	<p>A polarity in research studies could occur.</p>

Discussion and Directions for Future Research

This paper has identified and categorised the various types of virtual data employed in tourism research as reported in leading journals, and examined the virtual data collection used in a study exploring tourists' love for destination brands from the perspective of the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Drawing the strands of the discussion together, we suggest it may be beneficial for tourism researchers to think about virtual data collection in terms of the methodological challenges it helps resolve whilst at the same time being cognisant of the paradoxical tensions it creates.

One methodological challenge potentially resolved by virtual data collection relates to spatial dispersion. Tourism research can often, though not always, involve multi-site contexts. This may occur between participant and researcher locations, with the latter traveling to study the former *in-situ* (Varley & Medway, 2011), as well as between participants at different locations in the same study (Swanson, 2015). Virtual technologies expand the realm of methodological possibilities in these instances. Specifically, researcher and participant are more able to communicate regardless of their location, which may effectively expand the pool from which a sample can be drawn. However, tensions arise over the fact that certain participants may find it difficult to access virtual technologies due to reasons relating to the cost/affordability of, and/or connectivity or familiarity with, the technology itself. This could be more prevalent in certain cultural or age groups. We suggest that tourism researchers should carefully consider the characteristics of their population under investigation in determining whether virtual data collection is appropriate.

Another methodological challenge which might be resolved through virtual data collection relates to temporal issues. It can be argued that it may be more effective to study tourism as it is occurring (Smith et al., 2015), rather than afterwards, when tourists' perceptions of their vacation experiences might be affected by any cognitive dissonance afforded by the passing of time between a tourism "event" and questions asked about it by a researcher. Virtual data collection can provide the means to gather information closer to the point at which tourism occurs and is experienced. For example, although our research utilized Skype and Google Hangout in post-travel contexts, the inclusion of the VEP task began to explore data collection nearer the moment of tourism consumption while tourists were at the destination in question. Similarly, some tourism researchers have begun to integrate

smartphones into methodological design, including asking tourists to record videos, comment on them and send them to researchers *during* their tourism event rather than afterwards (Smith et al., 2015). The critical issue here is that tourists' perceptions of a destination may change at different points in time, both during and after a trip (Smith et al., 2015). Collecting data virtually may facilitate connection with tourists as and when these changes are occurring. This could be beneficial in enhancing both academic and practitioner understanding of what drives tourists' behaviours and what affects or moderates their consumption experiences of tourism.

Furthermore, in this journal (Varley & Medway, 2011) and others (Crouch, 2000; Giovanardi, Lucarelli, & Decosta, 2014), there has been growing interest in the topic of embodiment and tourism; embodiment being “a process of experiencing, making sense, knowing through practice as a sensual human subject in the world” (Crouch, 2000, p. 68). There are obvious links here to non-representational theory (Thrift, 1996), which emphasises the “half-second delay” between a sensory stimulus and conscious thought, also referred to as the “bare life,” “simple living body” or “. . . fleeting space of the moment . . . utterly wrapped up with its context and most especially the object world . . .” (Macpherson, 2010, p. 5). For tourism, one might imagine the potential for such a moment on, say, a boat-trip when a whale breaches the water. In that instant the viewing tourist can experience a fleeting sense of visceral and embodied awe, before cognition and conation set in to rationalise the event and set it in a wider temporal and spatial context. In such instances, virtual data collection provides an ability to capture data closer to the moment of embodiment. Tourists have already been asked to take photos to communicate feelings and perceptions (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Virtual data collection could take this a step further. For example, tourists could take a photo and post it to Instagram, or send a message via Twitter, for the researcher, as they experience what they consider to be significant events. Admittedly, by the time a tourist thinks of doing this, the moment of embodiment, or “bare life” has arguably passed. Nevertheless, if a tourist sends data virtually as soon as possible after an experienced event, then it helps the researcher get a close connection to that moment, especially compared to alternative data collection methods such as interviewing, focus groups, or even diary keeping, either during or after a vacation. (Although this does not deny that post-embodiment reflection by tourists might be what the researcher is seeking).

Emphasising this potential benefit of virtual technologies, the founder of Snapchat has noted that it “isn’t about capturing the traditional Kodak moment” but “about communicating with the full range of human emotion” (Snapchat, 2012). Put otherwise, virtual data collection may have the ability to better record tourists’ somatic and affective experiences of a vacation, rather than semantic and cognitive appreciations of it (Thrift, 1996). However, using virtual platforms to try and deliver such insights to the researcher could paradoxically distance the tourist from somatic sensitivity due to technological interference. Thus, in just the same way that photography can be used by individuals to mediate their identities as tourists (Robinson & Picard, 2009), introducing a layer of technology via virtual data collection could potentially disrupt the embodied experience, not least if tourists are asked to record key moments within their vacations through the lens of Instagram or Twitter.

Another methodological challenge for future tourism researchers, particularly those following lines of phenomenological inquiry using qualitative methods and interpretivist approaches, relates to hermeneutics. On the one hand, data interpretation may be enhanced when researchers are able to see participants and their facial expressions and body language, which makes virtual video-conferencing platforms such as Skype arguably preferable to the telephone when interviewing or undertaking focus groups. On the other hand, platforms such as Skype may be subject to technological malfunctions. In addition, virtual video-conferencing might paradoxically hinder the participants’ responses to research questions if they are unfamiliar with the technology, or feel nervous at being in front of a camera, as was the case with some of the participants in our study reported above.

Clearly, the range of virtual technologies now available can deliver numerous opportunities for methodological creativity in tourism research, provided this is suitably matched with research questions. Of course, ethical considerations should always be taken into account when undertaking such work. Online research requires certain special considerations (Elgesem, 2002), and some of the main issues regarding online research ethics include informed consent (for example, as in in-person settings, if researchers plan to record participants virtually, then those participants need to be aware of this and provide their consent); confidentiality (for example, the protection of participants’ identities and the secure storage of data); privacy (of participants); debriefing (following

up with participants after the research process); and netiquette (online etiquette) (Madge, 2007). Debates in the area of online research ethics abound and include to what extent people view online messages as private versus public (Elgesem, 2002) and when human subjects protection standards or models are appropriate in an online context (Walther, 2002; Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002) as opposed to viewing online data as cultural texts (Bassett & O’Riordan, 2002). Debates are ongoing and should continue to be held (Madge, 2007); at the same time, researchers should beware of going too far and imposing higher expectations on online researchers than those expected of onsite researchers (Madge, 2007), as this could have the paradoxical and unfortunate consequence of marginalizing groups that want their voices heard in a public domain (Bassett and O’Riordan, 2002). Going forward, it may be appropriate to include a consideration of the value of the research being conducted (Elgesem, 2002) and not simply apply structured ethical standards across the board but rather take more of a flexible approach to online research ethics that considers the specifics of each research study (Berry, 2004). Given the complexities of virtual data collection in tourism discussed in this article, this more flexible approach to ethics, in terms of carefully considering the participants’ needs in each individual research study, may be appropriate for tourism researchers to consider.

Potential future research streams are numerous, and include utilizing these technologies while participants are at the destination being studied. For example, virtual “check-in” interviews could be conducted with participants at various points during their trips. In studies aiming to collect data at as close to the moment of embodiment as possible, researchers could ask participants to submit data virtually immediately upon an embodied experience. Further knowledge is needed as well on hermeneutics and the interpretation benefits and challenges of virtual data collection in tourism as well as on ethical expectations of tourist participants who provide virtual data. Going forward, the opportunities for enhancing tourism research through virtual data collection appear particularly exciting, especially in the realms of spatiality, temporality and hermeneutics.

References

- Albert, N., Dwight, M., & Valette-Florence, P. (2008). When consumers love their brands: Exploring the concept and its dimensions. *Journal of Business Research*, *61*, 1062-1075.
- Amaro, S., & Duarte, P. (2015). An integrative model of consumers' intentions to purchase travel online. *Tourism Management*, *46*(0), 64-79. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.06.006>
- Arsal, I., Woosnam, K. M., Baldwin, E. D., & Backman, S. J. (2010). Residents as travel destination information providers: An online community perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, *49*(4), 400-413. doi: 10.1177/0047287509346856
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013a). "Do we believe in TripAdvisor?" Examining credibility perceptions and online travelers' attitude toward using user-generated content. *Journal of Travel Research*, *52*(4), 437-452. doi: 10.1177/0047287512475217
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013b). Predicting the intention to use consumer-generated media for travel planning. *Tourism Management*, *35*(0), 132-143. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.06.010>
- Bassett, E. H., & O'Riordan, K. (2002). Ethics of Internet research: Contesting the human subjects research model. *Ethics and Information Technology*, *4*(3), 233-247.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2012). Brand love. *Journal of Marketing*, *76*(March), 1-16.
- Bergkvist, L., & Bech-Larsen, T. (2010). Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love. *Journal of Brand Management*, *17*(7), 504-518.
- Berry, D. M. (2004). Internet research: Privacy, ethics and alienation: An open source approach. *Internet research*, *14*(4), 323-332.
- Cabiddu, F., Carlo, M. D., & Piccoli, G. (2014). Social media affordances: Enabling customer engagement. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *48*(0), 175-192. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.06.003>
- Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, *17*(2), 79-89.
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Guinalíu, M. (2010). Determinants of the intention to participate in firm-hosted online travel communities and effects on consumer behavioral intentions. *Tourism Management*, *31*(6), 898-911. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.04.007>
- Chaves, M. S., Gomes, R., & Pedron, C. (2012). Analysing reviews in the Web 2.0: Small and medium hotels in Portugal. *Tourism Management*, *33*(5), 1286-1287. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.11.007>
- Cong, L., Wu, B., Morrison, A. M., Shu, H., & Wang, M. (2014). Analysis of wildlife tourism experiences with endangered species: An exploratory study of encounters with giant pandas in Chengdu, China. *Tourism Management*, *40*(0), 300-310. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.07.005>
- Cowton, C. (1998). The use of secondary data in business ethics research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *17*(4), 423-434. doi: 10.1023/a:1005730825103
- Crotts, J. C., Mason, P. R., & Davis, B. (2009). Measuring guest satisfaction and competitive position in the hospitality and tourism industry: An application of stance-shift analysis to travel blog narratives. *Journal of Travel Research*, *48*(2), 139-151. doi: 10.1177/0047287508328795
- Crouch, D. (2000). Places around us: Embodied lay geographies in leisure and tourism. *Leisure Studies*, *19*(2), 63-76.

- Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2014). Skype interviewing: Reflections of two PhD researchers. *Qualitative Research* 14(5), 603-616.
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20, 157-161.
- Dijkmans, C., Kerkhof, P., & Beukeboom, C. J. (2015). A stage to engage: Social media use and corporate reputation. *Tourism Management*, 47(0), 58-67. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.005>
- Duverger, P. (2013). Curvilinear effects of user-generated content on hotels' market share: A dynamic panel-data analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(4), 465-478. doi: 10.1177/0047287513478498
- Edensor, T. (2000). Staging tourism: Tourists as performers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 322-344.
- Elgesem, D. (2002). What is special about the ethical issues in online research?. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 4(3), 195-203.
- Escobar-Rodríguez, T., & Carvajal-Trujillo, E. (2014). Online purchasing tickets for low cost carriers: An application of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) model. *Tourism Management*, 43, 70-88. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.01.017>
- Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2014). E-WOM and accommodation: An analysis of the factors that influence travelers' adoption of information from online reviews. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(1), 44-57. doi: 10.1177/0047287513481274
- Garrod, B. (2008). Exploring place perception: A photo-based analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 381-401.
- Giovanardi, M., Lucarelli, A., & Decosta, P. L. E. (2014). Co-performing tourism places: The "Pink Night" festival. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 44(0), 102-115. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.09.004>
- Gordon, W., & Langmaid, R. (1988). *Qualitative market research: A practitioner's and buyer's guide*. Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company Limited.
- Goulding, C., Saren, M., & Lindridge, A. (2013). Reading the body at von Hagen's 'body worlds'. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 40(0), 306-330. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.08.008>
- Guillemin, M., & Drew, S. (2010). Questions of process in participant-generated visual methodologies. *Visual Studies*, 25(2), 175-188.
- Guimarães, M. H., Nunes, L. C., Madureira, L., Santos, J. L., Boski, T., & Dentinho, T. (2015). Measuring birdwatchers preferences: A case for using online networks and mixed-mode surveys. *Tourism Management*, 46, 102-113.
- Hallo, J. C., Becco, J. A., Goetcheus, C., McGee, J., McGehee, N. G., & Norman, W. C. (2012). GPS as a method for assessing spatial and temporal use distributions of nature-based tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(5), 591-606. doi: 10.1177/0047287511431325
- Hanna, P. (2012). Using internet technologies (such as Skype) as a research medium: a research note. *Qualitative Research*, 12(2), 239-242.
- Hollenbeck, C. R., & Kaikati, A. M. (2012). Consumers' use of brands to reflect their actual and ideal selves on Facebook. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 29(4), 395-405.
- Hosany, S., & Gilbert, D. (2010). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(4), 513-526.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Causevic, S., & Odeh, K. (2014). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences: Further validation of the Destination Emotion Scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1-14.

- Huang, C.-Y., Chou, C.-J., & Lin, P.-C. (2010). Involvement theory in constructing bloggers' intention to purchase travel products. *Tourism Management*, 31(4), 513-526. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.003>
- Hung, K., & Law, R. (2011). An overview of Internet-based surveys in hospitality and tourism journals. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 717-724. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.05.027>
- Illum, S. F., Ivanov, S. H., & Liang, Y. (2010). Using virtual communities in tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 31(3), 335-340. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.03.012>
- Jamal, T., & Hollinshead, K. (2001). Tourism and the forbidden zone: The underserved power of qualitative inquiry. *Tourism Management*, 22, 63-82.
- Jamal, T., Smith, B., & Watson, E. (2008). Ranking, rating and scoring of tourism journals: Interdisciplinary challenges and innovations. *Tourism Management*, 29(1), 66-78. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.04.001>
- Janta, H., Lugosi, P., Brown, L., & Ladkin, A. (2012). Migrant networks, language learning and tourism employment. *Tourism Management*, 33(2), 431-439. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.05.004>
- Kim, H., & Stepchenkova, S. (2015). Effect of tourist photographs on attitudes towards destination: Manifest and latent content. *Tourism Management*, 49(0), 29-41. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.02.004>
- Kim, W. G., Lee, C., & Hiemstra, S. J. (2004). Effects of an online virtual community on customer loyalty and travel product purchases. *Tourism Management*, 25(3), 343-355. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(03\)00142-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00142-0)
- Koll, O., von Wallpach, S., & Kreuzer, M. (2010). Multi-method research on consumer-brand associations: Comparing free associations, storytelling, and collages. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(6), 584-602.
- Kotus, J., Rzeszewski, M., & Ewertowski, W. (2015). Tourists in the spatial structures of a big Polish city: Development of an uncontrolled patchwork or concentric spheres? *Tourism Management*, 50(0), 98-110. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.01.007>
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1), 61-72.
- Lee, K.-H., & Hyun, S. S. (2015). A model of behavioral intentions to follow online travel advice based on social and emotional loneliness scales in the context of online travel communities: The moderating role of emotional expressivity. *Tourism Management*, 48(0), 426-438. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.12.012>
- Lee, W., & Gretzel, U. (2012). Designing persuasive destination websites: A mental imagery processing perspective. *Tourism Management*, 33(5), 1270-1280. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.10.012>
- Li, G., Law, R., Vu, H. Q., Rong, J., & Zhao, X. (2015). Identifying emerging hotel preferences using Emerging Pattern Mining technique. *Tourism Management*, 46(0), 311-321. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.06.015>
- Liu, Z., & Park, S. (2015). What makes a useful online review? Implication for travel product websites. *Tourism Management*, 47(0), 140-151. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.020>
- Llodrà-Riera, I., Martínez-Ruiz, M. P., Jiménez-Zarco, A. I., & Izquierdo-Yusta, A. (2015). A multidimensional analysis of the information sources construct and its relevance for destination image formation. *Tourism Management*, 48(0), 319-328. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.11.012>

- Lo, I. S., & McKercher, B. (2015). Ideal image in process: Online tourist photography and impression management. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 52(0), 104-116. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.02.019>
- Lu, W., & Stepchenkova, S. (2012). Ecotourism experiences reported online: Classification of satisfaction attributes. *Tourism Management*, 33(3), 702-712. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.08.003>
- Luo, Q., & Zhong, D. (2015). Using social network analysis to explain communication characteristics of travel-related electronic word-of-mouth on social networking sites. *Tourism Management*, 46(0), 274-282. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.007>
- Lyu, S. O., & Hwang, J. (2015). Are the days of tourist information centers gone? Effects of the ubiquitous information environment. *Tourism Management*, 48(0), 54-63. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.11.001>
- MacKay, K. J., & Couldwell, C. M. (2004). Using visitor-employed photography to investigate destination image. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(May), 390-396.
- Macpherson, H. (2010). Non-representational approaches to body-landscape relations. *Geography Compass*, 4(1), 1-13.
- Madge, C. (2007). Developing a geographers' agenda for online research ethics. *Progress in human geography*, 31(5), 654-674.
- Magnini, V. P., Crotts, J. C., & Zehrer, A. (2011). Understanding customer delight: An application of travel blog analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(5), 535-545. doi: 10.1177/0047287510379162
- Månsson, M. (2011). Mediatized tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1634-1652. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.02.008>
- Mistilis, N., Buhalis, D., & Gretzel, U. (2014). Future eDestination marketing: Perspective of an Australian tourism stakeholder Nnetwork. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(6), 778-790. doi: 10.1177/0047287514522874
- Mkono, M. (2013). African and Western tourists: Object authenticity quest? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41(0), 195-214. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.002>
- Moylan, C. A., Derr, A. S., & Lindhorst, T. (2015). Increasingly mobile: How new technologies can enhance qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 14(1), 36-47.
- Munar, A. M., & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2014). Motivations for sharing tourism experiences through social media. *Tourism Management*, 43(0), 46-54. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.01.012>
- Murphy, H. C., & Chen, M.-M. (2014). Online information sources used in hotel bookings: Examining relevance and recall. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287514559033
- Nieto, J., Hernández-Maestro, R. M., & Muñoz-Gallego, P. A. (2014). Marketing decisions, customer reviews, and business performance: The use of the Toprural website by Spanish rural lodging establishments. *Tourism Management*, 45(0), 115-123. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.03.009>
- Önder, I., Koerbitz, W., & Hubmann-Haidvogel, A. (2014). Tracing tourists by their digital footprints: The case of Austria. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287514563985
- Orellana, D., Bregt, A. K., Ligtenberg, A., & Wachowicz, M. (2012). Exploring visitor movement patterns in natural recreational areas. *Tourism Management*, 33(3), 672-682. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.07.010>

- Osman, H., Johns, N., & Lugosi, P. (2014). Commercial hospitality in destination experiences: McDonald's and tourists' consumption of space. *Tourism Management*, 42(0), 238-247. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.12.009>
- Pan, B., MacLaurin, T., & Crotts, J. C. (2007). Travel blogs and the implications for destination marketing. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(1), 35-45. doi: 10.1177/0047287507302378
- Papathanassis, A., & Knolle, F. (2011). Exploring the adoption and processing of online holiday reviews: A grounded theory approach. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 215-224. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.12.005>
- Paris, C. M. (2012). FLASHPACKERS: An Emerging Sub-Culture? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 1094-1115. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.12.001>
- Park, S., & Nicolau, J. L. (2015). Asymmetric effects of online consumer reviews. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 50(0), 67-83. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.10.007>
- Phillips, P., Zigan, K., Santos Silva, M. M., & Schegg, R. (2015). The interactive effects of online reviews on the determinants of Swiss hotel performance: A neural network analysis. *Tourism Management*, 50(0), 130-141. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.01.028>
- Prebensen, N. K. (2007). Exploring tourists' images of a distant destination. *Tourism Management*, 28, 747-756.
- Qu, H., & Lee, H. (2011). Travelers' social identification and membership behaviors in online travel community. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1262-1270. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.12.002>
- Rageh, A., Melewar, T. C., & Woodside, A. (2013). Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(2), 126-149.
- Robinson, M., & Picard, D. (2009). Moments, magic and memories: Photographing tourists, tourist photographs and making worlds. In M. Robinson & D. Picard (Eds.), *The framed world: Tourism, tourists and photography*. Surrey, England: Ashgate.
- Rogers, E. M. (2010). *Diffusion of innovations*. Simon and Schuster.
- Sarkar, A., Ponnampalath, A., & Murthy, B. K. (2012). Understanding and measuring romantic brand love. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 11(4), 325-348.
- Saunders, M. N. K. (2012). Choosing Research Participants. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 35-52). London: SAGE.
- Schroeder, A., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2014). The role of social media in international tourist's decision making. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287514528284
- Shakeela, A., & Weaver, D. (2012). Resident reactions to a tourism incident: Mapping a Maldivian Emoscape. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), 1337-1358. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.01.007>
- Shakeela, A., & Weaver, D. (2014). The exploratory social-mediated gaze: Reactions of virtual tourists to an inflammatory YouTube incident. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287514532369
- Shoval, N., & Isaacson, M. (2007). Tracking tourists in the digital age. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1), 141-159. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2006.07.007>
- Shoval, N., McKercher, B., Ng, E., & Birenboim, A. (2011). Hotel location and tourist activity in cities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1594-1612. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.02.007>

- Small, J., & Harris, C. (2014). Crying babies on planes: Aeromobility and parenting. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 48(0), 27-41. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.04.009>
- Smith, W. W., Xiang, L., Pan, B., Witte, M., & Doherty, S. T. (2015). Tracking destination image across the trip experience with smartphone technology. *Tourism Management*, 48, 113-122.
- Snapchat. (2012). Let's chat. Retrieved from: <http://snapchat-blog.com/post/22756675666/lets-chat>.
- Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1310-1323. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.12.011>
- Sparks, B. A., Perkins, H. E., & Buckley, R. (2013). Online travel reviews as persuasive communication: The effects of content type, source, and certification logos on consumer behavior. *Tourism Management*, 39(0), 1-9. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.03.007>
- Stepchenkova, S., Kim, H., & Kirilenko, A. (2014). Cultural differences in pictorial destination images: Russia through the camera lenses of American and Korean tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287514535849
- Stepchenkova, S., & Zhan, F. (2013). Visual destination images of Peru: Comparative content analysis of DMO and user-generated photography. *Tourism Management*, 36(0), 590-601. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.08.006>
- Stienmetz, J. L., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2015). Estimating value in Baltimore, Maryland: An attractions network analysis. *Tourism Management*, 50(0), 238-252. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.01.031>
- Sturdy, A. (2003). Knowing the unknowable? A discussion of methodological and theoretical issues in emotion research and organizational studies. *Organization*, 10(1), 81-105.
- Swanson, K. (2015). Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 8(2), 142-146.
- Tavakoli, R., & Mura, P. (2015). 'Journeys in Second Life' – Iranian Muslim women's behaviour in virtual tourist destinations. *Tourism Management*, 46(0), 398-407. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.015>
- Tchetchik, A., Fleischer, A., & Shoal, N. (2009). Segmentation of visitors to a heritage site using high-resolution time-space data. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48(2), 216-229. doi: 10.1177/0047287509332307
- Thrift, N. (1996). *Spatial Formations*. London: Sage.
- Tseng, C., Wu, B., Morrison, A. M., Zhang, J., & Chen, Y.-c. (2015). Travel blogs on China as a destination image formation agent: A qualitative analysis using Leximancer. *Tourism Management*, 46(0), 347-358. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.012>
- Varley, P., & Medway, D. (2011). Ecosophy and tourism: Rethinking a mountain resort. *Tourism Management*, 32, 902-911.
- Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: Extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(1), 157-178.
- Vermeulen, I. E., & Seegers, D. (2009). Tried and tested: The impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration. *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 123-127. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.04.008>

- Vu, H. Q., Li, G., Law, R., & Ye, B. H. (2015). Exploring the travel behaviors of inbound tourists to Hong Kong using geotagged photos. *Tourism Management*, 46(0), 222-232. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.003>
- Walther, J. B. (2002). Research ethics in Internet-enabled research: Human subjects issues and methodological myopia. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 4(3), 205-216.
- Wang, Y., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2004a). Modeling participation in an online travel community. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(3), 261-270. doi: 10.1177/0047287503258824
- Wang, Y., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2004b). Towards understanding members' general participation in and active contribution to an online travel community. *Tourism Management*, 25(6), 709-722. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2003.09.011>
- Wolf, I. D., Hagenloh, G., & Croft, D. B. (2012). Visitor monitoring along roads and hiking trails: How to determine usage levels in tourist sites. *Tourism Management*, 33(1), 16-28. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.01.019>
- Woodside, A. G., Cruickshank, B. F., & Dehuang, N. (2007). Stories visitors tell about Italian cities as destination icons. *Tourism Management*, 28, 162-174.
- World Tourism Organization. (2007). Understanding tourism: Basic glossary Retrieved December 22, 2012, from <http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>
- Wu, M.-Y., & Pearce, P. L. (2014a). Appraising netnography: Towards insights about new markets in the digital tourist era. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(5), 463-474.
- Wu, M.-Y., & Pearce, P. L. (2014b). Chinese recreational vehicle users in Australia: A netnographic study of tourist motivation. *Tourism Management*, 43(0), 22-35. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.01.010>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research design and methods. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Series Eds.), *Applied social research methods series*, Vol. 5. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>

Chapter 4

Publication #3

I love this place! Tourists' destination brand love

I Love This Place! Tourists' Destination Brand Love

Kathryn Swanson, Dominic Medway, and Gary Warnaby

Introduction

How can those charged with managing a destination brand facilitate an experience that results in an avid fan who returns and promotes the destination passionately to his or her friends? This chapter explores the possibility that one answer is in the concept of brand love. It first sets the contexts by briefly examining the idea of brand love in relation to destinations. Second, through the reporting of a study based in three tourism destinations in the USA, the chapter demonstrates how brand love is manifest for destination products amongst tourists. Finally, the chapter develops a brand love model for destinations, arguably relevant for both academia and practice.

Setting the context: Brand love and places

Over the past couple of decades, scholars and practitioners alike have studied relationship marketing and how companies can use this to build brand loyalty among their customers, thereby improving company performance and the bottom line (Fournier & Avery, 2011). In this context, the notion of “brand love” has emerged in the disciplines of consumer psychology and marketing, and can be defined as, “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 81). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), who introduced the brand love concept, argue that when satisfied consumers feel greater brand love in relation to a product, they are more loyal (in terms of repurchasing commitment) and are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth. Several studies have followed Carroll & Ahuvia’s work, the majority also focusing on consumer products (Albert, Dwight, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2011; Bauer, Heinrich, & Martin, 2007; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012, p. 3) indicate that in their study, 100% of participants claimed to “love” or “sort-of-love” at least one brand, and conclude that the brand love concept includes: self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviours and positive overall attitude valence towards the brand; positive emotional connection and long-term relationships with the brand; and attitude certainty and confidence (or strength) drawn from the brand, mirrored by anticipated separation distress at the thought of being denied it. Additionally, they identify that a belief in quality is an antecedent to brand love, and resistance to negative information is an additional brand love outcome (Batra et al., 2012).

From a marketing practitioner perspective, love for brands has received attention through the idea of *lovemarks* (Pawle & Cooper, 2006; Roberts, 2005, 2006). Lovemarks, it is suggested, are “the brands, events, and experiences that people love,” and their consumers are “loyal beyond reason” (Roberts, 2006, p. 15). Depending on the particular consumer product category, those exhibiting such lovemarks are reportedly between 1.6 and 2.3 times more likely to be bought than products of other brands (Pawle & Cooper, 2006).

While there is a small amount of brand love research that includes service industries (Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky, & Bechara, 2012), or that focuses on services alone (Tsai, 2011), such research remains limited. This gap in the literature would include place brands, and specifically in relation to tourist places, or destinations. Notwithstanding this, Ahuvia (1992) found that places in general, and cities in particular, are entities that some

people claim to love in a “real” or “true” form and not just in a loose sense of the term. Moreover, in a study on tourists’ emotions, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) found that tourists can (and do) use “love” to represent their emotional experiences with a destination, and report that repeat visitors record higher scores of love for such places than those going for the first time.

In a related literature stream, place *attachment* is defined as “the bonding of people to places” (Manzo, 2003, p. 47). Attachment has been shown to have positive business outcomes for tourism, such as intention to revisit a destination and actual revisitation, as well as intention to recommend a destination (Swanson, 2015). While relevant to the research presented in this chapter, recent literature on tourism destinations indicates that emotions and attachment are related but distinct constructs (Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Causevic, & Odeh, 2014).

Investigating the problem

Three tourism destinations, all major cities in the USA, were studied: Orlando, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Las Vegas, Nevada. All three enjoy a substantial proportion of repeat visitors yet are distinct in their geographic locations and the main activities in which their tourists engage. Table 1 summarizes key characteristics of these destinations. (INSERT TABLE 1 HERE)

Data pertaining to the subject of destination brand love were collected from tourists between October 2012 and January 2014 in respect of the three study cities. This involved a variety of methodological techniques, including semi-structured tourist interviews, volunteer-employed tourist photography, and tourist collage creation.

Tourist Interviews

Participants were required to have been a tourist to “their” destination for a non-business main purpose, and they needed to agree that they “love” that destination. The World Tourism Organization definition of “tourist” (World Tourism Organization, 2007) was used for eligibility screening purposes. Six to seven interviewees per destination engaged in the research, constituting 20 participants in total. Ages ranged from 23 to 86, and all were residents of the United States. Interviews were conducted in person or via Skype and followed a semi-structured format, lasting 45 to 75 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim before being subjected to template analysis (King, 2012).

Tourist Photos

For purposes of triangulation, the tourists interviewed were each asked to participate in a volunteer-employed photography (VEP) (Garrod, 2008) activity during the next trip to “their” destination. It has been suggested that emotions can be difficult to express in words, and asking participants to produce an image provides a “different way in” when investigating a research question and also engages the brain differently (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p. 178). Participants were asked to send to the researcher, during or after the next trip to their “loved” destination, photos they felt encapsulated and demonstrated this love. They were also asked to provide a brief written commentary with each photo, regarding the main subject of the photo and reason they took it. Individuals who did not travel to the destination during the timeframe of the research were asked to substitute

photos from one or more previous trips. A content analysis approach was taken (Vince & Warren, 2012) for the photographs. To ensure that the researcher did not interpret the subject of a photo incorrectly (MacKay & Couldwell, 2004), the written commentaries were used to help inform the photo categories.

Tourist Collages

Again for purposes of triangulation and to address the potential difficulty in expressing emotions solely by verbal means, a third data collection technique, collage creation, was used. This approach has been used in brand (Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010) and tourism (Prebensen, 2007) research alike, and results suggest that collages can tap into knowledge in different ways than primarily verbal techniques. Further, the technique appears to be effective at revealing information about consumer-brand bonds and relationships (Koll et al., 2010). New associations often can be formed through cognitive processes that are activated during the course of rearranging collage components, and collages are unique in their flexibility in allowing participants to express themselves both visually and verbally (Koll et al., 2010). Additionally, the technique is most effective with experiential brands, such as tourism and destination brands, as opposed to common household products, etc. (Koll et al., 2010).

All participants were asked to create, either in a group setting with others from “their” destination or individually, a collage that demonstrated and encapsulated their love for the relevant tourist destination. They were provided with magazines and basic collage materials and told to feel free to include personal photos from previous trips if they desired. They were asked to also identify in writing on the back of the collage each image used and state why they chose it. Collages were retained, and, as with the photos, the images within were subject to content analysis (Vince & Warren, 2012). Additionally, themes were identified from the words on the collages and the written narratives accompanying them.

Toward an understanding of brand love for tourist destinations

Tourist Interviews

Thirteen primary themes relating to destination brand love were identified. These can be grouped into four areas: antecedents, relational issues, experiential issues and outcomes.

Antecedents

Antecedents represents the first of 13 identified themes relating to destination brand love in its own right. It includes a variety of “basics” of a quality tourist destination. While the specific items mentioned varied among the three destinations, in general, participants articulated these basics in terms of a wide variety of activities in which to engage, local people who make their visits special (service personnel and/or local family and friends), favourable weather, and easy logistics.

Relational issues

Relational issues incorporates four of the 13 themes relating to destination brand love; namely, family and friends, destination brand community, relationship to home, and self-brand integration.

Family and friends

The family and friends theme was common and encapsulated participants' opportunities to connect with family and friends in the tourism destinations. The specific application of this theme was quite different for each destination, however. For Orlando, the theme had more to do with a form of place attachment, resulting from bonding with loved ones in one's travel party. One participant referred several times to opportunities to connect with her grandchildren and nostalgic feelings about Orlando vacations:

“ . . . I'm lucky that I get to go with my grandkids, because it is – it's magical and . . . when I do think of Orlando, I do think of fun times and lots of memories with my husband... The first time I went there after Donny [her husband] died, it was kind of bittersweet going on my favourite ride... because, as we came out, Donny was always sitting opposite, and you just kind of expected to see him there... ”

For Minneapolis, discussions centred mostly on opportunities to connect with loved ones who live in Minneapolis as opposed to bonding with members of one's travel party. One participant stated, *“Love the city and love being there and love what it represents to me. Just, you know, family...”* For Las Vegas, comments dealt less with bonding with children and more with others such as friends, one's spouse, extended family, and even service personnel. For example, when discussing bartenders, one participant said, *“It's like you have a long-lost cousin...”* and another commented, *“ . . . I got buddies of mine that I went to high school with that... I talk to less than my bartender in Las Vegas...”*

Destination brand community

The theme of destination brand community encompassed a desire to bring new people (visitors/tourists) to a destination as important. For Orlando, this was often expressed in participants recruiting and encouraging others to go to Orlando, being sought out as experts, and sometimes engaging in interactions with others via social media. One participant discussed encouraging others to go to the Walt Disney World Marathon: *“ . . . asking others to go, say, 'Hey, yeah, go. You know, it's the happiest place on earth, you gotta go' ... Yeah, I encourage others to go...”* For Minneapolis, participants alluded to a feeling of an instant connection with others who enjoy visiting the destination and a tendency to speak fondly of and recommend it to others. A participant told a story about meeting a couple while she was at work, and how the couple were going to go to Minneapolis: *“ . . . so that was just kind of fun. It was almost like when they left it was almost like we felt like we knew each other.”* With Las Vegas, encouraging others to go, and “evangelizing” the destination was common, as was a strong sense of community with other visitors and service personnel while physically there. Comments included:

“I tell everyone, 'Let's go! Come on! It's so fun!' ... I promote it to people... 'Oh, my gosh, if you haven't been there, you've gotta go.’” and

“... if you've got somebody fun that you're sitting next to [at a betting table] that you don't know, you can really build up a nice fun relationship... so we're high fiving...”

Relationship to home

Relationship to home was also a common theme among participants. For Orlando, many seemed to have a desire for difference from home, yet simultaneously want an experience that was comfortable, relatively familiar, and where they knew what to expect. Thus, one participant stated that she enjoys being away in Orlando because it is different and unique

from home, but also strongly indicated that the feeling of being at home within this destination was equally important: “... *I think that’s what, you know, the home-like quality of it was what made me start to care about it, returning home in some way...*” In the case of Minneapolis, participants also indicated that one of the characteristics of this destination that they love is that they are able to feel at home there. Some had lived there previously, and others had relatives living there. Comments included:

“... probably one of the only places I can say that about, where, except for getting right off the plane, I feel right at home and I feel fine and my normal self the whole time I’m there,” and

“I don’t feel... anxiety because I don’t know the area... it’s very relaxing to me because I just know where I am.”

At the same time, participants frequently discussed how different Minneapolis is from their homes, and that they enjoy engaging in activities there that they cannot experience at home. For Las Vegas, in large part, participants desired difference from home when visiting the destination and often cited its uniqueness. Comments such as, “*It’s just different than here*” were common. At the same time, they did mention feeling comfortable and at home.

Self-brand integration

Self-brand integration was also an identifiable theme. It was common for participants to make comments suggesting that the destinations had become part of their lives (indicating an attachment to the place in addition to their professed love), and they often kept up their connection with the destinations whilst away. The ways in which this was expressed was quite varied by destination, however. For Orlando participants this occurred through badging (Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009), in terms of wearing and displaying purchases from their trips, looking at their photos of Orlando, as well as having frequent thoughts about the destination. Minneapolis participants expressed that the destination was a part of them to the extent that some did not even feel like tourists there, and many indicated thinking about Minneapolis frequently, keeping connections while away through family members who are residents, and buying and wearing “authentic” merchandise from the area. For Las Vegas, certain participants talked of their feelings of connection to the destination in physical terms such as cold sweats, sweaty palms, getting it in one’s “system” or blood, and getting a “twitch” or craving to go there. Some also discussed the importance of their membership of the loyalty clubs of the city’s casino companies (“*You live for the tier*”), which, in turn, facilitate the maintenance of connections with Las Vegas through direct marketing materials. Participants also discussed decorating their homes with items that remind them of Las Vegas.

Experiential issues

Experiential issues incorporates a further five of the 13 identified themes relating to destination brand love; namely, senses, mystery, agelessness, escape, and feelings whilst there.

Senses

Participants often associated one or more sensory experiences to the destinations. For Orlando, one participant reflected, “*I always get a kick... as soon as [I] get there; open up the windows, you... get... that humid smell.*” For Minneapolis, sensory stimulation often

centred around the outdoors and different seasons, such as the smell of evergreen trees, the sight of snow or lakes, the feeling of fresh breeze, etc. One participant commented on the sensory stimulation of the winter season, “... *just the crisp, cold air, snow, just being, you know, always cold. Your nose is always red... it’s cold but warm and cozy at the same time.*” Others mentioned gustatory sense, such as the taste of Thanksgiving food when on vacation in Minneapolis. This theme was especially strong among Las Vegas participants who reported that their senses are intensely stimulated while there (e.g., the visual feast of lights on The Strip and the sounds of casinos and slot machines). One participant remembered his first visit in terms of near sensory overload, “*I couldn’t keep my eyes focused on one thing... everything caught my eye.*” Even participants’ speech patterns reflected the extent of the sensory stimulation they experience while in Las Vegas, with some speaking more quickly and distractedly as if imagining the visual and auditory experience of being there.

Mystery

The theme of mystery appeared for all three destinations, but in quite distinct ways. For Orlando, it was often expressed with reference to the destination’s Disney associations and the feelings of fantasy and intrigue these engender in the tourist experience. For Minneapolis, mystery was evident in the form of surprise and delight at discovering new areas and activities in which to engage. Participants indicated that they had experienced pleasant surprises in the past upon discovering an area they had not visited before or for a long time. For Las Vegas, mystery was evident in participants’ sense of not fully knowing what one will encounter on a trip to the destination and, where gambling is concerned, what one could win or lose. Indeed this uncertainty was cited as part of the destination’s appeal. Participants indicated being surprised in the past by a show, people watching, gambling winnings, special treatment from service personnel, etc. There was also a sense of intrigue about the mafia history of the place and an overall awe at the beauty of the lights and visual spectacle.

Agelessness

A theme of agelessness also emerged. Participants indicated that people of any age can like Orlando and Minneapolis, and that they can enjoyably return at different stages of life. However, it was suggested that Orlando inculcated feelings of youthfulness “... *it’s a place to be like a child*” in individuals and visitors of any age, with the Disney connection being critical in this. Minneapolis was identified as a destination in which one could feel comfortable with the age one was, because there was always something to do for all age groups. Put otherwise, agelessness for Orlando appeared to be about making you feel different about the age you are (specifically more youthful). By contrast, agelessness for Minneapolis was about a destination that engendered comfortable feelings at any age. Las Vegas participants unanimously agreed that adults of all ages can enjoy this destination, with comments such as, “*There’s something for everyone.*” However, there were mixed opinions on whether Las Vegas is appropriate for children.

Escape

Participants identified that part of their fondness for destinations is an ability to escape whilst there, although this was expressed slightly differently for each destination. For Orlando, escape is about doing what you want, being whom you want, and feeling relaxed and free. Thus, one participant explained that Orlando is a destination she can “*escape to*” and “*forget about the real world.*” In Minneapolis, escape was identified in terms of being free from normal daily schedules and routines. It was also expressed as escape to a

memory of a previous time in a participant's life: "... when we lived there we... had places that we associated good times with... and then when I come back... we go see certain places." In Las Vegas, participants felt they could escape troubles and be fully in the moment. A participant commented, "... it's one of the few places that I actually go where... I don't think about work when I'm there... I'm not checking my e-mails, I'm not checking phone calls." In such instances, participants noted that feelings of escape in Las Vegas were further facilitated by the fact that "no one there judges you because there's always somebody more crazy than you... and you don't have to take it home with you."

Feelings whilst there

Orlando participants expressed a feeling of happiness and that they have fun whilst there. As one participant mentioned, "... everybody's pretty happy... so it's kind of tough not to have a good time." For Minneapolis, participants also expressed feeling happy and relaxed in the destination, but some also mentioned periodic bittersweet moments related to, for example, someone close who has passed away who they think of when in Minneapolis, a yearning to move to the destination, or Minneapolis reminding them of a period of life that was challenging: "... I didn't care for my high school years so much, so any time I'm in those kinds of areas... that would be bittersweet." Las Vegas interviewees indicated extreme feelings of happiness when in the destination (e.g., "euphoric"), and also nervous tension (e.g., "jittery"). Feelings of being carefree, wild, and even decadence were alluded to. As one participant put it: "We're living the life there" and "It's all about being spoiled..."

Outcomes

Outcomes incorporates the final three of the 13 themes relating to destination brand love; namely, anticipation/avoidance of separation distress, resistance to negative information, and positive attitude and certainty of that attitude.

Anticipation/avoidance of separation distress

For Orlando, it was common for participants to indicate that they are sad to leave the destination at the end of a trip, and several seemed to actively avoid such separation distress by means such as thinking about when they will next return, or even having a theme park pass with unused days as a tangible signal that return is inevitable. In one instance, actual separation distress as equated with a physiological as well as psychological state was expressed: "Every year I get that itch; I get that feeling, and I'll be darned if we go down again." Minneapolis respondents sometimes expressed feelings of sadness upon leaving Minneapolis and saying "Good-bye" to family members yet also avoided separation distress by telling themselves that they will return and that it will be nice to leave the cold weather behind. One participant reflected that leaving the destination makes her feel, "Sad... always that sense that I wish I could've done a little more, spent a little more time with people." Las Vegas participants, by contrast, were unanimous in their sentiment that they are ready to leave at the end of a trip because of its intensity and the feeling of being "worn out." However, they too shield themselves from separation distress by thinking about returning, and in many cases through their ongoing membership of casino loyalty programs. One issue common to all three destinations was participants' sentiment of devastation at the thought of a natural disaster destroying the destination in question. Comments included, "It would be like the death of a friend" and "I would be heartbroken."

Resistance to negative information

Participants indicated that they were somewhat resistant to negative information about Orlando, suggesting that they even had counter responses to defend the destination and its brand image in the face of any potential criticism: “... *I’ve heard people say... ‘Well... we don’t have kids or anything so what would we do?’ And Michael and I can both... rattle off a whole list of things.*” Similarly, for Minneapolis, participants’ resistance to negative information was reflected in a tendency to dismiss the negative perceptions of others, attributing these to a lack of knowledge about, or experience with, the city. As one participant explained: “*I would just think, ‘They just don’t know any better,’ and haven’t had the opportunity to really, you know, experience Minneapolis and some of the wonderful things it can offer.*” For Las Vegas, participants were also quick to dismiss others’ negative perceptions of the city and would not let those opinions influence their own feelings about the destination, with one stating: “*It’s too bad [if] you don’t know how to have fun.*”

Positive attitude and certainty of that attitude

Participants for all three destinations had strong, positive attitudes about the places and were confident in those attitudes and in their desires and plans to return. As one Orlando participant commented, “*We’ll keep going every year... that’s for sure.*” For Minneapolis, some participants indicated their positive attitudes toward the destination were heightened upon moving away and returning as a tourist: “*I think I had to move away before I realized how much I really did like it and love it.*” For Las Vegas, positive attitudes toward the place were often explained by participants using the language of addiction, e.g., “*getting cravings to go.*”

Integrative themes

Two additional integrative themes or “undercurrents” running through participants’ accounts (King, 2012, p. 432) that cut across the 13 primary themes identified above were: i) a recognition of difference between place/destination brands at different spatial scales, yet a periodic blurring of those distinctions as well; and ii) an ability to love more than one destination visited as a tourist.

It was clear from participants’ responses that they understood the differences among place/destination brands at different spatial scales. However, particularly in the cases of Orlando and Minneapolis, there also appeared to be a blurring of such brands at times. For Orlando, this occurred mostly with the brands of Disney and Florida, and for Minneapolis most frequently with Minnesota. To a moderate extent, this also occurred with Las Vegas and some of the major casino resort companies such as Harrah’s and MGM. Additionally, many participants indicated that they are able to (and do) love more than one tourism destination brand. Thus, while participants had strong feelings of love for “their” destination and were faithful to it in many ways, tourism destination brand relationships appear not to be an exclusive “marriage” (Fournier, 1998, p. 362). Rather, participants indicated loving different destinations for different reasons and to satisfy different needs. One participant commented that she loves more than one destination and that they each “... *have a different place in my heart.*”

Tourist Photos

Photos collected from participants from all three destinations shed additional light on the findings from the interviews and, moreover, provided new insights. For Orlando, 79 photos were collected from the seven participants. Fifty-one photos were collected from

the six Minneapolis participants, and 44 photos were received from five of the seven Las Vegas participants (two did not travel to Las Vegas during the research period and also did not have old photos).

Standout findings from the Orlando photos include the fact that the prominence of the Disney brand was stronger in the photos than in the interviews. While several participants indicated in interviews that they enjoy aspects of Orlando outside of Walt Disney World, they chose to capture their love for the destination visually almost exclusively through locations at the Walt Disney World resort. Another observation is that approximately two-thirds of the photos were taken outdoors, furthering the importance of weather as a basic antecedent of destination brand love.

The prominence of people stands out as well, and in particular, photos containing the participants themselves. This is interesting as participants were given instructions to return photographs that demonstrate and encapsulate their love for Orlando. Possibly, participants love who they are or who they become when they are in this destination. Indeed, one participant mentioned that Orlando, “*brings out the best in people.*” Additionally, showing oneself in the destination may indicate a level of place attachment in addition to love. Furthermore, many photos contain one or more family members of the participant. This confirms the importance of the family and friends theme in participants’ love of Orlando. Photos of family members in the destination seem to indicate a link between love for family and love for the destination. When experiences are shared there, the destination becomes special. Photos of fictional characters also stand out, emphasising the theme of mystery. Items photographed were both “real” (e.g., live animals or flowers) and fantasy (e.g., Disney World’s Cinderella Castle or Audio-Animatronic® animals), and there thus seems to be a simultaneous appreciation for both the natural and the man-made in relation to destinations.

Of note in Minneapolis participants’ photos is the prominence of people. Family members were more prominent in these photos than in those of Orlando participants, and in particular local family members being visited (Minneapolis residents). Such photos are typically composed within these residents’ homes, usually with the visiting participant in the photo too. Also of note are images captured outdoors featuring the changing seasons and nature activities. Such photos emphasise a sense of visiting participants feeling connected to Minneapolis, through family and/or the countryside.

Of particular note in Las Vegas participants’ photos is The Strip. Many such photos incorporate an iconic structure, such as a building, attraction, or fountain. This resonates with interview findings that participants enjoy the visual spectacle of Las Vegas and “gawking” at the lights, buildings, etc. It also explains why at least half the photos were taken outdoors. In contrast to the Orlando and Minneapolis cases, only a handful of photos contained images of family. This may be representative of a wider diversity of trips taken by participants to Las Vegas which might not necessarily include other family members or relatives. There were also relatively few photos of the participants in the Las Vegas case, perhaps emphasising a “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” mentality in relation to the destination. Some photos relating to staying up late also appeared, as did luxury-related images.

Tourist Collages

The collage-producing process afforded participants an opportunity to reflect on their relationships with the destinations in a different way, and they often provided confirmatory insights into themes identified in interviews and the VEP exercise.

For Orlando participants, the outdoors, people, fictional characters, nature/animals, and iconic buildings/attractions/structures were all categories of images included in the collages produced, although outdoors and people were most prominent. This selection of images was more diverse than those seen in the VEP. Others have similarly found that collages tend to reveal a wide variety of themes for discussion (Koll et al., 2010). Findings from the interview and VEP components of the research were broadly supported in the content of Orlando-related collages, especially in the liberal inclusion of images of the participants and of fictional characters. One participant, who had indicated in his interview that Disney was important in his love for Orlando, cut out an image of the Mickey Mouse icon and wrote on the back of his collage, “*All of the fun revolves around Mickey.*” This deepened the insight from the interviews regarding Orlando participants’ affinity for Disney and fictional characters. Additionally, most Orlando participants chose to cut out words to include in their collages. These typically related to the themes of Walt Disney World or activities done there, as well as weather, family and nostalgia, relationship to home, mystery, agelessness, positive attitude, escape, and feelings while there.

For Minneapolis, as with the VEP exercise, people and the outdoors stand out as prominent categories of images in the collages, along with images relating to dining and restaurants, art, buildings and the Minneapolis skyline, and special events. Shopping-related images also appeared in the collages, a category not present in the photos. Two participants included an image related to sports, and two a university-related image. As with Orlando, collage image categories were slightly more diverse for Minneapolis than had been captured with the VEP exercise. Broadly, however, findings from the photo component of the research are supported and confirmed through similar content of the collages including the liberal inclusion of images of family and of both summer and winter outdoor activities. Some Minneapolis participants also cut out words for their collages. These identified specific locations visited, as well as themes of family and dining out.

As with the VEP exercise, images of outdoors stand out as prominent in the collages for Las Vegas – in particular, those of iconic structures, buildings, attractions, and fountains. Many images used are at night and feature bright lights. Also echoing findings from the VEP exercise is the fact that Las Vegas participants’ collages feature a relative lack of images of the participant and/or their family or friends. Findings from the VEP component of the research are also supported through similar content of the collages regarding many of the types of activities in which participants engage whilst in Las Vegas and the visual spectacle and “gawking” opportunities they like. Additionally, participants chose to cut out words to include in their collages. Some of these identified specific locations visited, and others related more to participants’ feelings and experience of being in the destination.

Discussion and Conclusion

An Initial Model of Destination Brand Love

When put together, the themes from the tourist interviews, photos, and collages undertaken in this research tell a story of how and why tourists may develop a level of destination brand love. Figure 1 depicts an initial model of destination brand love, incorporating the 13 themes outlined above, that emerge from the data. (INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE)

As evident in Figure 1, the tourist is central to the formation of his or her brand love in relation to a destination. The basics of a quality tourism destination aid in facilitating the relational and experiential themes. The visitor interacts with the basics (represented by a two-way arrow) and this is key to the co-creation of value and the resulting experiential and relational themes. (These experiential and relational themes are further developed when the tourist is not even at the destination. For example, some individuals are consistently reminded of their relationship with the destination while at home through items they have purchased whilst there, direct marketing activities of destination-related/located loyalty clubs, etc.) The development of the experiential and relational themes leads to the tourist's formation of love for the destination and results in the outcome themes.

Types of Destination Brand Love

The data reveal that while high-level themes for the formation of destination brand love are consistent across diverse destinations, these themes are nuanced and expressed quite distinctly for each destination. For example, unsurprisingly as participants were tourists, the theme of "escape" emerged for all three destinations, but the meaning of that theme and the type of escape experienced by the tourists was different for each place. Furthermore, the love that tourists feel for a destination is not exclusionary. They can love more than one destination and do not feel like they are "cheating on" one destination by visiting another. They love destinations for different reasons and have room in their hearts to love more than one.

Data from this research indicate that tourists get different benefits out of relationships with different destinations, and this leads to the identification of different types of destination brand love. Each researched destination is an example of a different type of destination brand love, and these types are related to three different Greek words for "love:" philia, storge, and eros:

- 1) **Philia** is a friendship type of love that is freely chosen and includes deep respect, give and take, and virtue. Destination brand love for Orlando could be an example of this type of love. Visitors to Orlando tend to freely choose to have a relationship with the destination as opposed to having a necessarily familial connection. Those who love it have a strong sense of familiarity and comfort with the destination and an appreciation of the experience it affords.
- 2) **Storge** is an affection type of love that often occurs among family members and is thus a more "natural" love. It also represents putting up with situations and resiliency against negatives. Destination brand love for Minneapolis may be an example of this. Many tourists to Minneapolis have a relationship with the destination for reasons beyond their control (e.g., being born there, having family who live there). There seems to be a natural type of affection for Minneapolis

among such participants and an acceptance of, and continuing love for, even the negative aspects of the destination.

3) **Eros** is a passionate and romantic type of love that can be associated with a “Love at first sight,” a lack of logic and potentially “lust.” Destination brand love for Las Vegas is perhaps the nearest example of this. Visitors to Las Vegas allude to being instantly “hooked” on the destination and falling in love instantly. They also express a sense of awe about the city, especially (like an obsessed lover) during the first few visits. Visits tend to be intense and filled with indulgence, and for that reason, must be kept short in duration (participants say they cannot go for more than a few days at a time).

The elements of brand love identified in academic literature including self-brand integration; passion-driven behaviours; positive emotional connection; long-term relationship; positive overall attitude valence; attitude certainty and confidence; and anticipated separation distress (Batra et al., 2012) all appear to varying degrees in our research into love for Orlando, Minneapolis and Las Vegas; as does the brand love antecedent of quality and the brand love consequences of resistance to negative information, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Batra et al., 2012). While this brand love conceptualization is a useful starting point to understand tourists’ love for destinations, the data indicate that it does not suffice for places due to their complexity, their specificity, and the fundamental nature of places. A place is a “meaningful location” or a “site of history and identity” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 5), whereas place brands are “socially constructed meaning systems” (Warnaby & Medway, 2013, p. 348). The main facets of place are materiality and tangibility; realm of meaning; and place as practice, performance, or lived experience (Cresswell & Hoskins, 2008). In other words, places have a real physical presence, they have meaning to people, and they are consistently being experienced and created.

There is debate regarding whether a place can in fact be branded at all (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012), and the data raise a fundamental question to be further explored in future research: Given the subtle difference between a place and its brand, is the love tourists talk about actually for the destination itself or for the destination brand, or is it a combination of these? Does “destination brand love” even exist? The data indicate that the answers to these questions may vary by destination and that, in some cases, tourists may have more of a love for the destination itself, whereas in other cases, there may be a combination of love for the destination and its brand. This latter scenario was most evident in the case of Las Vegas, where several participants seemed to have a clear notion and love of the brand positioning of the destination, such as the “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas” campaign, and what that means for their expected and accepted behaviour as tourists. Minneapolis participants, however, had more of a love for the destination itself and not much recognition of the official brand of Minneapolis or its “City by Nature” slogan. It is apparent that for Minneapolis, destination love is real but destination brand love does not yet exist. Orlando is farther along than Minneapolis but not as far as Las Vegas in terms of developing destination brand love. Participants did not explicitly mention a connection to the official brand of the destination or its “Orlando Makes Me Smile” slogan but did have connections to brands that are integral parts of the larger Orlando destination brand, such as Disney and Universal.

Given the potentially different types of destination brand love discussed above and the varying benefits visitors gain from relationships with multiple destinations, perhaps academics and practitioners have been too quick to lump places together and systematically apply certain place marketing techniques to all. While there are broad themes across destinations regarding destination brand love, these themes are quite nuanced in that they take on different forms for each destination. Thus, one could conclude that destinations are fundamentally different from one another and should be treated as such. One way to accomplish this would be to view each destination in terms of which type of destination brand love is felt (or could be, if destination brand love does not yet exist for a given destination) among its most loyal tourists. Destinations could use this knowledge to more effectively build life-long relationships with tourists and meet tourism goals. For example, future research could potentially reveal that tourists with one type of destination brand love may be more likely to take certain actions than those with another type of destination brand love, and this could be important in creating marketing efforts. In the related research stream of place attachment, data reveal that there are different types of place attachment, and residents with a stronger attachment to the natural aspects of a place are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviours, but this relationship does not exist for those with more of a civic or social-related attachment to the place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). It may be that differences such as this exist for destination brand love as well which could be important for destination marketers' effectiveness.

Furthermore, practitioners could consider the potential impact of the fostering of destination brand love among their tourists on the brand equity (Keller, 1993) of their destinations. Favourable brand equity outcomes, such as repeat sales (Chaudhuri, 1999), were evident among participants (some had visited 50-100 times or more), and the findings of this research point toward a possible link between destination brand love and place brand equity. Through future research, this link could be further explored to contribute to the practice of destination marketing.

References

- Ahuvia, A. C. (1992). For the love of money: Materialism and product love. In F. W. Rudmin & M. L. Richins (Eds.), *Meaning, measure, and morality of materialism* (pp. 188-198). Provo, UT: The Association for Consumer Research.
- Albert, N., Dwight, M., & Valette-Florence, P. (2008). When consumers love their brands: Exploring the concept and its dimensions. *Journal of Business Research*, *61*, 1062-1075.
- Amujo, O. C., & Otubanjo, O. (2012). Leveraging rebranding of 'unattractive' nation brands to stimulate post-disaster tourism. *Tourist Studies*, *12*(1), 87-105.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2011). Brand love. [Article Postprint]. *Journal of Marketing*, 1-70.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2012). Brand love. *Journal of Marketing*, *76*(March), 1-16.
- Bauer, H. H., Heinrich, D., & Martin, I. (2007). *How to create high emotional consumer-brand relationships? The causalities of brand passion*. Paper presented at the ANZMAC, Dunedin.
- Bergkvist, L., & Bech-Larsen, T. (2010). Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love. *Journal of Brand Management*, *17*(7), 504-518.
- Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, *17*(2), 79-89.
- Chaudhuri, A. (1999). Does brand loyalty mediate brand equity outcomes? *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *7*(2), 136-146.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). Place: A Short Introduction Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Cresswell, T., & Hoskins, G. (2008). Place, persistence, and practice: Evaluating historical significance at Angel Island, San Francisco, and Maxwell Street, Chicago. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *98*(2), 392-413.
- Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *24*(4), 343-353.
- Fournier, S., & Avery, J. (2011). Putting the 'relationship' back into CRM. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, *52*(3), 63-72.
- Garrod, B. (2008). Exploring place perception: A photo-based analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *35*(2), 381-401.
- GLS Research. (2011). Las Vegas visitor profile study 2011. San Francisco, CA.
- Guillemin, M., & Drew, S. (2010). Questions of process in participant-generated visual methodologies. *Visual Studies*, *25*(2), 175-188.
- Hanstad, K. (2012). 2011 Minneapolis-St. Paul visitor count and profile. Minneapolis, MN: Meet Minneapolis Convention & Visitors Association.
- Hosany, S., & Gilbert, D. (2010). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, *49*(4), 513-526.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Causevic, S., & Odeh, K. (2014). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences: Further validation of the Destination Emotion Scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1-14.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, *57*(1), 1-22.
- King, N. (2012). Doing Template Analysis. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 426-450). London: SAGE.

- Koll, O., von Wallpach, S., & Kreuzer, M. (2010). Multi-method research on consumer-brand associations: Comparing free associations, storytelling, and collages. *Psychology & Marketing, 27*(6), 584-602.
- Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Research Department. (2012). Vegas FAQs Retrieved March 8, 2013, from <http://www.lvcva.com/stats-and-facts/visitor-statistics/>
- MacKay, K. J., & Couldwell, C. M. (2004). Using visitor-employed photography to investigate destination image. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*(May), 390-396.
- Manzo, L. C. (2003). Beyond house and haven: Toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 23*, 47-61.
- Pawle, J., & Cooper, P. (2006). Measuring emotion - Lovemarks, the future beyond brands. *Journal of Advertising Research, 46*(1), 38-48.
- Prebensen, N. K. (2007). Exploring tourists' images of a distant destination. *Tourism Management, 28*, 747-756.
- Reimann, M., Castaño, R., Zaichkowsky, J., & Bechara, A. (2012). How we relate to brands: Psychological and neurophysiological insights into consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 22*, 128-142.
- Roberts, K. (2005). *lovemarks: the future beyond brands*. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Roberts, K. (2006). *the lovemarks effect: winning in the consumer revolution*. Brooklyn: powerHouse Books.
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). The relations between natural and civic place attachment and pro-environmental behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(3), 289-297. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.01.010>
- Schau, H. J., Muñiz, A. M., Jr., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). How brand community practices create value. *Journal of Marketing, 73*(September), 30-51.
- Swanson, K. (2015). Place brand love and marketing to place consumers as tourists. *Journal of Place Management and Development, 8*(2), 142-146.
- Tsai, S. (2011). Strategic relationship management and service brand marketing. *European Journal of Marketing, 45*(7/8), 1194-1213.
- Vince, R., & Warren, S. (2012). Participatory Visual Methods. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 275-295). London: SAGE.
- Visit Orlando. (2011). *Orlando 2011 Domestic Leisure Visitor Profile*. Market Research and Insights. Visit Orlando. Orlando, FL.
- Visit Orlando. (2012). Orlando becomes first destination to top 55 million visitors Retrieved December 22, 2012, from <http://media.visitorlando.com/pressrelease/index.cfm/2012/6/5/Orlando-Becomes-1st-Destination-to-Top-55-Million-Visitors/>
- Warnaby, G., & Medway, D. (2013). What about the 'place' in place marketing? *Marketing Theory, 13*(3), 345-363.
- World Tourism Organization. (2007). Understanding tourism: Basic glossary Retrieved December 22, 2012, from <http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>

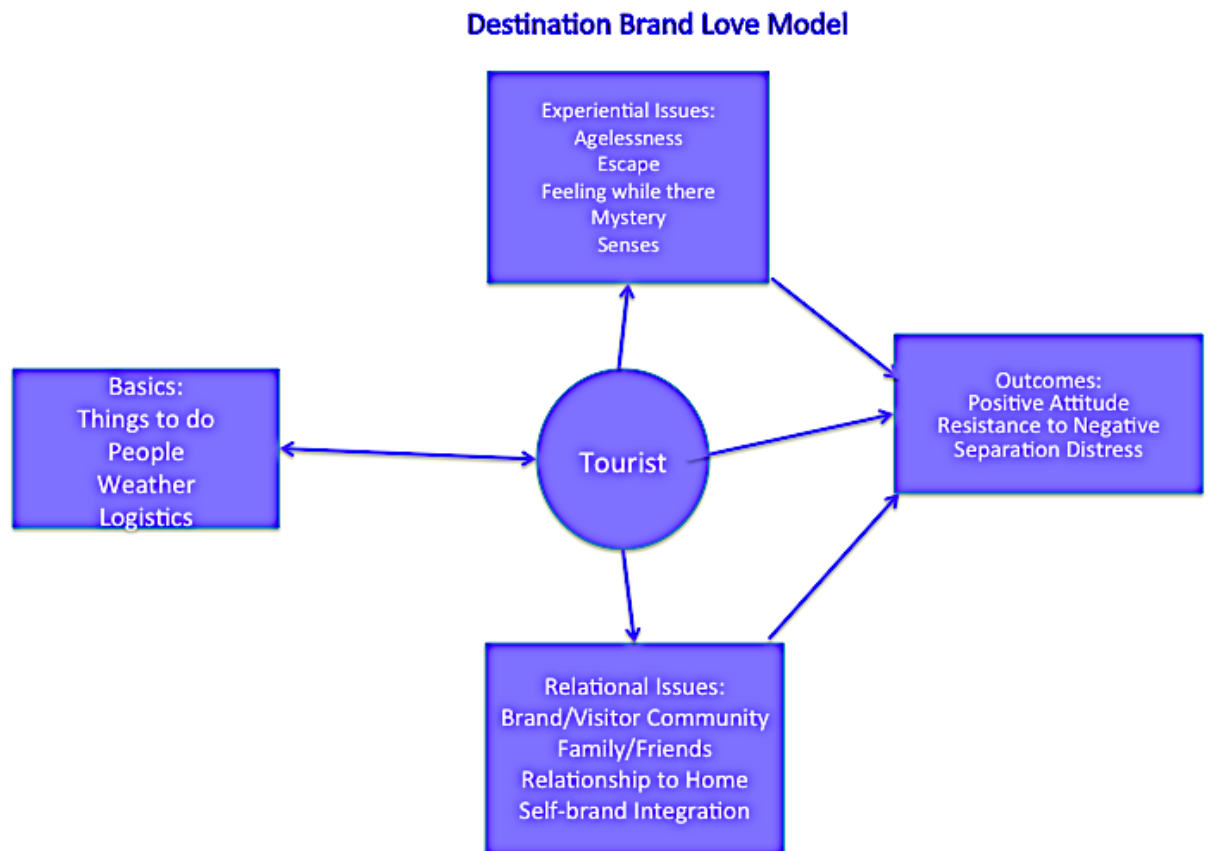
Table 1

Comparison of Chosen Destinations

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Annual visitors (mil)</u>	<u>% Repeat</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Distinctive activities</u>
Orlando	55	70	Southeast	Theme parks
Las Vegas	39	84	Southwest	Gambling, entertainment
Minneapolis	27	73	Midwest	Family/friends, shopping, sports

Note: Data compiled from D. Courtenay (personal communication, January 23, 2013); GLS Research (2011); Hanstad (2012); Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Research Department (2012); Visit Orlando (2011, 2012).

Figure 1. Destination Brand Love Model.



Chapter 5: Conclusion

The three publications included in Chapters 2-4 of this thesis comprise its theoretical and applied contributions to knowledge. This chapter begins with a restatement of the objectives of the thesis and an explanation of how those were met. Following this, the chapter moves to a synthesis of findings. Next, explanations of the work's contribution to theory and to practice are provided. Finally, limitations and directions for future research are stated.

5.1. Meeting of Objectives

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore the concept of brand love within the context of places as tourism destinations. Three main objectives emerged from this aim:

- 1) To examine the utility of the concept of brand love within the context of tourism destinations
- 2) To examine how brand love is manifest among tourists in a variety of different tourism destination products
- 3) To develop, and analyse the implications of, a conceptualization of brand love within the context of tourism destinations, from both practical and academic perspectives.

Additionally, a fourth objective (and outcome) emerged as a consequence of the research process:

- 4) To examine the potential for data collection from virtual platforms, or put more simply, “virtual data,” in tourism research

The first objective was met through the research study conducted for this thesis as reported in a preliminary form in Publication #1 and more fully in Publication #3. In Publication #1, the initial potential relevance of the brand love concept in a tourism destination context is reported. In Publication #3, a more in-depth discussion of the utility

of the concept is provided arising from an analysis of the data that constituted the main empirical contribution to this thesis. Here, it is reported that the brand love concept is a useful starting point, yet insufficient to fully capture the complex relationships tourists have with destinations and their associated brands. More detail on the utility of the concept of brand love in a tourism destination context is provided in this concluding chapter.

The second objective was met through the methodological decision of studying three different tourism destinations as reported in Table 1.1 in the Introduction chapter of this thesis. As reported in more detail below, a key finding of the research is an identification of different types of destination brand love.

The third objective was met through the development of a Destination Brand Love model (see Figure 5.1), as well as the identification of different types of destination brand love. These are reported in Publication #3 and discussed below.

Finally, the fourth objective was met through: a meta-analysis of relevant literature on virtual data collection in tourism; a thematic deconstruction and critical appraisal of virtual data collection in tourism based on the research conducted for this thesis, participant feedback on the methodology, and researcher reflections on the methodology; and a discussion on the future possibilities for virtual data collection in tourism research. These are reported in Publication #2 and discussed below.

More detail on the specific outcomes related to the objectives is provided in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

5.2. Synthesis of Findings

In this section, a summary of the findings from each of the three publications will be provided followed by a discussion of the sum of these findings.

In Publication #1, brand love was identified, through an overview of relevant

literature, as an established aspect of branding more generally that has not been explored in the context of places. This research identified 13 primary themes through which participants articulated their love in respect of the destinations under study. These can be grouped into four categories: *antecedents*, *relational themes* (involving relationships between others, oneself and the destination), *experiential themes* (relating to the experience of being at the destination) and *outcomes*. The preliminary results reported in this publication indicate that the brand love concept may be useful for both tourism academics and practitioners to investigate further.

In Publication #2, a summary of approaches to virtual data collection in tourism research is provided from a meta-analysis of relevant literature in top tourism academic journals, and three main categories of data are identified: *pre-existing* (i.e., relying on information that is publicly available through the Internet at the point at which the research process begins); *real-time occurring* (i.e., data that continues to emerge from virtual sources as it is studied); and *solicited* (by tourism researchers). Some studies mix these categories and use more than one type of data. Five main reasons for using virtual data collection (as cited in the articles used for the meta-analysis) are: *volume/diversity*; *access*; *efficiency*; *budget*; and *research question*. Among the 65 articles used for the meta-analysis, the most common reasons cited for using virtual data relate to practical matters such as efficiency, ease of access, and budget constraints. Less frequently mentioned are any benefits that virtual data collection may have over other approaches such as potential enhanced ability to capture a tourist's experience. This latter finding lays the foundation for the rest of Publication #2 in that it hints at a potential for virtual data collection to serve a wider purpose than is often recognised in tourism research.

The publication subsequently offers a thematic deconstruction and critical appraisal of virtual data collection in tourism research, based on the empirical research

conducted for this thesis, participant feedback on the methodology, and researcher reflections on the methodology. Findings are based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model for consumers (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012). Findings are organized according to the constructs that can affect acceptance of technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, and experience and habit (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

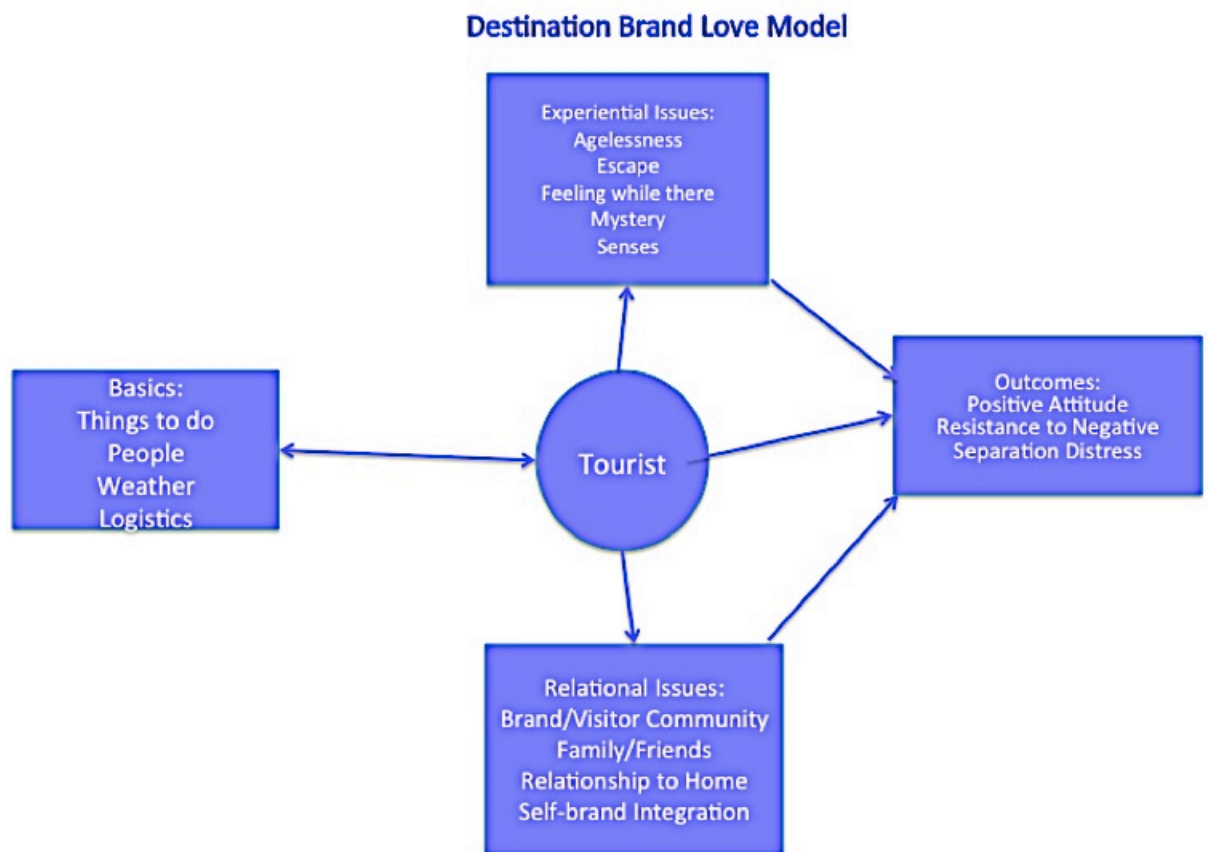
A discussion of findings is provided in Publication #2 in the context of a broader discussion on the future possibilities for virtual data collection in tourism research. It is suggested that it may be beneficial for tourism researchers to consider virtual data collection in terms of the methodological challenges it helps resolve, whilst at the same time being cognisant of the paradoxical tensions (such as spatial dispersion, temporal issues, hermeneutics, and ethical challenges) it creates. Virtual data collection may be able to better capture the tourist experience, particularly within the realm of embodiment, but may also impact upon that embodied experience.

In Publication #3, the 13 themes through which participants articulated their love, as briefly discussed in Publication #1, are unpacked further. Specifically, the *antecedents* category consists of several “basics” of a quality tourism destination, such as a variety of activities in which to engage and favourable weather. The *relational issues* category includes family and friends (e.g., participants’ opportunities to connect with family and friends in the tourism destinations); destination brand community (e.g., a desire to bring new visitors/tourists to a destination); relationship to home (e.g., a desire for difference from and/or similarity to home); and self-brand integration (e.g., indicating the brand had become part of their lives and displaying an attachment to the place in addition to love). *Experiential issues* included senses (e.g., associating one or more sensory experiences to

the destination); mystery (such as fantasy, surprise, or uncertainty associated with a tourist destination); agelessness (being able to enjoy the destinations at different ages); escape (an ability to escape whilst at the destinations); and feelings whilst there (such as feeling happy, bittersweet, etc.). *Outcomes* include anticipation/avoidance of separation distress (e.g., feeling sad upon leaving a destination and/or participants shielding themselves from feeling such separation distress); resistance to negative information (e.g., being resistant to negative comments or opinions about a destination); and positive attitude and certainty of that attitude (e.g., participants having strong, positive attitudes about tourist destinations and being confident in their desires and plans to return.)

The 13 themes are drawn together into a model of destination brand love (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Destination Brand Love Model.



As demonstrated in Figure 5.1, the tourist is central to the formation of his or her brand love in relation to a destination. The basics of a quality tourism destination aid in facilitating the relational and experiential themes. The tourist interacts with the basics (represented by a two-way arrow), and this is key to the co-creation of value and the resulting experiential and relational themes. These experiential and relational themes are further developed when the tourist is not even at the destination. For example, some individuals are consistently reminded of their relationship with the destination while at home through items they have purchased whilst there, or through the direct marketing activities of loyalty clubs linked to the destination in question. The development of the experiential and relational themes leads to the tourist's formation of love for the destination and results in the outcome themes.

In Publication #3, it is discussed that while high-level themes for the formation of destination brand love are consistent across diverse destinations, these themes are nuanced and expressed quite distinctly for each destination. Furthermore, the love that tourists feel for a destination is not exclusive or exclusionary. In other words, tourists can love more than one place and do not feel like they are “cheating on” one destination by visiting another. They love destinations for different reasons and have room in their hearts to love more than one.

Data from this research indicate that tourists get different benefits out of relationships with different destinations, and this leads to the identification of different types of destination brand love. Each researched destination is an example of a different type of destination brand love, and these types are related to three different Greek words for “love:” *philia*, *storge*, and *eros*:

- 1) **Philia** is a friendship type of love that is freely chosen and includes deep

respect, give and take, and virtue. Destination brand love for Orlando could be an example of this type of love. Tourists to Orlando, in particular, tend to freely choose to have a relationship with the destination as opposed to having a necessarily familial connection. Those who love it have a strong sense of familiarity and comfort with the destination and an appreciation of the experience it affords.

2) **Storge** is an affection type of love that often occurs among family members and is thus a more “natural” love. It also represents putting up with situations and resiliency against negatives. Destination brand love for Minneapolis may be an example of this. As tourists to Minneapolis, many participants have a relationship with the destination for reasons beyond their control (e.g., being born there, having family who live there). There seems to be an unquestioned affection for Minneapolis among such participants and an acceptance of, and continuing love for, even the negative aspects of the destination.

3) **Eros** is a passionate and romantic type of love that can be associated with a “love at first sight,” a lack of logic and potentially “lust.” Destination brand love for Las Vegas is perhaps the closest example of this. Visitors to Las Vegas allude to being instantly “hooked” on the destination and falling in love instantly. They also express a sense of awe about the city, especially (like an obsessed lover) during the first few visits. Visits tend to be intense and filled with indulgence, and for that reason, must be kept short in duration. Indeed, participants say they cannot go for more than a few days at a time.

Upon discussing these different types of love, Publication #3 returns to the question discussed in the introduction to this thesis, regarding whether a tourist loves the destination, the destination brand, or a combination of the two. The data indicate that the answers to these questions may vary by destination and that, in some cases, tourists may have more of a love for the destination itself, whereas in other instances, there may be a combination of love for the destination and its brand. This latter scenario was most evident in the case of Las Vegas, where several participants seemed to have a clear notion and love of the brand positioning of the destination, such as the “*What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas*” campaign, and what this means for their expected and accepted behaviour as tourists. However, it is apparent that for Minneapolis, destination love is real but destination brand love does not yet exist. Orlando is farther along than Minneapolis but not as far as Las Vegas in terms of developing destination brand love.

In drawing together all of the above findings, there is added value when considering the thesis as a whole. One potential contribution is in the area of psychological wellbeing. In 2014, 42% of Americans took no vacation days (Weingus, 2015), and stress is an oft-cited ailment affecting the workforce – in fact, the World Health Organization estimates that stress costs US businesses \$300 billion per year (Huffington, 2014). In this environment, numerous studies have been conducted which consider tourism and wellbeing (Chen, Petrick, & Shahvali, 2016). As reported in a literature review by Chen and Petrick (2013), research indicates that taking vacations can have positive impacts on people’s psychological wellbeing, happiness, stress reduction, life satisfaction, and other related constructs. It has even been suggested that a person’s happiness is often closely tied to his or her environment and that who a person is able to be is strongly related to where she or he is (de Botton, 2006).

On the flip side of this, however, is that a person's sadness also can be tied to his or her environment (de Botton, 2006). Additionally, sometimes tourists experience a "vacation sickness" and do not feel well in psychological or mental terms during their holidays; this potentially could be related to an inability to separate themselves from their work (Chen & Petrick, 2013, p. 717). Similarly, some find that their vacations to a new destination are not all that they hoped and dreamed they would be, which may relate to the inability of a person to escape oneself (de Botton, 2002). Upon describing a trip that was less perfect than he had imagined, de Botton (2002, pp. 19-21) states, "*A momentous but until then overlooked fact was making itself apparent: I had inadvertently brought myself with me to the island... I was to discover an unexpected continuity between the melancholic self I had been at home and the person I was to be on the island...*"

The participants involved with the research for this thesis seem to have figured out some of these issues and found a destination they can visit repeatedly that brings them happiness and enriches their lives. Comments made by participants alluded to the destination bringing out the best in them and others, having feelings of extreme happiness or euphoria while there, feeling well immediately upon arriving and stepping off of the plane, and being able to detach from work, e-mail, etc. Thus, it appears that having a deep relationship with a destination to the point of loving it has benefitted these individuals in terms of their wellbeing. The research conducted for this thesis contributes an understanding of how and why these types of relationships develop, and also importantly, how these phenomena might be studied. Having an understanding not only of how and why tourists develop these types of loving relationships, but also how they might be studied, is important. Perhaps others, such as the 42% of Americans who did not use any vacation days in 2014 (Weingus, 2015), could benefit from an understanding of how love for a destination might enrich life, and perhaps attempt to foster similar types of

relationships. Indeed, Chen and Petrick (2013) provide a call for future research into how the findings that connect tourism and wellbeing could be used to persuade people to take vacations. Although a lofty goal, this ultimately could reduce people's stress and increase their happiness. This might benefit those organizations that employ such individuals, whilst also generating revenue for the tourism industry.

5.3. Contribution to Theory

The thesis has four main contributions to theory. The first is some level of agreement with the seminal brand love literature, in that the 13 place-specific themes identified in the thesis resonate with previously identified brand love components, antecedents, and outcomes. Thus, the thesis extends the concept of brand love into a new area, that of destination brands. However, the 13 themes identified in the thesis do not fully explain the complex relationships that the participants have with destinations and their brands.

This leads directly to the second theoretical contribution of the thesis, namely an identification of the different types of love the participants experience for destinations, namely *philia*, *storge* and *eros*.

A third contribution to theory is the development of a theoretical model of destination brand love, in terms of how and why it forms amongst tourists.

Finally, the thesis's fourth contribution to theory is methodological in nature, in terms of: a) Providing a meta-analysis of virtual data collection techniques used by tourism researchers within the subject's leading academic journals; b) demonstrating how virtual data collection techniques can be applied in qualitative methodological approaches to tourism; and c) offering a thematic deconstruction and critical appraisal of such

techniques in the context of a broader discussion on the future possibilities for virtual data collection in tourism research.

5.4. Contribution to Practice

As this thesis is submitted for a DBA, as opposed to a PhD, it is important to explore the practical applicability of the research findings to businesses, and in the case of this particular thesis, specifically to tourism businesses (and destination marketing agencies in particular). Thus, as discussed in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, key informant interviews were conducted to gain insight into the potential utility of the thesis's findings to tourism businesses. Two key informants per destination (one who worked for the local convention and visitor's bureau in an executive-level marketing position and one who served on the bureau's board of directors), for a total of six key informants, participated in the research. In this section, a summary of the insights gained from the key informant research will be provided, followed by a general discussion regarding the thesis's contribution to improved practice in destination branding and marketing.

5.4.1. Key Informant Research Insights. In the first phase of the key informant research, a relevant finding was that the brand love concept is not widely utilized, or even known, among those responsible for marketing the tourism destinations studied in this research. When asked at the beginning of their interviews whether they were familiar with the term "brand love," most key informants said they were not or provided a guess whilst asking for confirmation. Throughout their interviews, the key informants alluded to work their organizations do that they felt could have a potential connection to the brand love concept, and used terms such as "*engagement*," "*loyalty*," "*emotional connection*," "*emotional attachment*," "*word-of-mouth*," and "*brand advocacy*," and indicated an interest in exactly how brand love could be connected to these terms.

Upon discussion of the definition of “brand love,” some of the key informants indicated that they felt some individual companies with a significant presence in the researched destinations may be farther along the path toward utilizing the concept of brand love than the destinations are themselves. Specifically, tourists feel love for these companies within the context of the wider destination in which the companies are located. For example, a key informant for Orlando indicated that some of the large corporations with a presence there, such as Disney and Universal, seem to have a strong understanding of brand love amongst their consumers. A key informant for Minneapolis and one for Las Vegas talked about work that major hotel companies do that might be related to brand love amongst tourists as well. For destinations, however, it was clear that there is a gap, and potential opportunity given key informants’ level of interest, in the area of fostering brand love for tourism destination brands. As one key informant indicated: “... *I don’t think that a lot of destinations think of themselves as a brand. Some of them have that have been more progressive . . .*”

The key informants did feel strongly that tourists who visit their destinations have relationships with those places and feelings of love for them, even though the destination management organizations for which they worked or served as a board member have not conducted research on brand love specifically. The key informants often referenced their repeat visitor statistics to back up these assertions. As one informant put it: “... *the numbers tell us that just in how many repeat visitors we have...*”, “*They must love it, right?*” However, the level of complexity in tourists’ relationships with, and feelings of love for, destinations and their brands that this research has revealed demonstrate that repeat visitor statistics do not encapsulate the full story. Put otherwise, there is an opportunity for a deeper understanding of how and why tourists come to love a destination and its brand, and how this is manifested, both attitudinally and behaviourally. With this

more complete knowledge, marketers would be better prepared to foster and grow brand love among tourists to their destinations.

In the second phase of the key informant research, the three informants who read Publication #3 provided feedback that indicated a strong sentiment that the research would be useful to marketers of tourism destinations. One key informant stated that the CEO of her convention and visitors' bureau has asked several times whether it would be a good idea for the destination in question to create a loyalty program, but had not yet done this. In the key informant's feedback to the researcher, it was indicated that work in the brand love area could potentially provide the foundation necessary for a loyalty program linked to the destination to be successful. Equally, this key informant also indicated that she could envision destinations that were not included in the research benefitting from the findings. Marketers of a given destination could compare themselves to the types of destination brand love identified and work with an agency to determine which of those types of love is the closest current match to what tourists, visitors and indeed residents of the destination in question experience. This process might help identify whether there is a type of destination brand love to which a given destination should aspire in order to increase their tourism traffic and repeat visitation. The application of this is described in more detail below.

Other feedback included the value of the findings to a destination's messaging in marketing campaigns. For example, one key informant commented on the research finding that the theme of "escape" was present in all three destinations, but that it had a different meaning for each destination. Such nuances would most likely be missed without a deeper understanding of the relationships tourists build with destinations and this could result in quite ineffective marketing messages if marketers alluded to a form of "escape" not suited to the destination in question.

Another topic of discussion centred on the ideas that the research findings could foster in terms of ways to develop and grow destination brand love for a given destination. For example, one key informant mentioned that a growing trend for destinations is a focus on deep experiences. She stated that tourists tend to be more interested in experiencing a destination from a local resident's perspective as opposed to visiting only the Statue of Liberty in New York City, for example. If a destination has the destination brand love concept in mind as a goal, it could inspire ideas, such as packaging some of these deeper experiences, that could contribute to tourists' relationships with and feelings of love for that destination. Another key informant took this one step further and said that there has been discussion in hotel corporations about organizational purpose and a sense of "Conscious Capitalism." These corporations take their focus beyond the guest experience to a point of making a deeper connection with the guest on the basis of a shared concern for a higher purpose (e.g., environmental concerns). This key informant suggested that destination management organizations could apply the idea of organizational purpose to their respective destinations and that the research on destination brand love could be informative in this endeavour. Specifically, knowing how and why tourists have developed love for a destination and how they manifest that love could assist destination management organizations in developing a purpose that would connect guests to the destination on a deeper level through their experiences while there.

One key informant also reflected on the theme of resistance to negative information and stated that the application of this could be tested through the use of loyalty metrics, or Key Performance Indicators (KPI). For example, she said that her organization uses "Net Promoter Scores" (NPS) which measure consumers' likelihood of promoting a particular organization to others, and which are used by many companies as an indicator of a firm's growth (Keiningham, Cooil, Andreassen, & Aksoy, 2007). This

informant suggested a potential link between resistance to negative information and NPS in that perhaps those who are resistant to negatives are also more likely to promote a destination. If that is the case, that information would be useful in her organization's work to grow visitation to the destination.

In total, there was strong sentiment among the key informants that the thesis' findings would be relevant to tourism businesses, and especially destination management organizations. From a very practical perspective, they felt that the information could be disseminated via a presentation on the research findings at tourism/destination management and marketing conferences to make destination marketers aware of the study's findings, and to help them think about how these could be applied to the places for which they are responsible. In fact, I have presented preliminary results at two of the annual international conferences of the Travel and Tourism Research Association and one of the regional conferences of a chapter of that organization at which both academics and practitioners were in attendance. These conference papers served as precursors to the publications submitted as part of this thesis.

5.4.2. Toward Improved Practice in Destination Branding and Marketing. As described earlier, the more significant value to tourism businesses likely would come from a branding consultant working with individual tourism destination marketing organizations, such as a destination's official convention and visitors' bureau, to research what type(s) of love is/are prevalent among that destination's most loyal tourists. Alternatively, destination marketers who learn about the research findings through a conference presentation or research article could undertake this themselves. Specifically, the following steps could be taken:

1) Recruit participants who agree that they love that particular destination, and gather data from them using methodology similar to that implemented for this thesis.

2) Analyse the data according to the processes described in the Introduction chapter of this thesis.

3) Using the types of love described above for assistance, develop a conceptualization of the type(s) of love most prevalent for that destination. Consider whether the love that the tourist participants described was a love for the destination, a love for the destination brand, or a love for both.

4) With that information in mind, look at the model of destination brand love illustrated in Figure 5.1. Given that certain “basics” of a quality destination can help facilitate experiential and relational issues that can lead to favourable outcomes associated with destination brand love, conduct an inventory and assessment of the destination at hand using feedback from the tourist participants as well as local residents and business owners. During this process, question whether there are gaps in the basics that could be addressed. For example, perhaps a destination has many fun attractions that tourists enjoy, but these are spread out geographically from each other. Perhaps adding a complimentary transportation service would enhance the basics, which, in turn, could facilitate the development of experiential and/or relational issues. This could be especially effective if the transportation was unique to the destination (such as trolley cars in San Francisco).

5) Considering the type(s) of love most prevalent for the destination, question whether any enhancements could be made to the destination offerings to directly facilitate any of the experiential or relational issues. For example, a destination may have a philia type of love, and the theme of connecting with family and friends while there may emerge as important. If tourist participants indicate that capturing photos of their loved ones

enjoying themselves at the destination is important, destination managers could consider offering suggestions to tourists of places to capture photos via signage, brochures, etc. This could directly influence the development of relational themes.

6) With the type(s) of love for the particular destination in mind, consider how that enhanced insight into tourists' relationships with the destination could influence and enhance branding and marketing campaigns. For example, perhaps a small town at which tourists enjoy secluded, romantic getaways results in fostering an eros type of love among its loyal tourists. The destination branding efforts could reflect the passionate connection that tourists have to the destination, and marketing campaigns could involve packaging of destination offerings that could facilitate that passionate connection. This would require partnership among destination businesses to create a branded offering ideally more compelling than any one business could provide alone. A loyalty program could be created as well to feed into the eros love tendency to have strong desires to return.

7) Ultimately, the goal and benefit of all of this could be increased visitation (and thus money spent) at the destination. Several participants for the research conducted for this thesis had visited "their" destination many times, so the idea would be to grow these types of relationships in an effort to meet tourism visitation and revenue goals. Targets could be set for visitation (and particularly repeat visitation) and revenue generation and tracked to measure effectiveness. As a feeling of love for a destination and its brand can take time to develop and grow, destinations may find it beneficial to view their efforts with a long-term perspective and to estimate lifetime values of their current loyal tourists. Returning to the research problem articulated in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, destinations that succeed at facilitating destination brand love among their visitors likely could cut through competing offerings vying for the attention of their tourists. Tourists

who have developed feelings of love for destinations and their brands have made a decision to maintain those relationships. They plan to not only travel but to travel to that particular destination repeatedly, resulting in increased visitation and revenue generation.

5.5. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The research was limited in that just three destinations were studied, all of which were in the USA, and all participants were residents of the USA with similar ethnic backgrounds. Future research could explore the relevance of the proposed destination brand love model with destinations and participants from other parts of the world. An approach to testing the model in quantitative terms might provide a complement to, and expansion of, the current research. Researchers interested in this topic could also investigate whether there are additional types of destination brand love beyond the three identified in this research. For example, there is a fourth word for love in the Greek language, “agape,” which is spiritual, charitable, and selfless. This type did not appear in the data, but perhaps is present in different types of destinations such as those heavily involved with eco-tourism. Additionally, future research could adopt a longitudinal perspective and engage with participants at different points in their lives to determine whether destination brand love evolves over time.

Furthermore, the data from this research suggest a complex answer to the question posed in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, regarding whether the love tourists feel is for the destination, the destination brand, or a combination of these. As discussed in Publication #3, it appears that while the brand love conceptualization is a useful starting point to understand tourists’ love for destinations, the data indicate that it does not suffice for destinations due to their complexity, their specificity, and the fundamental nature of places. A place is a “meaningful location” or a “site of history and identity” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 5), whereas place brands are “socially constructed meaning systems” (Warnaby &

Medway, 2013, p. 348). The main facets of place are materiality and tangibility; realm of meaning; and place as practice, performance, or lived experience (Cresswell & Hoskins, 2008). In other words, places have a real physical presence, they have meaning to people, and they are consistently being experienced and created. Thus, given the subtle difference between a destination and its brand, does “destination brand love” even exist? The data indicate that this may vary by destination and that, in some cases, tourists may have more of a love for the destination itself, whereas in other cases, there may be a combination of love for the destination and its brand. This latter scenario was most evident in the case of Las Vegas, where several participants seemed to have a clear notion and love of the brand positioning of the destination, such as the “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas” campaign, and what that means for their expected and accepted behaviour as tourists. It may be that for many destinations with less developed brands, however, that destination love is real but destination brand love does not yet exist. Future research could further investigate this conundrum and whether destinations that do not yet have a strong level of destination brand love could have success fostering it using the findings from this research in combination with the findings of others.

Also, as discussed in Publication #3, future researchers could consider the potential impact of the fostering of destination brand love among destination tourists on the brand equity (Keller, 1993) of those destinations. Favourable brand equity outcomes, such as repeat sales (Chaudhuri, 1999), were evident among participants (some had visited 50-100 times or more), and the findings of this research point toward a possible link between destination brand love and destination brand equity. Through future research, this link could be further explored to contribute to both destination brand academic theory and the practice of destination marketing.

References for Chapters 1 and 5

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.
- Ahuvia, A. C. (1992). For the love of money: Materialism and product love. In F. W. Rudmin & M. L. Richins (Eds.), *Meaning, measure, and morality of materialism* (pp. 188-198). Provo, UT: The Association for Consumer Research.
- Albert, N., Dwight, M., & Valette-Florence, P. (2008). When consumers love their brands: Exploring the concept and its dimensions. *Journal of Business Research*, 61, 1062-1075.
- Amujo, O. C., & Otubanjo, O. (2012). Leveraging rebranding of 'unattractive' nation brands to stimulate post-disaster tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 12(1), 87-105.
- Anholt, S. (2009a). Branding places and nations. In R. Clifton (Ed.), *Brands and branding* (2nd ed., pp. 206-216). Hoboken, NJ: Bloomberg Press.
- Anholt, S. (2009b). Should place brands be simple? *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 00(0), 1-6.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2011). Brand love. [Article Postprint]. *Journal of Marketing*, 1-70.
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2012). Brand love. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(March), 1-16.
- Bauer, H. H., Heinrich, D., & Martin, I. (2007). *How to create high emotional consumer-brand relationships? The causalities of brand passion*. Paper presented at the ANZMAC, Dunedin.
- Belk, R. W., & Tumbat, G. (2005). The cult of Macintosh. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 8(3), 205-217.

- Bergkvist, L., & Bech-Larsen, T. (2010). Two studies of consequences and actionable antecedents of brand love. *Journal of Brand Management*, 17(7), 504-518.
- Blain, C., Levy, S. E., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2005). Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(May), 328-338.
- Brewis, J., & Jack, G. (2005). Pushing speed? The marketing of fast and convenience food. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 8(1), 49-67. doi: 10.1080/10253860500069026
- Brunt, P., & Courtney, P. (1999). Host perceptions of sociocultural impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(3), 493-515.
- Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 79-89.
- Carson, C. (2004). "Whole new worlds": Music and the Disney theme park experience. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 13(2), 228-235.
- Chacko, H. E., & Marcell, M. H. (2008). Repositioning a tourism destination. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 23(2-4), 223-235. doi: 10.1300/J073v23n02_17
- Chaudhuri, A. (1999). Does brand loyalty mediate brand equity outcomes? *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(2), 136-146.
- Chen, C., & Petrick, J. F. (2013). Health and wellness benefits of travel experiences: A literature review. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(6), 709-719.
- Chen, C., Petrick, J. F., & Shahvali, M. (2016). Tourism experiences as a stress reliever: Examining the effects of tourism recovery experiences on life satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(2), 150-160.
- Clancy, K. J. (2001). Save America's dying brands. *Marketing Management*, 10(3), 36-41.

- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A Short Introduction*. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Cresswell, T., & Hoskins, G. (2008). Place, persistence, and practice: Evaluating historical significance at Angel Island, San Francisco, and Maxwell Street, Chicago. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 98(2), 392-413.
- Curtin, S. (2009). Wildlife tourism: The intangible, psychological benefits of human-wildlife encounters. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 12(5-6), 451-474. doi: 10.1080/13683500903042857
- de Botton, A. (2002). *The art of travel*. New York: Vintage Books.
- de Botton, A. (2006). *The architecture of happiness*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- de Chernatony, L., & Riley, F. D. (1998). Defining a "brand": Beyond the literature with experts' interpretations. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 14(5), 417-443.
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20, 157-161.
- Desforges, L., & Maddern, J. (2004). Front doors to freedom, portal to the past: History at the Ellis Island immigration museum, New York. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(3), 437-457.
- Dick, A. S., & Basu, K. (1994). Customer loyalty: Toward an integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2), 99-113.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. R. (2008). *Management Research* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Edensor, T. (2000). Staging tourism: Tourists as performers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 322-344.
- Elliott, R., & Wattanasuwan, K. (1998). Brands as symbolic resources for the construction of identity. *International Journal of Advertising*, 17(2), 131-144.

- Fairley, S. (2003). In search of relived social experience: Group-based nostalgia sport tourism. *Journal of Sport Management, 17*, 284-304.
- Fan, Y. (2006). Branding the nation: What is being branded? *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 12*(1), 5-14.
- Fetscherin, M., & Conway Dato-on, M. (2012). Brand love: Investigating two alternative love relationships. In S. Fournier, M. Breazeale & M. Fetscherin (Eds.), *Consumer-brand relationships: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Forsberg, H., Medway, D., & Warnaby, G. (1999). Town centre management by co-operation: Evidence from Sweden. *Cities, 16*(5), 315-322.
- Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research, 24*(4), 343-353.
- Fournier, S., & Avery, J. (2011). Putting the 'relationship' back into CRM. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 52*(3), 63-72.
- Garrod, B. (2008). Exploring place perception: A photo-based analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(2), 381-401.
- Gartner, W. C., & Ruzzier, M. K. (2011). Tourism destination brand equity dimensions: Renewal versus repeat market. *Journal of Travel Research, 50*(5), 471-481.
- Gertner, D. (2011). Unfolding and configuring two decades of research and publications on place marketing and place branding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 7*, 91-106.
- GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. (2009). The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index Methodology and Quality Control for the 2009 NBI Study. New York: GfK.
- Gibson, C., & Davidson, D. (2004). Tamsworth, Australia's 'country music capital': Place marketing, rurality, and resident reactions. *Journal of Rural Studies, 20*, 387-404.
- GLS Research. (2011). Las Vegas visitor profile study 2011. San Francisco, CA.

- Gordon, W., & Langmaid, R. (1988). *Qualitative market research: A practitioner's and buyer's guide*. Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company Limited.
- Goulding, C. (2001). Romancing the past: Heritage visiting and the nostalgic consumer. *Psychology & Marketing, 18*(6), 565-592.
- Gross, M. J., & Brown, G. (2008). An empirical structural model of tourists and places: Progressing involvement and place attachment into tourism. *Tourism Management, 29*, 1141-1151.
- Guillemin, M., & Drew, S. (2010). Questions of process in participant-generated visual methodologies. *Visual Studies, 25*(2), 175-188.
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: Towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 10*(2), 109-121.
- Hankinson, G. (2015). Rethinking the place brand construct. In M. Kavaratzis, G. Warnaby & G. J. Ashworth (Eds.), *Rethinking place branding: Comprehensive brand development for cities and regions* (pp. 13-32). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Hanstad, K. (2012). 2011 Minneapolis-St.Paul visitor count and profile. Minneapolis, MN: Meet Minneapolis Convention & Visitors Association.
- Heidegger, M. (1971). Building dwelling thinking (A. Hofstadter, Trans.) *Poetry, language, thought*. New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Hernández, B., Hidalgo, M. C., Salazar-Laplace, M. E., & Hess, S. (2007). Place attachment and place identity in natives and non-natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 27*, 310-319.
- Herstein, R. (2011). Thin line between country, city, and region branding. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 18*(2), 147-155.
- Hidalgo, M. C., & Hernández, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 21*, 273-281.

- Hinch, T. (1998). Ecotourists and indigenous hosts: Diverging views on their relationship with nature. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1(1), 120-124.
- Hoeffler, S., & Keller, K. L. (2003). The marketing advantages of strong brands. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 10(6), 421-445. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540139
- Hogg, S., Medway, D., & Warnaby, G. (2004). Town centre management schemes in the UK: Marketing and performance indicators. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 9(4), 309-319.
- Holbrook, M. B., & Batra, R. (1987). Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer responses to advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(December), 404-420.
- Hosany, S., & Gilbert, D. (2010). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(4), 513-526.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., Deesilatham, S., Causevic, S., & Odeh, K. (2014). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences: Further validation of the Destination Emotion Scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1-14.
- Huffington, A. (2014). 40 percent of American workers will leave paid vacation days unused. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from Huffington Post website: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/paid-vacation-days_b_5693225.html
- Jacoby, J., & Kyner, D. B. (1973). Brand loyalty vs. repeat purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 10(1), 1-9.
- Jamrozy, U., & Walsh, J. A. (2008). Destination and place branding: A lost sense of place? In S. F. McCool & R. N. Moisey (Eds.), *Tourism, recreation and*

sustainability: Linking culture and the environment (2nd ed., pp. 131-141).

Cambridge, Ma: CAB International.

Kavaratzis, M. (2004). From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding*, 1(1), 58-73.

Kavaratzis, M. (2010). Is corporate branding relevant to places? In G. Ashworth & M. Kavaratzis (Eds.), *Towards effective place brand management: Branding European cities and regions* (pp. 36-48). Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.

Kavaratzis, M., & Ashworth, G. (2008). Place marketing: How did we get here and where are we going? *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 1(2), 150-165.

Kavaratzis, M., & Ashworth, G. J. (2005). City branding: An effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick? *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 96(5), 506-514.

Kavaratzis, M., & Hatch, M. J. (2013). The dynamics of place brands: An identity-based approach to place branding theory. *Marketing Theory*, 13(1), 69-86.

Keiningham, T. L., Cooil, B., Andreassen, T. W., & Aksoy, L. (2007). A longitudinal examination of Net Promoter and firm revenue growth. *Journal of Marketing*, 71(3), 39-51. doi: doi:10.1509/jmkg.71.3.39

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.

Keller, K. L. (2009). Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 15(2-3), 139-155. doi: 10.1080/13527260902757530

King, N. (2012). Doing Template Analysis. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 426-450). London: SAGE.

- Koll, O., von Wallpach, S., & Kreuzer, M. (2010). Multi-method research on consumer-brand associations: Comparing free associations, storytelling, and collages. *Psychology & Marketing, 27*(6), 584-602.
- Konecnik, M., & Gartner, W. C. (2007). Customer-based brand equity for a destination. *Annals of Tourism Research, 34*(2), 400-421.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., & Makens, J. C. (2006). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*(4/5), 249-261.
- Kumar, V., & Shah, D. (2004). Building and sustaining *profitable* customer loyalty for the 21st century. *Journal of Retailing, 80*, 317-330.
- Laros, F. J. M., & Steenkamp, J. E. M. (2005). Emotions in consumer behavior: A hierarchical approach. *Journal of Business Research, 58*, 1437-1445.
- Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Research Department. (2012). Vegas FAQs Retrieved March 8, 2013, from <http://www.lvcva.com/stats-and-facts/visitor-statistics/>
- Lee, C. C. (2001). Predicting tourist attachment to destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research, 28*(1), 229-232.
- Levy, S. E., & Hassay, D. N. (2005). Visitor communities. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, 12*(4), 57-72.
- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 31*, 207-230.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Lucarelli, A., & Berg, P. O. (2011). City branding: A state-of-the-art review of the research domain. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 4(1), 9-27.
- MacKay, K. J., & Couldwell, C. M. (2004). Using visitor-employed photography to investigate destination image. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(May), 390-396.
- Manzo, L. C. (2003). Beyond house and haven: Toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, 47-61.
- Mattila, A. S. (2006). How affective commitment boosts guest loyalty (and promotes frequent-guest programs). *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 47(2), 174-181.
- McAlexander, J. H., Schouten, J. W., & Koenig, H. F. (2002). Building brand community. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(January), 38-54.
- McKercher, B., & Guillet, B. D. (2011). Are tourists or markets destination loyal? *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(2), 121-132.
- Mechinda, P., Serirat, S., & Gulid, N. (2009). An examination of tourists' attitudinal and behavioral loyalty: Comparison between domestic and international tourists. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(2), 129-148.
- Medway, D., Swanson, K., Delpy-Neiorotti, L., Pasquinelli, C., & Zenker, S. (2015). Place branding: Are we wasting our time? Report of an AMA special session. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 8(1), 63-68.
- Medway, D., & Warnaby, G. (2008). Alternative perspectives on marketing and the place brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(5/6), 641-653.
- Medway, D., Warnaby, G., & Dharni, S. (2011). Demarketing places: Rationales and strategies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(1-2), 124-142.

- Michael, C., & Sedghi, A. (2014). The world cities with the most powerful brands - get the data. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from The Guardian website:
<http://www.theguardian.com>
- Mohammad, B. A. M. A., & Som, A. P. M. (2010). An analysis of push and pull travel motivations of foreign tourists to Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(12), 41-50.
- Moore, S. A., Rodger, K., & Taplin, R. (2013). Moving beyond visitor satisfaction to loyalty in nature-based tourism: A review and research agenda. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 18(7), 667-683.
- Morais, D. B., Kerstetter, D. L., & Yarnal, C. M. (2006). The love triangle: Loyal relationships among providers, customers, and their friends. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(May), 379-386.
- Mossberg, L. (2007). A marketing approach to the tourist experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 7(1), 59-74.
- Muñiz, A. M., Jr., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(March), 412-432.
- Muñiz, A. M., Jr., & Schau, H. J. (2005). Religiosity in the abandoned Apple Newton brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(March), 737-747.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *The Journal of Marketing*, 63(Special Issue), 33-44.
- Pawle, J., & Cooper, P. (2006). Measuring emotion - Lovemarks, the future beyond brands. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46(1), 38-48.
- Pearlman, D., & Melnik, O. (2008). Hurricane Katrina's effect on the perception of New Orleans leisure tourists. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25(1), 58-67. doi: 10.1080/10548400802164905

- Phillips, D. M., & Baumgartner, H. (2002). The role of consumption emotions in the satisfaction response. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 12*(3), 243-252.
- Prayag, G., & Ryan, C. (2010). The relationship between the 'push' and 'pull' factors of a tourist destination: The role of nationality – an analytical qualitative research approach. *Current Issues in Tourism, 14*(2), 121-143.
- Prayag, G., & Ryan, C. (2011). Antecedents of tourists' loyalty to Mauritius: The role and influence of destination image, place attachment, personal involvement, and satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research, 1*-15.
- Prebensen, N. K. (2007). Exploring tourists' images of a distant destination. *Tourism Management, 28*, 747-756.
- Reddy, W. M. (1997). Against constructionism: The historical ethnography of emotions. *Current Anthropology, 38*(3), 327-351.
- Reimann, M., Castaño, R., Zaichkowsky, J., & Bechara, A. (2012). How we relate to brands: Psychological and neurophysiological insights into consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 22*, 128-142.
- Roberts, K. (2005). *lovemarks: the future beyond brands*. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Roberts, K. (2006). *the lovemarks effect: winning in the consumer revolution*. Brooklyn: powerHouse Books.
- Rollero, C., & De Piccoli, N. (2010). Place attachment, identification and environment perception: An empirical study. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*, 198-205.
- Roy, S. K., Eshghi, A., & Sarkar, A. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of brand love. *Journal of Brand Management, 20*, 325-332.

- Rubinstein, R. L., & Parmelee, A. (1992). Attachment to place and the representation of the life course by the elderly. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 139-163). New York: Springer.
- Ryu, K., Bordelon, B. M., & Pearlman, D. M. (2013). Destination-image recovery process and visit intentions: Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22(2), 183-203. doi: 10.1080/19368623.2011.647264
- Saatchi & Saatchi. (2012). *Lovemarks*. Retrieved April 12, 2012, from <http://www.lovemarks.com/index.php?pageID=20015&additions=1&lmcategoryid=6>
- Salamone, D. (2006). *The role of time in place attachment*. Paper presented at the Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, Bolton Landing, NY.
- Sánchez-García, I., Pieters, R., Zeelenberg, M., & Bigné, E. (2012). When satisfied consumers do not return: Variety seeking's effect on short- and long-term intentions. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(1), 15-24.
- Sarkar, A., Ponnampalath, A., & Murthy, B. K. (2012). Understanding and measuring romantic brand love. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 11(4), 325-348.
- Saunders, M. N. K. (2012). Choosing Research Participants. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 35-52). London: SAGE.
- Schau, H. J., & Muñiz, A. M., Jr. (2002). Brand communities and personal identities: Negotiations in cyberspace. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 29, 344-349.
- Sherman, E., & Mathur, A. (1997). Store environment and consumer purchase behavior: Mediating role of consumer emotions. *Psychology & Marketing*, 14(4), 361-378.
- Smith, D. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2001). Socio-cultural representations of greentified Pennine rurality. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 17, 457-469.

- Stubbs, B., Warnaby, G., & Medway, D. (2002). Marketing at the public/private sector interface; town centre management schemes in the south of England. *Cities*, 19(5), 317-326.
- Sturdy, A. (2003). Knowing the unknowable? A discussion of methodological and theoretical issues in emotion research and organizational studies. *Organization*, 10(1), 81-105.
- The University of Manchester Research Office Graduate Education Team. (2014). Presentation of Theses Policy. Manchester, UK: The University of Manchester.
- Tsai, S. (2011). Strategic relationship management and service brand marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(7/8), 1194-1213.
- Tsai, S. (2012). Place attachment and tourism marketing: Investigating international tourists in Singapore. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14, 139-152.
- van den Berg, L., & Braun, E. (1999). Urban competitiveness, marketing, and the need for organising capacity. *Urban Studies*, 36(5-6), 987-999.
- Velázquez, B. M., Saura, I. G., & Molina, M. E. R. (2011). Conceptualizing and measuring loyalty: Towards a conceptual model of tourist loyalty antecedents. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 17(1), 65-81.
- Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: Extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(1), 157-178.
- Vidal González, M. (2008). Intangible heritage tourism and identity. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 807-810. doi:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.07.003>
- Vince, R., & Warren, S. (2012). Participatory Visual Methods. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative Organizational Research* (pp. 275-295). London: SAGE.

- Visit Orlando. (2011). *Orlando 2011 Domestic Leisure Visitor Profile*. Market Research and Insights. Visit Orlando. Orlando, FL.
- Visit Orlando. (2012). Orlando becomes first destination to top 55 million visitors Retrieved December 22, 2012, from <http://media.visitorlando.com/pressrelease/index.cfm/2012/6/5/Orlando-Becomes-1st-Destination-to-Top-55-Million-Visitors/>
- Warnaby, G. (2009). Towards a service-dominant place marketing logic. *Marketing Theory*, 9(4), 403-423.
- Warnaby, G., Bennison, D., Davies, B. J., & Hughes, H. (2002). Marketing UK towns and cities as shopping destinations. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 18(9-10), 877-904.
- Warnaby, G., Bennison, D., & Medway, D. (2011). Branding a Roman frontier in the twenty-first century. In A. Pike (Ed.), *Brands and branding geographies* (pp. 248-263). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Warnaby, G., & Davies, B. J. (1997). Commentary: Cities as service factories? Using the servuction system for marketing cities as shopping destinations. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 25(6), 204-210. doi: doi:10.1108/09590559710175953
- Warnaby, G., & Medway, D. (2013). What about the 'place' in place marketing? *Marketing Theory*, 13(3), 345-363.
- Warnaby, G., Medway, D., & Bennison, D. (2010). Notions of materiality and linearity: The challenges of marketing the Hadrian's Wall place 'product'. *Environment and Planning A*, 42, 1365-1382.
- Weingus, L. (2015). Way too many Americans took ZERO vacation days in 2014. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from Huffington Post website:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/05/americans-vacation-days-2014_n_6419100.html

World Tourism Organization. (2007). Understanding tourism: Basic glossary Retrieved December 22, 2012, from <http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2014). UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2014 Edition. Madrid: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2015). Exports from international tourism rise to US \$1.5 trillion in 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.unwto.org> website: <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2015-04-15/exports-international-tourism-rise-us-15-trillion-2014>

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2016). International tourist arrivals up 4% reach a record 1.2 billion in 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.unwto.org> website: <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2016-01-18/international-tourist-arrivals-4-reach-record-12-billion-2015>

Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research design and methods. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Series Eds.), Applied social research methods series, Vol. 5. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>

Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 1-14.

Yuksel, A., Yuksel, F., & Bilim, Y. (2010). Destination attachment: Effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 274-284.

Appendix 1

Publication #4

Place branding: Are we wasting our time? Report of an AMA special session

Place branding: are we wasting our time? Report of an AMA special session

Place branding: are we wasting our time?

63

Dominic Medway and Kathryn Swanson

Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Lisa Delpy Neirotti

Department of Management,

*The George Washington University School of Business,
Washington, District of Columbia, USA*

Cecilia Pasquinelli

GSSI Cities – Gran Sasso Science Institute, L'Aquila, Italy, and

Sebastian Zenker

*Department of Marketing, Copenhagen Business School,
Frederiksberg, Denmark*

Received 5 December 2014
Revised 5 December 2014
Accepted 7 December 2014

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to report on a special session entitled “Place branding: Are we wasting our time?”, held at the American Marketing Association’s Summer Marketing Educators’ conference in 2014.

Design/methodology/approach – The report details the outcome of an Oxford-style debate with two opposing teams of two persons – one team supporting and one team opposing the motion. The opening speaker of each team had 10 minutes to put their case across, and the closing speaker had 8 minutes. Teams took to the stand alternately, matching up against each other’s arguments.

Findings – The outcome of the debate points towards a need for place brands to develop as more inclusive and organic entities, in which case it may be best for place practitioners to avoid creating and imposing a place brand and instead help shape it from the views of stakeholder constituencies. This shifts the notion of place branding towards an activity centred on “curation”.

Originality/value – The use of a competitive debating format as a means for exploring academic ideas and concepts in the place management field.

Keywords Place branding, Oxford-style debate, Place curation

Paper type Viewpoint

Preamble

On Saturday, 2nd August 2014, a special session, entitled “Place branding: Are we wasting our time?”, was held at the American Marketing Association’s Summer Marketing Educators’ Conference in San Francisco. Taking a move away from the standard paper delivery format, the deliberately provocative title of the session formed the motion for an Oxford-style debate with two opposing teams of two persons – one team supporting and one team opposing the motion. The opening speaker of each team had 10 minutes to put their case across, and the closing speaker had 8 minutes. Teams



took to the stand alternately, with opening speakers (Medway versus Zenker) matching up against each other's arguments, followed by closing speakers (Delpy Neirotti versus Pasquinelli). Team members were chosen a few weeks beforehand by the Chair of the debate (Swanson). Membership of the team supporting or opposing the motion had nothing to do with team members' views; indeed, this was purely an intellectual exercise. At the end of the debate, the Chair took a vote on the winning team from the small audience. An open discussion then took place on what the debate had taught us. Below-mentioned key aspects of arguments put forward in support of the motion are presented in brief, followed by those opposing it. This report concludes by reflecting on what was learnt from this special session, primarily in terms of place branding theory and practice, but also in relation to this competitive debating format as a means for exploring academic ideas and concepts in our field.

Supporting the motion: "Yes, we are wasting our time"

Support for the motion kicked off with the suggestion that applying classic marketing concepts to a place context is fraught with difficulty (Ashworth, 1993; Kavaratzis, 2007), and this is especially true where branding is concerned. Nevertheless, it was suggested that place marketing practitioners often appear to believe that they can treat a place like a conventional product and a place name (a toponym) like a brand name and then, even worse, attach a series of supposed brand values to that toponym (often with minimal consultation with place stakeholders – especially residents of the place in question). It was suggested that this toponymic commodification can result in some superficial and potentially patronising place sloganising, often at odds with external and, especially, internal perceptions of the place in question, and in many cases, beyond any excuse of supposed comic irony. Examples were provided which acknowledged the US conference venue and included: "Kansas – As big as you think" (does it matter if you do not think); "Delaware – It's good being first" (well that depends what for - there are some things where you might want to be last), and perhaps best of all, or maybe worst of all, (and also found on the state license plates) "Idaho – Famous potatoes".

Another identified problem with treating place names as brands is the belief that the toponym can be simply switched or changed to meet place marketing goals, such as improving place image or increasing inward investment and tourism spend. An example given of such toponymic rebranding was the new name of "Noho" for the London district of Fitzrovia north of Soho. This attempt to rename and rebrand the place has been promoted by property developers within the area, who argue it is reflective of new urban regeneration (Davis, 2008). The team supporting the motion suggested that a fundamental problem with commodifying places in this manner, and seeing them as a "thing" that can be branded is that it denies the very agency that has made such places what they are. Echoing this line of argument, the views of a local councillor for Fitzrovia, Rebecca Hossack, were quoted. She has said that Noho means nowhere to her, suggesting it is a word, name and brand:

[...] which has nothing to do with community [...] [and is] like putting a big white paint brush over something that's incredibly delicate and has been [...] woven together over hundreds of years (Davis, 2008).

In this sense, it was suggested that the biggest problem with place branding and associated practices, such as toponymic commodification and place-related sloganising,

is that they automatically constrain the possible perceptive versions of a place by starting to delimit parameters around what it should look and “feel” like via powerful and influential brand positioning tools, such as brand values and brand personality. Thus, as [Medway and Warnaby \(2014, p. 164\)](#) have suggested:

[...] place branding campaigns, in an effort to project one universal reality (or hyperreality) of the place product to relevant audiences, often end up suppressing (albeit unintentionally) a place’s eclecticism and natural distinctiveness. In truth, places typically remain much more disordered in the way they serve the needs of their consumers, in essence performing the oft-cited “place marketing” role of being multisold at one and the same time to multiple audiences.

It is problematic, therefore, if place branding activity reaches only some of those audiences.

The team supporting the motion summed up their argument by suggesting that place branding is not something any individual or agency needs to do, because it happens anyway and, in this sense to do it is “wasting our time”. In addition, where place branding activity does not connect with many of its target audiences (mentioned earlier), it is arguably a waste of public money too – money which some have argued might be better spent on the place and its people directly ([Elliott and Delpy Neirotti, 2008](#)). Thus, the supporting team presented the notion of place branding purely as an organic concept born out of the widest possible participation – residents, tourists, communities, etc. – or put another way, people. This is a “bottom-up” as opposed to “top-down” perspective, in which if place brands emerge at all, it is merely as a consequence or by-product of naturally occurring, co-created processes involving a full range of stakeholders rather than deliberate branding effort by “so-called” place marketing professionals. Such a view draws explicitly on social constructionist and phenomenological perspectives on place ([Cresswell, 2004](#)).

Opposing the motion: “No, we are not wasting our time”

The team opposing the motion started with a reminder of the size of the challenge that place branding faces, both as a concept and a practice:

There are more than 300 cities in the world with over a million inhabitants, and all those cities want to be the most attractive. In Europe, there are more than 500 regions and 100,000 different kinds of communities competing individually for the same jobs, investments and talented experts ([Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009, p. 3](#)).

Given such observations, the opposing team argued that it should come as no surprise that competition amongst places for tourists, investors, companies, new citizens and most of all qualified workforce has risen strongly in the past decades ([Zenker et al., 2013](#)). The fact that place marketers increasingly try to establish places as brands, and use brand positioning practices to help promote their place to its different target groups, was proposed as a logical outcome of this competitive place environment. Furthermore, whilst there is an argument that place branding activity can waste public money (mentioned earlier), the opposing team argued that the image of a place is often built through stereotypes and commonsense narratives, and that investment in place branding was the most effective way of altering these if they are perceived negatively by potential or existing place users.

Although there was clear agreement by the opposing team that place marketing practice needs (and perhaps even wants) place branding, there was also an echo of the supporting team's argument in the suggestion that place marketers may erroneously believe that the place brand is controllable and fully manageable, thus disregarding the inherent complexity that characterises place products with their multitude of stakeholder interests. For instance, attention to counter-branding (Jensen, 2007; Greenberg, 2008) as an intrinsic part of place brand building witnesses a commitment to an understanding of place branding as going well beyond the ideas of coordination, alignment and strategic consistency. Indeed, it was suggested that theoretical and conceptual advances in our exploration and understanding of those complexities surrounding place branding may provide an important lesson, which can be fed back into the branding of more conventional products. Specifically, the increasing engagement of debates in place branding with a plurality of disciplines across the social sciences is an important reminder of the inherent political, social and geographical nature of all forms of product consumption beyond places. In addition, the fact that a place brand can rarely stand alone, in the sense that it is always connected to other places through flows of resources and capital as well as to other brands such as product brands, person brands and corporate brands, points towards a notion of brand ecosystems where place is concerned. This may hold resonance for scholars and practitioners wishing to make sense of increasingly complex brand architectures in the worlds of consumer goods and services, often brought about by successive waves of merger and acquisition activity.

Reflection

In the audience vote at the end of the debate, the team opposing the motion won. That said, there was an acknowledgement that the team supporting the idea that place branding is “wasting our time” would always be “swimming against the tide” when presenting at a major academic conference devoted to the subject of marketing. Nevertheless, the members of both teams agreed that the process of the debate itself had been a constructive academic exercise. Specifically, through the presentation of two opposing arguments, an area of “common ground” was revealed in critiquing the nature of current place branding practice. Both teams arrived from a point of recognition that place branding, at present, is often inadequate, typically revealing itself as something that place branding practitioners “do to a place” rather than something that “emerges” from it in an organic manner via stakeholder groups such as residents, tourists, etc. (Braun *et al.*, 2013). From this latter perspective, places might be viewed as socially constructed and co-created products, endlessly re-developed and re-defined via the competing, ongoing and often simultaneous narratives of place consumers. This is a view in harmony with academic viewpoints in the critical place marketing field (Warnaby and Medway, 2013). Indeed, there has been considerable debate regarding the limits of place branding (Pasquinelli, 2010; Pasquinelli and Teräs, 2013) and whether a place can, in fact, be branded at all (Amujo and Otubanjo, 2012; Kavratzis and Ashworth, 2005). Such writers, by taking the stance identified by the opposing team and combining perspectives from across the social sciences (in particular, those of geography and politics), imply that to “tie” a place to one dominant narrative via centralised and imposed place branding activity (typical of town/city centre management, local authorities and tourist agencies) suppresses the diversity that makes

places different. At a theoretical level, such developments have echoes of Ritzer's (2011) McDonaldization thesis. In more practical terms, place consumers who feel and maintain connections with a place out with its projected brand image are more likely to feel marginalised. In summary, doing place branding badly creates a dominant but arguably "inauthentic" narrative (Relph, 1976), which overwrites the realities of a given place arising from the potentially alternative discourses of its multifarious consumers.

If the above represented a point of agreement between the debating teams, the key point of difference centred on what should be done about it. In short, whilst both teams set out from the premise that much place branding activity is currently left wanting, the team supporting the motion presented this as evidence that the activity was not worth doing at all, whilst the opposing team argued that it provided an impetus to do things better. One would imagine, and hope, that most readers of this conference report would side with the latter view, or there would be little justification for this journal's existence. In truth, outside the confines of the debate and the desire to win an argument, even if it meant playing devil's advocate, the team supporting the motion was also of this opinion.

To conclude, a key task for place marketing academics should be finding ways to make branding work better for places. If this means allowing place brands to develop as more inclusive and organic entities, then it will require us to provide the evidence to relevant audiences as to why it may be best for place practitioners to avoid creating and imposing a place brand and instead help shape it from the views of stakeholder constituencies. This shifts the notion of place branding from an activity of "imposition" to one of "curation". If a competitive debate is a format for exploring the potential of this shift, then it is one we should encourage and embrace in the future. Furthermore, conducting that debate between disciplines in the social sciences might reveal some interesting contrasts in viewpoint.

References

- Amujo, O.C. and Otubanjo, O. (2012), "Leveraging rebranding of 'unattractive' nation brands to stimulate post-disaster tourism", *Tourist Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 87-105.
- Ashworth, G. (1993), "Marketing of places: what are we doing?", in Ave, G. and Corsico, F. (Eds), *Urban Marketing in Europe*, Torino Incontra, Turin, pp. 643-649.
- Braun, E., Kavartzis, M. and Zenker, S. (2013), "My city – my brand: the different roles of residents in place branding", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 18-28.
- Cresswell, T. (2004), *Place: A Short Introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Davis, A. (2008), "Noho? No way, this is Fitzrovia", *London Evening Standard*, 6 March, available at: www.standard.co.uk/news/noho-no-way-this-is-fitzrovia-6651554.html
- Elliott, S.M. and Delpy Neirotti, L. (2008), "Challenges of tourism in a dynamic island destination: the case of Cuba", *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 375-402.
- Greenberg, M. (2008), *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis Was Sold to the World*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Jensen, O.B. (2007), "Brand resistance and counter branding", in Gitte, M. and Zerlang, M. (Eds), *Fun City*, Arkitektens Forlag, Copenhagen, pp. 99-120.
- Kavartzis, M. (2007), "City marketing: the past, the present and some unresolved issues", *Geography Compass*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 695-712.

-
- Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G.J. (2005), "City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?", *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, Vol. 96 No. 5, pp. 506-514.
- Medway, D. and Warnaby, G. (2014), "What's in a name? Place branding and toponymic commodification", *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 153-167.
- Moilanen, T. and Rainisto, S. (2009), *How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations: A Planning Book for Place Branding*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Pasquinelli, C. (2010), "The limits of place branding for local development: the case of Tuscany and the Arnovalley brand", *Local Economy*, Vol. 25 No. 7, pp. 558-572.
- Pasquinelli, C. and Teräs, J. (2013), "Branding knowledge-intensive regions: a comparative study of Pisa and Oulu high-tech brands", *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 21 No. 10, pp. 1611-1629.
- Relph, E. (1976), *Place and Placelessness*, Pion, London.
- Ritzer, G. (2011), *The McDonaldization of Society*, 6th ed., Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Warnaby, G. and Medway, D. (2013), "What about the 'place' in place marketing?", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 345-363.
- Zenker, S., Eggers, F. and Farsky, M. (2013), "Putting a price tag on cities: insights into the competitive environment of places", *Cities*, Vol. 30, pp. 133-139.

Corresponding author

Dominic Medway can be contacted at: Dominic.medway@mbs.ac.uk

Appendix 2

Data Analysis Details and Examples

Example Template of Themes.

Hierarchy of Themes

I. The “Basics” of a high-quality experience

- Accessibility (easy to get to; good airport)
- Safety
- Weather and nature
- Things to do; new things added; uniqueness of things to do
- Good service; good experiences/people are remembered
- Accommodations/place to stay
- Clean

II. Relational Themes

1) Family and Friends

- Connect with them; brings people together; shared experience in that place (attachment to the place resulting from bonding with others there)
- Nostalgia and memories; importance of early experiences
- Tradition/routine/long-term relationship with place and repeat visitation; particular things done repeatedly

2) Relationship to Home

- Desire for difference from home
- Yet, feel comfortable/familiar
- Feels at home

3) Self-brand Integration

- Badging; the merchandise helps person remember through tangible thing and is conversation starter
- Photos; documenting
- Keep connection while away (through the community [attractions' Facebook pages, etc.], through photos/items, through frequent thoughts about the place, through future trip planning, passively through marketing materials, through contacts/friends there)

4) Brand Community/Visitor Community

- Evangelizing/recommending and giving advice/acting as expert/WOM
- Says brand community may be more at attractions level
- Connecting with others; can connect when away (talk to people or see someone's shirt or electronic media, etc.); share tips

III. Experiential Themes

1) Senses

- A sight/sound/smell/food that is associated with place

2) Agelessness

- Any age can enjoy; can go back at different stages in life

3) Escape

- Do what you want
- No reality/work; relaxing

4) Feeling while there

- Happy
- Smiling
- Have fun

5) Mystery

- Characters
- Surprises

IV. Outcome Themes

1) Anticipated separation distress/avoidance of separation distress

- Sad to leave or ready but promise to return
- Would feel sense of loss if destination were destroyed
- Lock in repeat visitation to avoid separation distress/knowledge of repeat visitation helps avoid separation distress

2) Resistance to negative information

- Discount negative opinions of others; would not be swayed by negative comments of others
- Forgive negatives

- Educate if someone makes negative comment; some feel offended if hear negative

3) Positive attitude and certainty of that attitude

- Desire and plan to return

V. Integrative Themes

- A) Understanding of difference among brands at different spatial scales yet blurring
- B) Able to love more than one place that they visit as tourists (love for different reasons; each holds a different place in heart)

Table A.1.

Content Analysis of Orlando Photos (79 Photos in Total).

Category	Number of images	%
Event	7	8.9
People (non-entertainers)	45	57.0
- Includes participant	31	39.2
- Includes family	26	32.9
- Includes friends/others	5	6.3
- In costume/hat or silly	9	11.4
Fictional character	25	31.7
Buildings/attractions/structures	36	45.6
- Cinderella Castle	6	7.6
- Spaceship Earth	8	10.1
Entertainment	6	7.6
Outdoors	54	68.4
- Evening	8	10.1
Shopping	7	8.9
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant	7	8.9
Nature/animals (real or fake)	21	26.6
Art	15	19.0
At Walt Disney World	74	93.7
At Universal Studios	4	5.1

Table A.2.

Content Analysis of Minneapolis Photos (51 Photos in Total).

Category	Number of images	%
Event or milestone	9	17.7
People (non-entertainers)	39	76.5
- Includes participant	26	51.0
- Includes family	35	68.6
- Includes local family	24	47.1
- In a funny pose	3	5.9
Attractions/Museums	11	21.6
Outdoors	24	47.1
Summer: Lakes, boats, etc.	15	29.4
Winter: Snow, fireplace, etc.	10	19.6
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant	8	15.7
Nature/animals	8	15.7
Art	6	11.8
Skyline	5	9.8
At a resident's home	27	52.9
At an art museum	10	19.6

Table A.3.

Content Analysis of Las Vegas Photos (44 Photos in Total).

Category	Number of images	%
People (non-entertainers)	14	31.8
- Includes participant	12	27.3
- Includes friends	9	20.5
- Silly	3	6.8
Indoor “grandiose” shot	10	22.7
Pop culture reference	5	11.4
Buildings/attractions/structures/fountains	23	52.3
Entertainment	13	29.6
- Gambling related	8	18.2
Outdoors	22	50.0
- Evening/Lights	10	22.7
Luxury related (e.g., limousine)	4	9.1
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant/bar	9	20.5
Nature/animals (real or fake)	5	11.4
No-no/a little naughty/up late	8	18.2
On The Strip	29	65.9
In Downtown Las Vegas	4	9.1

Table A.4.

Content Analysis of Non-word Orlando Collage Images (69 Images in Total).

Category	Number of images	%
Event	5	7.3
People (non-entertainers)	28	40.6
- Includes participant	19	27.5
- Includes family	14	20.3
- Includes friends	5	7.3
- Strangers (magazine)	9	5.8
- Silly/funny pose	3	4.4
Fictional character	21	30.4
- Live/costumed	11	15.9
- Image	10	14.5
Buildings/attractions/structures	16	23.2
Outdoors	37	53.6
Nature/animals (real or fake)	18	26.1
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant	7	10.1
Art	5	7.3
Sun accessories	4	5.8

Table A.5.

Content Analysis of Non-word Minneapolis Collage Images (56 Images in Total).

Category	Number of images	%
Event	6	10.7
People (non-entertainers)	25	44.6
- Includes participant	12	21.3
- Includes family	19	33.9
- Includes local family	12	21.4
- Strangers (magazine)	6	10.7
Skyline	5	8.9
Buildings/attractions/structures	3	5.4
Outdoors	28	50.0
- Summer	13	23.2
- Winter	12	21.4
Nature/animals (real or fake)	5	7.3
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant/bar	9	16.1
Art/architecture	6	10.7
Shopping/merchandise	3	5.4
At a resident's home	11	19.6
At an art museum	7	12.5

Table A.6.

Content Analysis of Non-word Las Vegas Collage Images (86 Images in Total).

Category	Number of images	% of total
People (non-entertainers)	13	15.1
- Strangers (magazine)	13	15.1
Entertainers/characters/athletes	8	9.3
Buildings/attractions/structures/fountains	25	29.1
Indoor “grandiose” shot	8	9.3
Outdoors	43	50.0
- Night/lights	20	23.3
Gambling related	13	15.1
Food/beverages/dining/restaurant/bar	12	14.0
Nature/animals (real or fake)	5	5.8
Summer activities (pools, golf, hiking)	14	16.3
On The Strip	28	32.6
In Downtown Las Vegas	7	8.1

Transcript Example

Alma Pearson

KS: Um... so... I guess, yeah. Just first off, you said when we talked before, you said that you... that you do love Orlando...

AP: Uh huh.

KS: And... can you just tell me why do you think that is? Why is that?

Disney

Memories, nostalgia

Family

AP: Um... well definitely, I mean, like I think I've said before, I've mostly experienced Orlando through Disney World, but I think because of going, you know, to Orlando for Disney, it associates a lot of special memories with going with my husband and his family, and so I think, you know, it's become a place that I really enjoy going to because of the first visit being so special, and so I think just, you know, going the several times we've gone it just associates, you know, back to the first trip, and so it's a nostalgic thing. I think that's the main reason – it's for the nostalgia of going to somewhere that's very, you know, happy and childlike for sure. So...

Importance of first experience

KS: Sure.

Happy, return to youth

AP: And the weather's really nice there too, of course. So... [Laughter]

KS: Yeah. So...

Weather

AP: And rainy sometimes. So...

KS: Yeah. [Laughter] Um... [0:04:00] and so you feel... when you say um... nostalgia from... from your... from your childhood, is that what... is that what you said?

Nostalgia possible even when haven't been there (movies, etc.)

Return to youth

AP: Yeah. 'Cause I never went, you know, when I was a kid, and so I think going as an adult now, you know, is fun to associate, you know, all the movies you've seen growing up and all the rides you've seen commercials about and actually getting to experience it, and you pretty much feel like it's a safe place to be like a child, you know, for sure. So definitely it makes the trip more fun and relaxed, and... and this summer, you know, we'll be going back again, but this time we'll have our little nephew will be a part of the trip, which he'll be only 8 months when we go, and so that's how crazy they are about Disney, that they'll take a little 8-month-old on the trip. So we'll see how that changes... changes our viewpoint of having a little 8-month-old along. So...

Fun

Relaxing

KS: Yeah. Oh, that'll be... that'll be fun.

AP: Yeah. [Laughter]

KS: Um... do you feel like... do you feel like Orlando has kinda become like a part of you? Do you feel attached to it?

AP: Yeah. I think especially since we... I guess my husband and I at the point when I first went, we'd only been dating for a little less than a year. I mean, it was almost a year at that point, so I think that was, you know, just associates our early part of the relationship, you know, and then going the last few years together with his family. That's how I've gotten to know, you know, his family really well and so...

Attachment developed through bonding with loved ones in the place

and that's something that they really care about. So I think it kinda, you know, tied down to me and made me care more about it too. So...

KS: Sure. So he went with his family growing up a lot?

AP: Yeah. And he went through a phase where he wasn't as sure about going – I'm sure when he was a teenager. But then now, I think, going and just being, you know, older [0:06:00] and around family more, he definitely has gotten really into it again, and I guess taking me along since he didn't, you know, (___s/I get into it as much) when he was younger, and having me get really into it probably helped, so... [Laughter].

KS: Sure. Yeah. Oh, that's neat. Um... and while you're there, do you feel like you have a... like a quality... a high quality experience?

AP: I... I was gonna say definitely any time we've ever gone, it definitely is a very high quality experience because they... they really, you know, go out of their way to make sure, you know, you feel really special and taken care of. So definitely.

KS: Sure.

High quality experience:
good service

AP: I've never had a negative experience with being there.

KS: Sure.

No negative; strong positive
attitude; confidence in attitude

AP: So...

KS: Great. Um... and what about... Do... do you think it's... is it a pretty place, do you think? Do you think that it's physically attractive?

AP: I do. I mean, I... I've grown up in Houston mostly, and so... I think of the times of year I've gone, which have been during the summer, it's been pretty humid, so I'm familiar with how humid it can get there, but I think overall it's definitely very um... it's very green, for sure, 'cause I guess it rains there a a lot. And so, definitely, it's a lot prettier than, you know, around where I grew up, so...

Pretty,
green,
different
from
home

KS: Sure. Okay. And what about... are there any... like, when you're... when you're back in Texas and... are there any, like, sounds or smells or tastes or anything that remind you of Orlando or that you... like when you're back that you think, "Oh. That reminded me of Orlando," or anything like that?

AP: Yeah. Hm... That's a good question. Well, I definitely would say, I mean, obviously with hearing music, you know, at Disney World all there, if I hear, you know, a Disney song, you know, that always associates, you know, with Orlando for me. Um... [0:08:00] but I would say as far as, you know, food goes or... I think... um... well definitely one of my favorite parks there is the Epcot park where all the lands are and so I think, you know, the international part of it, you know. Sometimes I'll associate with that from, you know, going to an international restaurant here. Sometimes that'll associate memories for sure. Um...

duh

Sounds and
tastes: music,
international
cuisine

Photo Example

People:
participant,
family

At Walt
Disney World



Evening

Magic,
mystery
(fireworks)

Outdoors,
weather

This photo was taken
of Jeremy and I at Magic
Kingdom after the "Wishes"
fireworks show. You
can tell we have had
a wonderful time yet
again!



Collage Example

People:
participant,
family

Nostalgia

Silly pose

Fictional
character

Mystery

Agelessness

Relationship
to home

Iconic buildings;
castle, Spaceship
Earth

