Stepping out from the Crowd: (Re)branding Jamaica's Tourism Product through Sports and Culture

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Stepping out from the crowd: (Re) branding Jamaica's Tourism

Product Through Sports and Culture

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BY

Thelca Patrice White

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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Stepping out from the crowd: (RE) Branding Jamaica’s Tourism Product through sports and culture
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Abstract

Branding and marketing, in a world where much emphasis is placed on commercialism, are inextricably linked, and carry significant weight. Brands, as we have come to know them, are seemingly ubiquitous, and represent an omnipresent way for many businesses to communicate vital information about their products to existing, as well as, prospective customers. However, while many persons consider branding to be directly related to huge corporations, branding has expanded its repertoire to include nations. While many scholars of marketing and branding have placed keen attention on the branding of corporations, very little attention has been placed on the branding of nations, especially in relation to the tourism industry. Therefore, in light of the obvious lack of extensive research focusing on branding through tourism, I intend to, through my own examination, shed more light on the aforementioned concept, as it pertains to Jamaica’s tourism industry in order to understand the current strategies being used to enhance its tourism product. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine nation branding as an emerging concept, in an effort to establish how this form of marketing is being used by tourism sector to create a unique and competitive advantage for the island, to secure its position as a top destination for travelers.

Keywords: Nation-branding, Tourism, Jamaica, Competitive Advantage.
The journey to completing my thesis was fraught with challenges, to say the least. There were days when I felt completely overwhelmed with just the sheer amount of time and effort that I had to invest, to ensure its fruition. I questioned myself many times about my ability to complete it, and now, in retrospect, am thankful that I remained motivated and dedicated to the task at hand. And now that it is finally finished, I can truly say, “it was not easy, but it was worth it”. Even though my name is the only one that will grace my thesis, I would be lying if I even tried to insist that I was unsupported in this endeavor. And, it would certainly be remiss of me, if I did not acknowledge each individual who played a key role in helping me on my academic journey which has now culminated in this tangible scholarly work, otherwise called my thesis.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

With the world being as competitive as it is, branding a country’s services, attractions and culture is of great importance, especially if that country intends on maintaining a sizeable advantage in the global marketplace. Given that Jamaica wants to exponentially increase the number of tourists visiting the island annually, and boost investments in the island, the Jamaican government along with other stakeholders is keen on using the Jamaican culture, along with sports, to help brand and define its image and identity to the rest of the world. Jamaica has recognized that branding may help to buoy the tourism sector, by increasing interest from prospective visitors, and business persons looking to invest in the product. In today’s business savvy world, branding has increasingly become an accepted strategy for competitive advantage and success, a fact that is not lost on the Jamaican government.

The Caribbean region has an abundance of beautiful, tropical islands, which for decades, have lured adventurous travelers to their shores. One of these islands is Jamaica. Famous for reggae music and its vibrant culture, Jamaica, like most of its island neighbors, is heavily reliant on the tourism industry to keep its economy buoyant. And for Jamaica, stepping out of the proverbial “crowd” means that it will have to compete, and win, against its competitors in the Caribbean tourism industry by establishing a brand that is unique, powerful and attractive to prospective tourists.

Tourism has always been important to Jamaica. However, prior to the emergence of tourism as its main industry, Jamaica counted the mining of bauxite as its main economic driver. In fact, the island was one of the top bauxite producing countries in the
world. However, the industry experienced a marked decline at the turn of the 21st century with the downturn in the global bauxite trade. This led to the full or partial closure of bauxite mining companies, and subsequently, the loss of jobs and livelihoods for persons living in the parishes of Manchester and St. Elizabeth. With the decline of the bauxite sector, the Jamaican government was left with the task of either looking for an alternate sector, or identifying one that already existed to substitute that of bauxite. The government chose the latter, and decided that tourism represented the greatest potential, in terms of revenue generation, investments, and job creation. Of course, tourism had already proven that it had the type of viability necessary to boost the economy.

Additionally, the dynamic nature of the tourism industry provided an industry whose products and service offerings were untapped to an extent. The latent potential of the tourism industry, now serves as the primary foundation for subsequent nation branding activities.

Tourism, because of its nature, has been charged with marketing the island to persons overseas. And, by tapping into the major North American and European markets, citizens living in these regions have become somewhat familiar with Jamaica through TV and print advertisements. The growing popularity of Jamaican music, specifically reggae, familiarized many other persons with the island through the accomplishments of musicians such as Bob Marley and the Wailers, Jimmy Cliff and Burning Spear, to name a few. These musicians are considered conduits of Jamaican cultural expression, and have arguably helped to generate interest in Jamaica. In the 1980s, Jamaica’s global recognition was bolstered by the exploits of the Jamaican Bobsled Team. Despite having a tropical climate, the island’s bobsled team defied all
odds to qualify for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, Canada. According to
the Jamaica bobsled team’s website, “by the start of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games the
popularity of the team was widespread based on grassroots support from those who
favored the unusual, and the underdog” (jamaicabobsleighteam.com). The popularity
gained by the team inspired the popular Disney film, “Cool Runnings”, loosely based on
the team’s journey to the Winter Olympics. Ten years later, in 1998, Jamaica achieved
another sporting first when it became the smallest country, at the time, to qualify for
FIFA World Cup in France. The Jamaican Football Team, affectionately dubbed “Reggae
Boyz”, was the proverbial “toast” of the World Cup, not because they were expected to
win, but simply because they were the underdogs. Much like the Jamaican Bobsled team,
people became interested in the story of the “Reggae Boyz”, and how a small country
emerged as one of the contenders for football’s coveted World Cup trophy.

Notwithstanding the success of the bobsled team, and other athletes like Merlene
Ottey and Mike McCallum, the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, afforded
Jamaica the most global publicity. Led by the charismatic Usain Bolt, the Jamaican
athletes had dazzling performances on the track, signaling to the world, that they had
replaced the USA as the “sprint factory” of the world. The Olympic Games had a global
reach of 3.6 billion people (Olympic.org). Bearing this in mind, it is certainly fair to
assume that billions of people watched Usain Bolt’s record-breaking performances in the
100m, 200m and the 4 x 100m races; giving visibility not only to Usain Bolt and the
other Jamaican athletes, but Jamaica by extension.

As an island with a population of less than three (3) million people, Jamaica has
gained significantly more recognition globally than many countries that have larger
populations, are more economically powerful, and are well endowed with natural resources. As a result of this, government officials and business interests are keen to tap into the country’s global recognition to boost a variety of sectors, which include tourism and manufacturing. For instance, local manufacturers have become aware of the potential desire that might emerge for Jamaican made goods, as a result of the island carving a name for itself in the global arena. Hence, the “made in Jamaica” label may, not only signal authenticity, but also an association with a country brand that is increasingly popular, particularly in popular culture. To ensure that Jamaica benefits from its own brand, there are many persons in the society who are keen on protecting Brand Jamaica. These stakeholders are especially concerned about non-Jamaican agents who continue to reproduce for themselves, uniquely Jamaican items that are capable of being branded as having been produced in Jamaica. There have been many instances in which ‘made in Jamaica’ labels have been attached to goods that originated in countries outside of Jamaica, perhaps with the hope that an association with the island will lead to increased demand for particular goods. Whatever the case might be, the fact is, there is a demand for Jamaican made goods, and even non-Jamaican agents have tried to capitalize on Brand Jamaica.

It has often been said that Jamaica has the same number of citizens living in Jamaica as it does living the Diaspora (Jamaicans living outside of the country) in Great Britain, USA and Canada (Glennie & Chappell, 2010). These Jamaicans have helped with the creation of Jamaican brand awareness, by virtue of the fact that they have brought the Jamaican culture to the different countries in which they live. For example, Jamaicans who migrated to Great Britain in the 1960s have markedly influenced British
popular culture in terms of music, fashion (rude boy way of dressing), and language. Presently, slangs from Jamaica Creole (JC), such as ‘nuff respect’, and ‘big up’ are now part of the British vernacular.

In recent years, Jamaicans have been introduced to the idea of branding the island. Indeed, there have been several initiatives encouraging Jamaicans at home, and in the diaspora, to support Jamaican brands. Despite the familiarity of the initiative to brand the island, many Jamaicans do not know the nuances of this campaign. Additionally, no official study has been undertaken to assess whether branding campaigns have been successful, particularly as it relates to foreign direct investment (FDI), and increased interest in Jamaican products. Jamaica has numerous recognizable brands; the most notable are Bob Marley, Reggae, Blue Mountain Coffee, Sandals Resorts International, Red Stripe Beer, and Usain Bolt. However, the power of the aforementioned brands has not been tested, to ascertain their effectiveness. This, ostensibly, means that branding strategists are not clear on the impact of branding efforts on the Jamaican economy. And, although the government and other business interests have been actively seeking ways to leverage the island’s brand recognition, the impact of branding efforts in tourism and other sectors is generally unknown. These stakeholders have come to recognize that any economic advancement of the island rests, in great measure, on the perceived latent potential presented in the fusion of tourism, culture, and sports. In consideration of this issue, I will examine the ways in which the tourism industry is using sports and culture to diversify its product to create a distinct tourism brand, and maintain its competitive advantage.
Statement of the Problem

Nation branding is becoming a common practice used by many countries throughout the world to build, manage, and measure their reputations. However, given the fact that the concept of nation branding is still an emerging one, available scholarship in this field is limited, and when it exists, it usually focuses on larger nations. Notwithstanding, it should come as no surprise that many developing countries, like Jamaica, are looking to leverage their unique assets by adopting nation branding strategies. Because of the increased use of nation branding by a significant number of countries, the researcher believes that it is necessary, and relevant, to conduct a study that explores the phenomenon of nation branding in the Jamaican context, to gain further insight into its nuances while adding to the expanding body of scholarship on this concept.
CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

As one of the largest islands in the Caribbean, Jamaica has been able to carve out an identity for itself on the global landscape mainly because of its cultural icons and sports stars. However, prior to the 21st century and the rise of athletes such as Usain Bolt, Asafa Powell and Merlene Ottey, Jamaica’s image was firmly embedded in its culture, with Bob Marley serving as its most famous brand ambassador. Although Jamaica has a population of less than three (3) million people, the island has garnered significantly more recognition globally when compared to many countries that have larger populations, are more economically powerful, and are well endowed with natural resources. In fact, despite its size, Jamaica has more recognizable brands than many countries with larger populations. Bearing this in mind, Jamaica represents a viable subject of nation branding scholarship because it is one of the most renowned islands in the Caribbean, and has a culture which is unmatched by most of the other islands in the region.

This project will employ Simon Anholt’s (2011) ‘nation branding’ concept as its theoretical framework because he is the leading scholar and practitioner in the field of nation/place branding. Furthermore, nation branding is a theory which has been gaining great interest within the field of marketing and has its own viable methodology for measuring a nation’s brand value. Accordingly, the literature review will focus on branding in the Jamaican context, and the different forms of branding strategies that are currently being used by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) to increase the country’s competitive identity in the tourism industry. Therefore, in order to establish what nation
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branding is, and illuminate its growing importance to countries that are using it as strategy to market themselves, the researcher will define, review, and explain brands and branding, as well other various types of branding that are relevant to the topic under investigation. Additionally, the researcher will incorporate information from reputable and relevant sources to support and substantiate the branding of nations, and the different elements that constitute the concept. Subsequently, the researcher will discuss, in depth, nation branding and its implications, in addition to nation brand image, identity, brand personality, brand equity, as well as competitive identity. Moreover, since this particular project is based on nation branding in Jamaica, it will also review specific nation branding campaigns that have focused on the island’s tourism product, and it will examine nation branding campaigns by other tourism bodies of other countries as a point of comparison and reference. The literature review will also serve as the foundation on which the discussion chapter will be based.

**Brands and Branding**

Branding, as we have come to understand it, is one of the most important strategies being used by businesses to promote recognition and differentiate them from their competitors. Branding is not only important in helping companies stay relevant in the eyes of customers, but it also serves a fundamental purpose in terms of establishing and articulating one’s competitive advantage. Given this fact, brands have become an important aspect of our everyday lives, and we are under constant bombardment from companies looking to introduce us to, or remind us about the existence of their different brands. Brands often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive
offerings (Keller, 2003). Brands also help customers exercise their preferences in the marketplace where they are inundated with many branded options.

For companies, brands are valuable strategic assets, as well as a source of competitive advantage. In fact, Grace and O’Cass (2005) contend that brands are rich sources of information for consumers. Considering this premise, it becomes quite important for companies to be strategic, especially where the management of their brands is concerned. Moreover, Healey (2010) opines that brands serve several valuable functions, and at their most basic level, serve as markers for the offerings of a firm. For customers, brands can also engender trust, or even promise a particular level of quality for goods and services. Brands, therefore, are built from the product idea, and play an important role in determining the effectiveness of marketing efforts such as advertising and channel placement (Keller, 2006) and they can reflect the complete experience that a customer has with a product.

In understanding the importance of brands, Keller (2003), asserts that a branded product can be a physical good as well as a service, a store, a person, a place, an organization, or even an idea. However, Ambler (1992) defines brands as the promise of the bundles of attributes someone buys, which provide some degree of satisfaction. Ambler (1992) also contends that the attributes that make up a brand may be rational or emotional, real or illusionary, tangible or invisible. This means that a brand only exists once it has acquired power to influence the market, an accomplishment that is quite time consuming (Wood, 2000). Understandably, consumers play a critical role in not only how brands are perceived, but also in their success, or lack thereof, in the marketplace. This is because consumers, more often than not, have strong preferences for the products they
buy, and which companies they loyally patronize. As a result of this, many companies have come to recognize and appreciate that branding plays a fundamental role in how well they are able to attract and retain a customer base. For companies, brands are valuable strategic assets and a source of competitive advantage. Therefore, it becomes crucially important for companies, not only to have a brand that is readily recognizable, but that same brand should also stand for something that is perceived by internal and external stakeholders as being positive and trustworthy. Positive brand perceptions form the foundation on which brands are able to maintain a share of the market, as well as provide support for their credibility and relevance. This is the reason companies commit millions of dollars to ensure that their brands are not only visible, but reputable as well. Thus, branding as a strategy should never be undervalued or underestimated.

**Nation Branding**

In a globally competitive marketplace driven by capitalist ideologies, many nations have, understandably, found themselves in a fierce economic to survive economically, socially and politically. More countries have embraced nation branding as a way to differentiate themselves in the market to create a competitive advantage and to improve their economic performances (Lee, 2009). Nation branding should create a distinctive country image which affects the customer's perceptions by communicating the nation's identity to the target audiences (Fan, 2006). Given the potential threat that globalization poses to countries, particularly the ones which are less developed or smaller in physical size, some nations have embraced the concept known as “nation branding”. Dinnie (2008) suggests that nations are seeking to employ nation branding strategies to attract prospective tourists, stimulate inward investment, as well as boost exports. Furthermore,
he contends that nation branding, if used effectively, can enhance nation building, help to restore international credibility, in addition to creating stronger international partnerships between countries. Leslie de Chertanony (1999) argues that countries engage in nation branding to attract tourists, boost exports, and increase investment opportunities. As such, nation branding is generally viewed as a marketing strategy that is used for the main purpose of targeting external markets, with the end goal being to establish and communicate a specific image of national identity (Varga, 2013).

As a concept, the term “nation branding” was coined by Simon Anholt to describe the sum of people’s perceptions of a particular country, using the areas of culture and heritage, exports, governance, tourism, investment, and immigration as key markers (Anholt, 2005). However, Lee (2009) is of the view that nation branding is more of a strategic activity geared towards improving national reputation and image. Anholt (2005) along with Kotler and Gertner (2002) theorize that countries are brands since countries have names and flags which serve as brand names and make them similar to product brands being marketed by businesses. Notwithstanding, nations as brands are perceived as having a unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences. It specifies management both to develop a nation’s attraction and to project an attractive image in a coherent manner. In this sense, the concept of the nation-as-brand relates to how to define nation brand itself (Lee, 2009). Anholt (2005) also acknowledges that when a country is well-known and admired for its competence in certain areas, as well as values, and culture, that same country has a distinct advantage over those countries whose identity is less clear, lesser known, or less positive. Hence, nation branding should
create a distinctive country image which affects the customer’s perceptions by communicating the nation’s identity to the target audiences (Fan, 2006; Lee, 2009).

Jaworski and Fosher (2003) assert that just like any of the popular brands that we have become used to, countries have distinct identities that are unique to individual nations. No two nations share the same characteristics, despite the fact that they might share a similar history, as is the case with many Caribbean nations with a history steeped in colonialism. However, in recognizing their own uniqueness, many countries are eager to tap into their own marketing potential by branding themselves to the rest of the world. This has, invariably, led to increased competition, between countries looking to benefit from branding themselves. Not surprisingly, nation branding has now become a strategic practice, and many countries are now resorting to its use, in order to compete effectively with other countries that they see as rivals (Dinnie, 2008). Consequently, many countries, particularly smaller states such as Jamaica, are finding different ways to brand themselves by packaging or repackaging their culture, heritage, music, and sports. Nation branding reflects a certain way of thinking about the role of a nation; both as a means of selling goods and services, and as an entity that can mobilize the populace in the name of economic development.

Proponents of nation branding market it as a powerful equalizer, providing a way for lesser known and economically weaker countries to compete with their powerful counterparts (Anholt, 2005). By latching on to the belief that nation branding represents a viable strategy to make lame countries walk, governments are now furiously hiring nation branding experts to develop a veritable plan of action to tap into the benefits that can come from branding. Therefore, in an effort to improve their economies, many
governments are increasingly becoming cognizant of the need to present a positive image of their countries, in the hopes of attracting visitors and investors to their countries. Previously, the main vehicle that many countries used to lure interested parties was tourism. However, in addition to tourism, we are now witnessing a shift in how countries market themselves (Kulcsár & Yum, 2011). Many countries are seeking to leverage their culture, music, famous citizens and cuisine, coupled with their natural resources. Hence, this strategic marketing of countries, with the intention of attracting tourists, as well as investors, is known as “nation branding”.

**Implications of Nation Branding**

As with any other strategy geared towards getting people to patronize a service or commodity, nation branding has its own set of implications. While some nation branding proponents such as Anholt (2003) argue that nation branding brings about positive changes to nations, other scholars like Aronczyk (2014), while not denying its positive impact, have also identified some negative consequences. Anholt (2003) argues that nation branding serves to build patriotism and a sense of purpose among members of a population that engage in nation branding activities. In fact, when one considers Jamaica, it becomes clear that the high levels of patriotism that Jamaicans exude, is due in part to them being cognizant of the fact that the island is well known on the global stage, along with the perception that, as a country, Jamaica has something unique, not found anywhere else, to offer the world. Patriotism can occur when citizens are proud of their country and its achievements. Certainly in Jamaica, especially during events such as the Olympic Games and independence celebrations, patriotism is readily visible with individuals decked out in clothing bearing the colors of the national flag, cars with miniature flags on
their dashboards and the playing of music which reinforces Jamaican pride. According to Anholt (2005), developing countries, through nation branding can use resources such as culture, to attract investments where they might lack tangible resources such as oil reserves. Moreover, Anholt (2005) believes that this may help distribute the benefits of globalization more equitably.

Conversely, Aronczyk (2014) posits that nation branding has negative consequences that surface with the unaccountability of marketing experts in decision-making; downplaying of components of national identity which do not project the desired image; and the reduction of national identity to a single configuration. Aronczyk (2014) is of the belief that many special consultants that governments hire to undertake nation branding initiatives are not heavily invested in this cause. She argues that this lack of investment may lead to lack of accountability, especially when such consultants are from a different country of origin. Additionally, Aronczyk (2014) asserts that the type of competitiveness that nation branding instigates on the basis of national legitimacy is one which sets up some countries to effectively benefit from globalization while other countries struggle. Since some nations will be branded as more advanced than others, it forces the less advanced countries to be more limited in their consideration of other options concerning their own development (Aronczyk, 2014). Finally, Aronczyk (2014), asserts that nation branding assumes that the existence of a single and homogenous set of values or essence that is agreed upon by all citizens and one that is also readily recognizable to them. This she considers a weakness of nation branding because reliance on this essence invariably neglects the fact that not all citizens will be in agreement with what a country puts forward as its essence or core set of values.
Tourism’s Importance to Jamaica

In today’s globalized world, more and more people are becoming fascinated with the idea of visiting new places. The reasons why people travel to new places are varied, but some of the reasons may include experiencing new cultures, learning a new language, or simply for business or leisure. Given the improvements in the aviation industry, travelling overseas is now accessible to millions of people from all walks of life. Travelling abroad has become so prevalent that the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has revealed that international tourist arrivals are expected to grow at the sustained pace of 3.3 percent a year on average, reaching 1.8 billion by 2030. This makes tourism, one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the world (Wood, 2000).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which involves the movement of people to places or countries outside their customary habitat for personal or business purposes. Tourism scholars, Mathieson and Wall (1982), describe tourism as the temporary movement of people outside of their usual places of work and residence, the endeavors undertaken, and the facilities created to satisfy their needs. Commonly referred to by the term ‘tourist’, these people are important to the long-term viability of the sector because their expenditures keep the industry afloat by patronizing local hotels, tour operators and gift shops for example. Accordingly, many countries see tourism as a pathway to their economic development. On the contrary, some persons are of the belief that mass-tourism threatens the sustainability of countries since it, in large part, overwhelms the natural environment as well as their cultural, social, and physical resources. However, with many
countries like Jamaica not having economically viable industries to disrupt that of tourism, these countries are left with no choice but to position it as a main economic driver.

The Caribbean region has been synonymous with tourism, so much so that it is now considered to be the region of the world most heavily dependent on the industry for economic benefits (Patullo, 2005). For Jamaica, one of the key players in Caribbean tourism, tourism is a key driver of the local economy, and, on whose foundation the island’s development and economic growth rests. Accordingly, Boxhill (2004) argues that Jamaica is reliant on the tourism industry to provide jobs and foreign revenue. The tourism industry has been buoying the Jamaican economy for a long time, and this is expected to be the norm for perhaps the long term, unless another viable industry emerges to complement the tourism sector. Over the last few years, the sector has continued on an upward trajectory and, because of this, Jamaica managed to post its most impressive figures in 2013, reaching the historic milestone of welcoming 2 million visitors to its shores. This figure surpassed the 1.986 million arrivals recorded in 2012, and represents more than a 0.7 per cent increase in arrivals for the year (Jamaica Information Service, 2015). The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) also reports that the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) was JMD109.3bn (7.7% of total GDP), with the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP being JMD364.8bn (25.6% of GDP) in 2013, a figure which is projected to rise in subsequent years. Additionally, Travel & Tourism directly supported 82,000 jobs (7.0% of total employment), which makes the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry at 23.4% of total
employment, or the equivalent of 274,500 jobs (World Travel & Tourism Council 2014). Given that the tourism sector is labor and income intensive, it has benefitted Jamaica by increasing or improving foreign exchange earnings, profits and taxes, and employment. Tourists contribute to sales, profits, jobs, tax revenue, and income, with the most direct benefits occurring in the major tourist areas of Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Negril. Therefore, the primary tourism sectors which include hotels, restaurants and tour bus operators have the greatest advantage of gaining from the sector.

**Nation branding—The Jamaican Context**

Jamaica, like most other islands in the Caribbean, is heavily dependent on tourism which is largely considered to be an important driver of its economy, especially with the decline of bauxite. The tourism sector plays a key role in employing thousands of Jamaicans, generating taxes and vital foreign exchange. Since the advent of tourism in Jamaica, branding the country through various marketing activities has always been a priority for government officials, hoteliers, and other business interests.

According to the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), Jamaica’s emergence as a tourist destination was ushered into being after the end of the Second World War when increased numbers of Americans and Europeans visited the island for leisure activities. This new sector also created a real need for Jamaica to undertake marketing activities which ostensibly sought to separate it from other destinations. Seeing the latent potential in tourism, the Jamaica Tourist Board was established in 1955 to market and promote Jamaica as a preferred destination worldwide (JTB, 2015). Additionally, the Jamaica Tourist Board was also established to cultivate new relationships with travel partners and disseminate marketing information to its partners worldwide. The island’s major
marketing effort was concentrated in North America, and in May 1957 the JTB opened its own publicity department in Kingston which resulted in increased visibility for Jamaica in its major North American markets. During this period, a local marketing campaign was also launched to make Jamaicans more familiar with, and aware of the potential of tourism to improve the local economy. As such, Jamaicans were encouraged to support the industry through the campaign “Tourism matters to you”.

In an effort to bolster Jamaica as a destination of considerable natural beauty and unique culture, the JTB also launched the “Come to Jamaica” campaign, the first such major campaign geared towards stakeholders abroad. The marketing initiatives have aggressively continued throughout the years and have positioned Jamaica as not only a destination of choice for many tourists but a distinctive brand in and of itself. The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) has launched several marketing campaigns throughout its history to promulgate the island’s natural beauty, products and cuisine to overseas interests. Below are the JTB’s marketing campaigns throughout the years.

**Comeback to Jamaica (1963-1975)**

In recognition of Jamaica’s unique artistic and cultural expressions, and their potential to significantly enhance the island’s attractiveness, the JTB quickly adopted an integrated approach to its marketing effort. By incorporating the use of Jamaican music, culture, fashion, cuisine and art, the JTB manage to garner for Jamaica, not only increased exposure, but increased recognition overseas. Because of the success of this campaign, it was duly hailed as one of the most effective in promoting the country’s tourism product. In fact, the JTB reported that, through the use of creatively executed advertisements, it was able to portray Jamaica’s diversity to markets of over 167 million.
Also, during the period from 1964-65, the North American publicity campaign recorded an average of more than 100 newsbreaks every week in the year—a impressive figure for a small island state. As a consequence of its vigorous marketing, stores such as Macy’s, adopted Jamaican themes for their merchandising. The success of the JTB’s marketing initiatives had a marked effect on the Jamaican brand, and this was reflected in Macy’s winter resort promotion, “Macy’s Flew to Jamaica”. This served to improve Jamaica’s image in the marketplace, and subsequently, the island was also featured in numerous publications, enhancing the island’s profile internationally. Indeed, by March 1967, Jamaica was the place to be and one of the most sought after destinations in the world.

**Discover Jamaica / We are More Than a Beach… (1975-1984)**

To sell Jamaica as a destination that was not only synonymous with beautiful beaches, the JTB launched the Discover Jamaica campaign during the period from 1975-1984. However, this campaign was not geared exclusively towards overseas visitors. Given that many Jamaicans considered the tourism industry to be the domain of foreign nationals, the JTB focused this particular initiative on getting Jamaicans to vacation in their own homeland. In essence, the JTB wanted to make ordinary Jamaicans central to the industry, hence, breeding a spirit of inclusivity and harmony with the island’s tourism product. To effectively carry out this mandate, the board adopted a “new approach” to tourism and embarked on a programme to “offer a product that meets the needs of the consumer, yet at the same time reflect the pride, the aspirations and needs of Jamaica.”

The resulting “Discover Jamaica” campaign, according to the JTB, was one of the most memorable in the island’s tourism history and was supported by the slogan “A Fi Wi Country” (it’s our country). The aforementioned title was developed into a song by
Reggae artiste Max Romeo, and encouraged Jamaicans to be visitors in their own land, instead of travelling overseas for vacation.

In 1975, the JTB also initiated a “computerized system that data-processes newspaper, magazine and newsletter clipping returns, and radio and television reports. One year later, the JTB also placed advertisements in popular black magazines in order to attract black Americans to the island. The JTB also promoted the island at the “Miss Black America” pageant. Moreover, there was a concentrated marketing effort on the West Coast targeting students and “Black Ethnic” markets. A special “Rest and Relaxation” programme was aimed at travel agents and by 1981, television was used as the prime medium for advertising Jamaica to the world.

Make it Jamaica Again (1984 –1994)

Prior to the launch of the “Make it Jamaica Again” campaign period, Jamaica had long been known as a warm weather destination, where people from colder climates would come to escape harsh winters (Stupart & Shipley, 2012). However, in an effort to shed that brand image, the JTB conceived the “Make it Jamaica Again” campaign to brand the island as a year round vacation spot (JTB, 2015). This represented a strategic move by the JTB to expand its niche market, and consequently, its competitiveness in the tourism industry. Represented at the time by the acclaimed firm, Young and Rubicam, the agency used nostalgic themes to create a new campaign that focused on both “the visitor and the product” (JTB, 2015). The island was marketed as an idyllic destination that facilitated romantic getaways. To accompany this campaign, the JTB also produced a Hotel Value Guide, as well as the cruise video “Jamaica All Ashore”, which highlighted the island’s four ports. Additionally, the board ramped up its marketing efforts to Black
Americans by targeting cities such as Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta. In an effort to increase the number of Latino visitors to Jamaica, the JTB sought to make the island a key destination for Spanish speaking visitors by increasing its marketing efforts in Dade County, Florida. Air travel was also established between Jamaica and the South American countries of Brazil and Argentina.

**One Love (1994-2003)**

Borrowing the title of Bob Marley’s iconic song, One Love, the JTB launched a campaign of the same name. This time, the challenges it sought to overcome swiveled around increased regional and international competition, as well as a negative notion that Jamaica was unsafe, and even unfriendly. To combat these challenges, the JTB reached out to members of the Jamaican diaspora, through the “Friends of Jamaica Programme”, to help curtail and debunk this pessimistic view of Jamaica and Jamaicans. To reassure its stakeholders, the JTB also established a “Tourism Helpline” providing 24-hour response service to assist visitors seeking vital information on the island and its service offerings.

In 1996, the JTB also launched the Honeymoon Trail”. This programme was geared towards visiting honeymooners, and one of its perks was easy passage through the Sangster International Airport. Additionally, the programmes “Doin’ the T”, and “Putting yourself in the picture” were created to illuminate the myriad opportunities facilitated by tourism, as well as the industry’s positive impact on the lives of Jamaicans.

However, it was the qualification of the island’s national football (soccer) team for the 1998 World Cup gave the JTB its biggest opportunity yet, to highlight Jamaica as an up and coming destination for sports tourism. The island, through its national football team, fondly dubbed, the “Reggae Boyz”, became the first English speaking territory, and
the smallest country at that time, to qualify for the World Cup finals. Understandably, the JTB saw this as a great promotional opportunity for Jamaica, and it subsequently embarked on a series of special activities featuring the team. The JTB, looking to make its own history as the Reggae Boyz had done, commissioned the creation of a giant football which was arguably the biggest football ever created. This football was used to generate enormous publicity for the Reggae Boyz. The ball was inaugurated at the Charles de Gaulle airport in France in June 1998, and was the focal point for visitors to Paris during the football competition (JTB, 2015). The press surrounding the qualification of the “Reggae Boyz” along with the huge football created new interests in Jamaica, and rekindled interests which had become stagnant.

Once you go, you know (2003-2013)

There is a popular saying that goes, “if America sneezes, Jamaica gets a cold”, reflecting the influence and dependence of Jamaica on the USA. After the September 2011 attacks in the USA, it became quite obvious how events in the USA could affect the Jamaican economy. Being Jamaica’s largest tourist market, the terrorist attacks in the USA, understandably brought about a large amount of angst for the Jamaican tourist industry. Due to its overwhelming reliance on the North American market, the Jamaica Tourist Board launched the “Once you go, you know” campaign in 2003. This campaign, according to the JTB, was intended to aggressively promote and encourage travel to the island. Through various public relations, advertising and promotional activities, the JTB shifted its focus to the ‘modern visitor’ who was interested in getting the full Jamaican experience by indulging in its cuisine, art, culture, and the history of its people. During
this period, the JTB experimented with cinema advertising, and, was able to reach an
audience of 7.4 million moviegoers in four major US cities.

The “Once you go, you know” campaign, according to the Jamaica Brand Manual
(2015), was built on the premise that there is more to Jamaica than “meets the eye”.
Rather, Jamaica is an experience that catapults visitors on a mystical journey that stays
with them forever. This experience encompasses the island’s history, natural beauty,
cuisine, music and language that can only be revealed in its entirety when one sets foot
on the island. In essence, an individual will never know the true Jamaica until he or she
visits. This campaign was intended to brand Jamaica as a non-generic destination,
differentiating it from all other island destinations by prompting visitors to experience its
richness and diversity, thereby embarking on a memorable journey.

**Jamaica-Get All Right (2013-present)**

In 2013, the Jamaica Tourist Board once again introduced a new campaign titled
“Get Allright”. Launched at the World Travel Market 2013 conference in London, the
new branding was selected to help express Jamaica’s new “edgy” tone across all future
marketing materials, including digital, TV and print communications (Faull, 2013).
Based on the long held belief that Jamaica, as a place, made people feel that all was right,
the ‘Jamaica Get Allright” slogan was conceived. Jamaica has now been (re) branded as a
destination where people can find positive energy, and an experience which is stimulated
by its rhythm, energy, and spirit (JTB, 2015). To launch this new campaign, a giant stress
ball with the new slogan was released on Broadway (NY) between 45th and 46th Streets,
allowing persons in the city a chance to release their stress, while tacitly encouraging
them to do so in Jamaica. This activity was also accompanied by a Twitter campaign with
the hashtag #getallright (Faull, 2013). By bringing the spirit of Jamaica to life, the JTB hopes to entice visitors who are seeking more than a destination, but an experience and a way of life.

**Nation Branding- The Greek Perspective**

Since the concept of nation branding was introduced by Simon Anholt in 1992, it has been used by developed and developing countries alike. Greece is an example of a smaller state that is utilizing nation branding techniques to enhance its economy and general position in the global arena. As one of the oldest civilizations in the world, Greece is famous for its contribution to politics, theatre arts, and religion. In fact, Greece boasts several United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) accredited heritage sites such as the Acropolis, Delos and the archaeological site at Olympia. As a sovereign country, Greece possesses 6,000 islands and islets that are scattered throughout the Aegean and Ionian Seas. However, only 217 of those islands are inhabited. The most notable of these islands being, Mykonos, Santorini, Crete and Paros (www.visitgreece.gr). The country also has over 16,000 km of coastline which boasts some of the most beautiful beaches in Europe. Given its natural beauty, history and cuisine, thousands flock to Greece each year to bask in what the country has to offer. However, despite the aforementioned, many believe that Greece as a brand has suffered greatly, due to its ongoing financial crisis.

Triggered by the global recession of 2008 which had its genesis in the USA, the Greek economy would eventually collapse, under mounting debt. In November 2009, when it became apparent that its budget deficit and public debt were no longer sustainable, the Greek government accepted a rescue plan of 110 billion euros designed
and financed by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Understandably, this bailout was accompanied by austerity measures which manifested themselves in decreased public spending, increase levels of unemployment, and loss of financial security for its citizenry, particularly older Greeks. Because of the financial crisis which Greece is still undergoing, the government has embarked on initiatives geared toward rebranding the country.

Cognizant of the fact that Greece has suffered some amount of image and reputation damage because of the financial crisis, the Greek government has launched several campaigns in an attempt to restore the country’s credibility with prospective visitors and international business interests. With nation branding, the Greek government hopes to put the country on the path of economic recovery by placing an emphasis on tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI). Subsequently, the Greek government launched several tourism campaigns, intended to reignite interest in Greece. The emphasis placed on tourism is particularly important as that sector accounts for 18 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), employing more than one-fifth of the Greek workforce (Bisa, 2005).

In 2008, the Greek National Tourism Organization launched, the “Leave your Myth in Greece” campaign which painted Greece as a premier tourist destination. The campaign tried to portray Greece as an idyllic destination, set against the backdrop of azure blue waters, and historical sites with contemporary offerings. The advertisement lures potential visitors by encouraging them to ruminate about Greece and put themselves in the various settings depicted in the promotional video. In 2012, the Greek Tourism Ministry also launched a four-minute flash mob titled, “Greece Welcomes You” to
increase interests in the Greek Tourism product (Bisa, 2012). Since the summer of 2010, the Greek National Tourism Organization has also shifted its nation branding efforts to online marketing not only to increase its internet presence but also to reach greater audience (Vazou, n.d).

**Brand Image**

Aaker (1991) asserts that images are based on perceptions that may or may not reflect the truth about a particular brand, and they are indicative of some form of present social knowledge shared by a particular group of people. According to Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono (2004), "a successful brand image enables consumers to identify the needs that the brand satisfies, and to differentiate the brand from its competitors, consequently increasing the likelihood that consumers will purchase the brand" (p. 252). However, Aaker (1991) does not link the brand just to a product, rather, he extends the term to cover the source of the product. Therefore, a company is a brand, and that brand is capable of creating value above and beyond the product's functional purpose, making the product seem better to consumers. For example, there are many brands of orange juice on the market, and many customers would find it difficult to make a distinction, solely based on taste. However, as part of its marketing strategies, a company marketing a particular brand of orange juice knowingly uses subtle tactics to engender an allegiance to its brand by getting consumers to believe that their brand of orange juice is inherently better than the rest. Reynolds (1965) notes that "an image is the mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of the total impressions; it comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered" (p. 69).
Furthermore, it might be argued that the values which make up a brand exist because of perceptions. Bearing this in mind, perceptions may be evaluated positively, or negatively by customers, and potential customers. These evaluations, when combined, manifest themselves in the form of brand image. Moreover, it is important to remember that even though image is based on perceptions, and lacks tangible aspects, buyers are still inclined to act on these perceptions because of the association with specific images. Thus, image has the power to direct both behaviour and communication activity. The establishment of a common vision of reality, in a given social or cultural group, is therefore, a matter of the success of a given image (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991).

**Brand Identity**

Brand identity is something that truly is, or is a representation of the brand- the brand’s essence (Dinnie, 2008). It is the identification that distinguishes something apart from another. As it pertains to marketing, the concept of image has numerous meanings; however, it is widely accepted to mean what consumers perceive an organization to be visually and otherwise (Ferrand & Pages, 1999). When marketing a company and its products, brand identity is crucial. Dibb, et al (1997) define brand as a name, symbol, design, or some other characteristic that distinguishes a seller's product or service from that of another seller. For instance, Nike and Reebok are both in the business of sports merchandising, however, based on their unique brand identities, we are able, as consumers, to separate the products of one from the other. Kapferer (2008) suggests that the identity of a brand involves many different components, and that communication coming from a particular company about a brand, whether verbal or non-verbal, or formal or informal, to have a consistent identity.
Brand identity, according to Janonis, et.al (2007), is a set of visual, auditory, and other stimuli that is unique and makes a brand meaningful. This brand identity, invariably, helps to express the brand and construct its image. Brand identity plays a significant role in helping companies resonate with their targeted customers. Certainly, in the world of business, branding is playing a dominant role as companies compete to have the rights to align themselves with prominent persons. For example, sports and movie stars play a key role in helping to bolster the brand identity of the companies they are associated with. This makes branding more than just a slogan or an image. Branding and the identity which is created in the process, represents a real and powerful set of actions which companies can effectively use to drive value to their brands by offering something that, by virtue of having its own individual essence, helps differentiate their brand from others (De Chernatony & Harris, 2001).

Brand Personality

The idea of a brand having its own unique personality is not new. In fact, the concept was first used decades ago, to describe the non-material dimensions that made a store special- in essence, its character (Azoulay & Kaprefer, 2003). Simply put, brand personality may be described as a set of human characteristics that are attributed to a brand name. A brand personality is something to which the consumer can relate, and an effective brand can only increase its brand equity by having a consistent set of traits. Indeed, King (1970) argues that people choose brands the same way that they choose their friends, pointing out that they like them as they do people. Hence, it is not astonishing to hear people referring to brands as being “sexy”, “chic” or even “friendly”. For example, Apple customers are loyal to the brand because they see a personality trait
with which they can readily identify. By associating human characteristics with brands, customers may feel that they can relate to the brand, thereby engendering a sense of obligation and loyalty to that brand. According to Keller (1993), brand personality also serves a symbolic and expressive function; however, this symbolic view of brands is only made possible because consumers often imbue brands with human personality traits. Consumers, like the Apple loyalists, play a fundamental role in creating, and acting out, the values that the brand represents. Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) further argue that the use of the term “brand personality” originated as a non-product based definition of the brand, which in essence, “captured all that was not bound to the product’s use, performance, attributes, and benefits” (p.144).

Therefore, to be effective, a brand’s personality has to, first and foremost, resonate with everyone who is involved with the brand, from brand managers to customers. Therefore, it is essential that companies build upon the values and competencies that already exist within their companies. One of the biggest challenges many brands face is determining how to speak in a way that is unique, relevant to their audiences, and expresses their core brand values. With this being said, brand personality starts with the company’s employees, who bring this personality to life, and actually help to determine brand personality. To ensure that a brand has an endearing personality, that same company should establish corporate-wide values for everyone to live by, investing in recruiting and training, communicating objectives openly, and listening to its employees. For many firms, the employees are the face of the company that customers often see, and it is imperative that employees embody the brand personality that a company aspires to build upon.
Brand Reputation

The reputation of a brand, like a person’s reputation, is of utmost importance, and it can mean the difference between success and failure. Therefore, to be successful, and profitable, brands, understandably, must develop a good reputation. According to Aaker, (1991) brand reputation makes it possible for a potential buyer to identify or recall of a brand as a member of a certain product category. The brand reputation is particularly important in contexts in which the brand must first enter the consideration of people. A reputable or recognized brand will thus often be selected over an unknown brand (Aaker, 2000). This means that an unknown brand, usually, has little chance of competing against a known brand that has a favourable reputation. A reputable brand is a strong asset, which benefits from a high degree of loyalty and the stability of future sales (Kapferer, 1997). And, increasingly, companies are paying more attention to the manner in which their product brands could impact a company’s overall profit margin (bottom line). For many businesses the brand name and what it represents is its most important asset on the basis of competitive advantage and of future earnings streams.

Reputation also involves how a company is seen by its stakeholders, and based on this idea, the majority of companies have to pay attention to their reputations. Reputations are fickle and vulnerable to internal and external threats, and a company’s reputation that has been carefully built over many years can crumble with one single act of indiscretion on a company’s part. Not having a good reputation may prove detrimental to a company’s brand and set it up for failure. Thus, reputation is perceived as a major risk issue along with other risks which may be financial or operational. Therefore, organizations need to avoid developing bad reputations, since they are, unavoidably,
always under the watchful eye of their stakeholders (Aaker, 1996). Hence, it is not uncommon that many companies are always looking for viable opportunities to enhance their brands. In an attempt to do this, companies may adopt cause-related marketing (CRM) and corporate social responsibility initiatives to gain favour from their stakeholders.

**Brand Equity**

Brand equity, according to Aaker (1991) is defined as the set of brand assets and liabilities linked to the brand that add value to or subtract value from a product or service. In his brand equity model, David Aaker contends that brand equity is comprised of brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, in addition to other proprietary assets. Although a number of different views of brand equity have been expressed, they all are generally consistent with the basic notion that brand equity represents the "added value" endowed to a product or a service as a result of past investments in the marketing of the brand.

Brand equity offers certain strategic benefits to companies. High levels of brand equity can result in increased sales, price premiums, customer loyalty, (Aaker, 1991), lower costs (Keller, 1993), and purchase intent. It is important for adding line extension. When a product category has entered the decline stage of the product life cycle, strong brand equity can help a brand survive longer than its competitors. Likewise, in periods of economic downturn, brand equity provides a platform that keeps the brand afloat at a profit long after competing products without strong brand identification begin to flounder. The power of brand equity is especially important in international marketing. Thus, a brand will have positive brand equity if consumers react more favorably to its
marketing mix elements than they do to the identical elements attributed to an unnamed brand (Keller, 1993). Thus, brand equity signifies something extra, namely the favorable status of the brand in the consumer’s mind. Brand equity is also what enables branded products or services to charge premium prices. Many major brands are positioned as quality products, and many people are willing to pay more for a quality they are familiar with, particularly if the brand has an image with which they would like to be associated. We have found that brand equity helps to differentiate the product from competitors’ offerings; serves as a proxy for quality and creates positive images in consumers’ minds; presents market share erosion during price and promotional wars; and prevents market share erosion by giving a firm time to respond to competitive threats.
CHAPTER 3
Methodology

This chapter will describe the methodological background for this thesis by, first and foremost, explaining the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach. Additionally, the choice of the case study approach will be explained, and how it will be applied to this particular study, and then the techniques used to gather and analyze data will be accounted for.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Given the topic being studied, a qualitative research approach was used for this study. Qualitative research, according to Patton (2001), “uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings” (p. 39). For instance, real world settings where the researcher has little control over the phenomenon being studied are possible scenarios. Qualitative methods also provide considerable space for an interpretive inquiry, unlike quantitative methods, which are more deductive. Certainly, within the context of research, qualitative methods are commonly used to discover how people construct the meaning of something (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000), and to understand how they live with those shared meanings in their various relationships. Moreover, the qualitative approach is also deemed ideal because of its unique ability to provide rich textual descriptions on a wide variety of phenomena.

Based on the fact that qualitative research methods seek to build understanding and discover meaning about different topics, the use of a qualitative method for this study of nation branding in the Jamaican context is not only practical, but will also provide the requisite tools to understand the nuances associated with the concept of nation branding.
Additionally, by using the qualitative method, the researcher gained information about the various strategies employed in nation branding, which provided invaluable insight about how they are currently being used in Jamaica. With this in mind, the qualitative research method proved valuable because it allowed greater flexibility since it is emergent in nature. Additionally, qualitative research is quite useful in describing and exploring phenomena and generating tentative explanations, which invariably helps to facilitate greater understanding about different elements of the chosen topic. This made it much easier for the researcher to understand nation branding in the Jamaican context, and the country’s attempt to enhance its competitive advantage through the use of various nation branding techniques.

**Addressing Issues of Credibility/Reliability**

Qualitative research tends to attract questions about reliability and credibility. Such questions normally arise from the fact that qualitative research is inductive, and interpretive in nature. In light of any concerns about credibility, extra effort was taken to ensure that data was collected from multiple sources which included archival records, existing documentation, and other artifacts. The use of data from varied sources, according to (Patton, 1990) invariably helps to bolster the credibility of the data, therefore reducing questions of accuracy. Furthermore, it is largely understood that for any qualitative research to be considered credible, some amount of culpability resides with the researcher, whose responsibility is to be judicious in the procedures used to garner information, as well as report such data from trustworthy sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).
Case Study

Since the concept of nation branding is a relatively new one, and under researched, it is appropriate that this study should be exploratory in nature. Hence, the use of a case study is seemingly the best route to take based on the fact that current research requires significant probing to unearth answers to the requisite research questions.

As a research approach, case studies have become prominent based on the fact that they offer some degree of flexibility for interpretation (Bryman, 2012) that is not readily offered by other qualitative approaches. Furthermore, Stoecker (1991) asserts that a “case study is the best way by which we can refine general theory and apply effective interventions in complex situation” (p.109).

According to Yin (1994. P. 13), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Furthermore, Mitchell (1983), defines a case study as a “detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits (or exhibit) the operation of some identified general theoretical principles” (p. 192). In other words, case studies allow researchers to explore different outcomes of general processes suggested by theories depending on different contexts. Therefore, case study research warrants detailed investigation, and is comprised of extensive data collected over time, providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study.

In defense of the use of case studies for research, Yin (1994) believes that they are particularly helpful in allowing the researcher to pursue an in-depth contextualized examination of social interaction within a single social setting. Case studies, according to
Yin (1994), represents a comprehensive research strategy that deals with situations “in which there will be more variables of interest than data points,” and one that “benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (p. 13). Thus, data for any research using case studies will come largely from documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 1994).

Stake (2000) contends that a case study is not a methodological choice, but more of a choice on what is to be studied. Moreover, Stake (1998) points out that case studies are not necessarily about the methods of investigation; rather, they are also about the object of the study which is the case itself. Stake (1995) also differentiates case studies as either intrinsic, collective, or a multi-case studies. The former, he posits, is used when one wants to understand a particular case. The latter is employed when the researcher wants to study several cases, which may, or may not, be grouped together with other cases.

When one has a research question and wants to get insight on the question by studying a particular case, instrumental case study is conducted. On the contrary, Yin (1994) suggests three different types of case studies whose use he contends are heavily reliant on the type of research question. This being the case, he asserts that case studies are exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. Additionally, he suggests that if the research is mainly focused on “what” questions, it may call for an exploratory study. An explanatory case study deals with “how” or “why” questions. A descriptive study focuses on covering the background information and accurate description of the case in question. Therefore, based on the fact that case studies accommodate in-depth data gathering, it is not
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surprising that they are more accurate if data is retrieved from different sources and can be validated.

Case studies may be single or multiple designs, and for the purpose of this study, the use of single case study is apt since a single-case study is analogous to a single experiment, and many of the same conditions that justify a single experiment also justify a single-case study. Another reason for conducting a single case study is that the case in question is a revelatory case and in that way being unique. In other instances, it is usually envisaged that a single-case may be conducted as a prelude to further study, but should not stand on its own.

Research Questions

To effectively examine the approaches being used by Jamaica to enhance its tourism product, this study will be guided by the following research question.

RQ 1. What are the branding strategies currently being used to enhance Jamaica’s tourism product?

Data Collection

For this study, once the research question was determined, a plan of action was prepared establishing how data would be collected, as well as potential sources of such data. To ensure accuracy, the researcher used multiple sources from which data was tapped. Such sources included, but were not limited to the Jamaica Tourist Board’s website, newspaper and magazine articles, previous research on branding and marketing Jamaica, tourism campaigns, and published books that focus on tourism in Jamaica. Moreover, Yin (1994) suggests that the use of multiple sources and modes of data or
‘triangulation’ are recommended to lessen certain biases which may invariably compromise the process of drawing conclusions.

Data for this study was collected over a period of time extending from July 2014 through April 2015, and was stored based on emerging themes in appropriate folders. The creation of a separate database, including notes, tabular materials, narratives etc. can be used as evidence for the case study report (Yin, 1994). When a chain of evidence is maintained, it is subsequently possible for an external observer, or a reader of the report, to determine how the evidence emerged. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that themes are important because they reflect important elements about the data in relation to the research question, and also represents a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. Additionally, themes help to identify patterns within the data and this in essence makes it easier to analyze said data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In carrying out research for this study, popular search engines such as Google and Bing were utilized to help identify relevant information, particularly about the Jamaica Tourist Board and its marketing endeavors, which exist in multiple sources on the internet. By using keywords such as “Jamaica Tourist Board”, “tourism in Jamaica”, “branding Jamaica” and “brand Jamaica”, the researcher was able to not only narrow the search for information but also identify data which aided in the development of the current study.

Archival/Historical Approach

In research, data from reputable sources plays a significant role in supporting the arguments presented in any study. One source of credible data is archives. Archives are largely described as extensive records which provide mostly historical information about people, events or activities. Some examples of archival documents include, letters,
Archival research is particularly useful because it provides copious amounts of information about institutions, people and communities. As a method of collecting data, archival research can be defined as the locating, evaluating, and systematic interpretation and analysis of sources found in archives (Corti, 2004). Archival research encompasses a significant array of activities which are intended to aid in the investigation of documents and textual materials produced by and about organizations. Archival methods usually involve the study of historical documents, and provides information about events, organizations and individuals from a previous time. Elena (2010) contends that historic research focuses on finding, using, and correlating information within primary and secondary sources to help researchers report on their own understanding of past events and their significance. This type of historical data is integral to research, because it allows researchers to interpret and better understanding various events or phenomena and their evolution over time. By analyzing historical texts, researchers may be better able to develop a narrative about a specific topic based on the evidence at hand because of the explanatory nature of archival research. In light of this, archival research is used in this project because the data collected is unique to Jamaica and gives a broader view of trends or outcomes as it relates to branding efforts over time.
(RE) BRANDING JAMAICA’S TOURISM PRODUCT

CHAPTER IV

Analysis

In this chapter, I define what the Jamaican brand is from the perspective of the tourism industry to its present contemporary nuances, which is reflective of a general attempt to brand the nation as a whole. Bearing this in mind, I postulate that traditional efforts to brand Jamaica has almost exclusively been tied to the tourism sector and its main marketing agency, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB). In light of this, this chapter includes a historical overview of the tourism industry in Jamaica and the different ways in which Jamaica has traditionally branded itself as a tourist destination. To elucidate how Jamaica is enhancing and (re) branding its tourism product, I present the different ways in which the tourism product is being diversified and fused with sports and cultural heritage to enhance Jamaica’s brand, particularly in tourism.

Defining Brand Jamaica

As an island endowed with natural beauty and great year round warm climate, Jamaica has always considered these attributes to be some of its major strengths and, as a result of this, has used them to market the island’s tourism product. In fact, since the emergence of its tourism, Jamaica has always been branded a beautiful tropical destination whose visitor experience was largely predicated upon its bountiful amounts of sun, sea and sand. Because of this, Jamaica became a playground for those wanting to bask in its natural beauty. To this end, the island’s tourist product became synonymous with a premiere, tropical destination brand which boasts a host of all-inclusive resorts, villas and other high-end accommodations.
According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2012), the idea of creating a distinct Jamaican brand emerged in the 1950s through the activities of the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB). During this period, the JTB registered trademarks for the country name “JAMAICA”, which meant that it could only be used by the agency in its marketing campaigns to make the island a top tourist destination. As the main agency responsible for marketing Jamaica as a top tourist destination, the Jamaica Tourist Board, continues to promote the island as a destination of choice to millions of prospective visitors worldwide. Through print and media campaigns, the JTB sells Jamaica as a beautiful place with clear blue water, white sand beaches, and amiable local people. In fact, these ads are replete with images of the island’s flora and fauna as well as its people whose smiling faces signify a welcoming and inviting spirit where visitors will be treated hospitably by local residents and at the same time have an experience which is authentically Jamaican. In essence, Jamaica’s brand, to a large extent is defined by its natural beauty as well as its people who play a significant role in influencing the brand.

In recent years, there have been efforts to create a Jamaican brand that is not exclusively tied to tourism, but instead is reflective of a general Jamaican brand essence. This shift was initiated in 1996 by JAMPRO’s Film, Music and Entertainment Commission, and sought to bring the island’s music, art, food and craft under one all-encompassing Jamaican brand (WIPO, 2012). Although the idea of a uniquely Jamaican brand has been tossed around for years, there really is no common consensus on what the brand is and what it is intended to represent to Jamaicans and non-Jamaicans alike. Despite the absence of an official brand Jamaica definition, Scarlett-Lozer (2012) has suggested that Brand Jamaica is an asset whose value is continuously growing. She
further argues that Brand Jamaica is comprised of Usain Bolt; Reggae and Dancehall music; the black, green, and gold colours of the national flag; Yohan Blake; Jamaican male sprinters on a whole; Jamaican female sprinters; and things Jamaican on a whole. Furthermore, Scarlett-Lozer (2012) postulates that Brand Jamaica is constituted by both intangible and tangible elements. The tangible property is made up of the land of wood and water, while the intangible property which is creative expressions captured as intellectual property. Scarlett-Lozer (2012) also notes that Brand Jamaica is simply culture, a vibe, a "Jamaicaness" that persons will come to know once they see or experience it.

The initiatives to brand the entire island emerged out of the need to amplify its competitive edge in increasingly globalized world. As it pertains to tourism, Jamaica’s branding strategy has now shifted to include other areas such as sports, religion, cultural heritage, as well as community tourism. Jamaica, now recognizes that it cannot sit on its laurels where branding itself is concerned as there is too much to gain from branding the island, not to brand the island. Consequently, the government and other stakeholders have found it necessary to reinvent the island’s brand to increase its competitive advantage not only in tourism but in other vital sectors as well. However, while the desire to brand the island is real, there is little consensus as to what it is, what it stands for, and its inherent benefits if any.

**History of Tourism in Jamaica**

Tourism in Jamaica goes back many decades. Kingsbury (2005) argued that “Jamaican tourism began in the late nineteenth century when the island was used and enjoyed as an exotic ‘Garden of Eden’ health resort by rich American tourists who were
transported on steamships owned by banana traders from Boston" (p.121). However, it is generally recognized that the sector was officially formed in the late 1800s, with the passing of the Hotels Act. Before this act, the sector, understandably, was poorly organized, which signaled inadequate accommodations, as well as the lack of essential services to make the sector successful (www.jtbonline.org). Based on this situation, the government encouraged the construction of hotels, granting lucrative incentives for the construction and maintenance of hotels, as well as duty free allowances for all building materials and furniture (McCatty & Serju, 2006; Stupart, 2005). Additionally, McCathy & Serju (2006) assert that the government proposed another Hotels Act in 1904. This act gave persons who were building hotels with over 40 rooms duty-free allowances, as well as exemptions from increased taxation for ten years, starting at the time their import license was issued.

After the passage of the Hotels Act, hotels opened in Kingston, Spanish Town, Moneague, and Mandeville (www.jtbonline.org). However, in an attempt to organize a unit responsible for marketing the country’s tourism product, the Jamaica Tourist Association was formed in 1910. This agency had the primary responsibility of marketing the island as a pleasure and health destination (Taylor, 1993). McCathy and Serju (2006) suggest that tourism continued to grow gradually, but noticeably declined because of the First World War. Given that tourism continued on an upward trend after the First World War, the Jamaican government again looked to capitalize on the sector, and established the Tourist Trade Development Board (TTDB) in 1922. The main role of this newly formed agency was to communicate key information about the island’s facilities, in addition to making arrangements with tourism stakeholders, for example hotel and
shipping companies bringing visitors to the island (Jamaica Tourist Board). However, in 1964, the government overhauled the TTDB and established the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), the agency which continues to be responsible for the worldwide tourism marketing and promotion for Jamaica.

**The Sun, Sea and Sand Model**

From the inception of tourism in Jamaica, the concept of sun, sea and sand has been the maxim that governs the industry. Tropical destinations such as Jamaica, according to Dodds (2007), have traditionally focused on this model to develop the industry. Promoted as a place that offered a respite from the harsh winters of Europe and North America; Jamaica has always promoted itself as a haven for those looking to get away from colder climates (Patullo, 2005; Stupart 2005). Initially, the region attracted persons who were stricken with maladies that required a warm environment to promote recuperation. And, those who could afford the voyage from North America and Europe began to view the islands as places to recreate and rejuvenate. Based on its long history of attracting persons from colder climates, the Jamaican government has been complicit in the marketing of the sun, sand, and sea experience to tourists. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the government was the main instigator behind the 1891 Jamaica exhibition which served as an avenue for promoting Jamaica abroad as a ‘winter-getaway’ tourist destination (Martin, 1994, in Stupart, 2012).

Throughout the 1960s, marketing continued to focus on the sun, sea and sand winter get-away image because few attractions had been developed that provided an alternative experience. This placed Jamaica in direct competition with a number of other Caribbean destinations that were marketing the same packages (Stupart, 2012). Indeed,
Jamaica now faces greater competition, not only from its Caribbean neighbors, but also from other countries in Asia, that have similar offerings of “sun, sea and sand”. Nonetheless, Jamaica continues to market itself primarily as a sun, sea and sand destination, and this is evident in its continued marketing efforts, as the spatial development of areas such as Negril, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, whose local economies pivot primarily around the tourism sector. However, over the last several years, tourism stakeholders, and the government have been making a concerted effort to diversify the island’s tourism product. This diversification effort, for the most part, include sports tourism, community tourism and heritage/culture tourism.

The All-Inclusive Concept

In a market where tourists have a plethora of options to choose from, all-inclusive (AI), seemingly reigns supreme in sun, sea and sand destinations such as Jamaica. The all-inclusive model was introduced to Jamaica by hotelier John Issa, and was inspired by the Club Mediterranean resort concept on the Spanish island of Mallorca during the 1950s. Issa and Jayawardena (2003) argue that this type of holiday package is the most popular in the Caribbean. All-inclusive holidays can be defined as travel, accommodations, and a substantial amount of food and drink, together with activities such as entertainment, trips or sports coaching which takes place at the time of booking.

The basic premise of all-inclusive resorts is that it takes the hassle out of vacation planning. In fact, the AI model is described by Gill (1994) and Pennicook (2006) as a “class-less” and “cash-less” system through which visitors could pay for round trip, hotel transfers, accommodation, entertainment, and unlimited food in one package. Poon (1988) argues that the addition of the concept helped to diversify the Caribbean tourism
product, thereby giving it a competitive advantage in the global tourism industry. Additionally, Gill (1994) lauds the all-inclusive model for increasing the Caribbean’s share in the industry, as well as helping it to maintain a strong image in the marketplace.

**Cruise Tourism**

Cruise tourism represents a fun and exciting way to visit a destination or multiple destinations in one trip. And, unlike other forms of tourism, the main purpose of taking a cruise is primarily for leisure. Because of the nature of the cruise industry, many tourists are gravitating towards this option because they can sample several destinations. Cruises present a safer alternative to travelling by airplane and there are a myriad of activities that are offered on the cruise liners. Whatever the reason for choosing a cruise over a land-based resort, this form of tourism is increasing in terms of popularity. In fact, Brida and Aguirre (2008) propose that it is the fastest growing segment in the global travel industry. While the industry is relatively young, it continues to steadily increase (Teye & Parris, 2011). This increase is driven, in part, by the demand from North America and growing demand from Europe and Australasia.

The cruise tourist market is dominated by North America, the largest originator of cruises. The major cruise harbour infrastructure is located in Miami, Florida, and is regarded as the cruise capital of the world (Dehoorne, 2008). During 2013, more than 4,000 cruises originated from ports throughout North America, carrying an estimated 10.94 million passengers. The leading zone is the Caribbean which, especially during the northern hemisphere’s winter months, captures more than half of the demand from the world’s leading source market, which continues to be North America. There has been growth in all global cruise regions, but the industry’s success is headlined by the
Caribbean region, the top cruise destination in the world. In fact, the region accounted for 34.4% of all global itineraries in 2013 (FCAA, 2014).

For Jamaica, cruise tourism is just as important a market segment as land-based tourism. Indeed, destinations such as Jamaica are, according to Teye and Parris (2011) “attracted to cruise tourism because of the expenditure of cruise passengers that supplement revenue generated by land-based hotel and resort guests” (p. 18). Furthermore, they argue that cruise ship visitors are seen as samplers of destinations, making a cruise trip as a precursor to an extended resort or land-based vacation. The cruise industry, provides a viable, supplementary product to bolster the important tourism industry.

Noting the upward trends projected for the cruise tourism industry, the Jamaican government opened the Falmouth Cruise Ship Pier in 2011, to increase the number of ports that are accessible by the various cruise line companies. Falmouth is the capital of the parish of Trelawny and it is located on the island’s north coast. The opening of the Falmouth Pier brought the number of ports on the island to four. The other three ports are located in Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Port Antonio, which is located on the eastern side of the island. The Falmouth Pier can accommodate the largest cruise ships in the industry. In Falmouth, visitors will get to experience an historic area of Jamaica which is home to one of the Caribbean's largest colonial historic districts, with its Georgian style buildings. During its heyday, Falmouth was one of the busiest ports in Jamaica and the send-off point for sugar, molasses, rum and coffee that was bound for England. In return, the English tall ships arrived in Falmouth with African slaves and other staples of 18th-century colonial life. Falmouth's economic status began to decline in the 1800s after the
end of slavery, and the town became a quiet, seaside village. However, the arrival of the Falmouth cruise port has added much needed vitality to the town, giving it the chance to actively participate in the tourism industry, and in the process generate vital revenue for the town.

**Cultural/Heritage Tourism**

Culture, at its core, can be described as the sum of a group’s experiences, thoughts, behaviors and values that govern the lives of persons who are members of that group (Browne, 2013). Hence, culture is also seen as making up a constitutive, yet intrinsic aspect of societies throughout the world. Noted social psychologist Geert Hofstede (1994) places the different elements of culture into four (4) categories. The first category is constituted of symbols which, for the most part, constitutes verbal and nonverbal language. The second is made up of rituals that essentially are the collective activities inherent in a culture. Thirdly, he proposes that values are important to culture because they express the feelings of a culture. Lastly, he suggests that culture also takes into consideration its heroes, real or imagined. These heroes serve as role models in literature and folklore (Browne, 2013).

Cultural heritage tourism is defined as the movement of persons to visit cultural attractions outside of their usual place of residence, to gain new understanding and experiences regarding the history of others (Richards, 1996). In this sense, culture is considered to be an important element, and arguably, the catalyst that motivates people to leave the confines of their homes to visit other places. Thus, it can be argued that it is the Egyptian culture, for example, that lures millions of tourists to visit its pyramids each year. Because of this seemingly symbiotic relationship between culture and tourism,
McKercher and du Cros (2002) argue that cultural assets form the foundation of cultural/heritage tourism. This partnership between culture and tourism has enabled the emergence of a distinct niche market in the lucrative business of travel.

Cultural heritage tourism is an important part of the international tourist market, and Dias (2012) argues that cultural heritage is the most valuable “raw material” of the modern tourist industry. However, despite the prominence of cultural/heritage tourism today, McKercher and du Cros (2002), suggest that it was not formally considered as a distinct product category in the tourism industry until the 1970s. It now plays a fundamental role in the marketing of various destinations in the world. Destinations such as Greece, Italy and Egypt have leveraged their cultural heritage and have used it as a key marketing tool to brand themselves, invariably setting themselves apart from other destinations. Therefore, the aforementioned destinations are able to distinguish themselves because they offer authentic experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere. For example, one can only go to Egypt if he/she desires to see the real sphinx, as it is unique to that country. And, since tourists have been known to seek out authentic experiences, a country like Egypt is able to use that to its advantage. This is because destination brands, according to Dias et al (2012), individually inherit their core assets which are comprised of landscape, people, culture and history. Thus, cultural heritage becomes the basis for attractiveness to tourists, as well as the enduring essence and lasting characteristics of a destination (Dias, et al 2012).

Known as the land of wood and water, Jamaica’s natural beauty has captivated visitors for many decades. However, aside from its natural beauty, Jamaica also has a beguiling personality that captivates the interest of persons, luring them to its shores. As
the birthplace of several genres of music, the most famous of which is reggae, Jamaica’s
cultural fabric is an interesting, yet complex history of domination, rebellion, and
perseverance. In Jamaica, the mutual dependence that exists between tourism and cultural
heritage is particularly evident, and despite having a history that is similar to its
Caribbean neighbors, the island has managed to create a culture which makes it easily
distinguishable from the other islands. In fact, Brathwaite (1971) proposes that Jamaica is
a Creole society that emerged from a dominant African structure whose culture has been
fused with Europe, specifically Great Britain. The combination of these two cultures has
resulted in the emergence of Jamaica as a cultural powerhouse, having contributed to
distinct cuisine, arts and craft, religion and, language.

Jamaica, as a site for cultural/heritage tourism, is also home to numerous heritage
sites and attractions. One of the most notable sites is Maroon Town, home to the
legendary maroons; a group of slaves who broke away from Spanish plantations when the
British took over the island in 1655. These former slaves established autonomous
communities in the hilly interior of the island. The maroons defeated the British on
multiple occasions after they were deemed a threat to the survival of the plantations
scattered throughout the island. This was because plantation slaves had ambitions of
joining the maroons in their free villages. After multiple attempts to defeat them, the
English finally acknowledged that this would be futile, eventually signing a peace treaty
with the maroons. Port Royal is another heritage site that is included in the list of
attractions on the island. Once known as the "the wickedest city on earth", Port Royal
became the mercantile hub of the Caribbean and the most economically important
English port in the Americas. Of note also, is the Rastafari religion whose beliefs center
around the divinity of Haile Selassie, the late emperor of Ethiopia. The Rastafarian name for God is Jah, and many regard Haile Selassie, the late Ethiopian Emperor as the Messiah prophet of the Black race, as well as God incarnate (Savishinsky, 1994). Rastafarians also believe they are one of the lost tribes of Israel who were sold into slavery and taken to Babylon (Jamaica). In fact, some members of the Rastafarian religion have migrated to Ethiopia from Jamaica, as they believe the former to be the Promised Land. Rastafarians are identified by their matted hair, commonly referred to as locks or dreadlocks which are symbolic of the lion’s mane in the Rastafarian flag. Rastafarians who adhere to the tenets of the religion tend to be vegetarians, and do not consume processed foods. Additionally, Rastafarians consider marijuana (ganja) a religious sacrament, and uses it recreationally as well for religious purposes.

According to the “The Ten Year Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development”, other sites that could be incorporated into the cultural/heritage product includes, but are not limited to the Black River Safari, Spanish Town, Rosehall Great House, Invercauld Great House and Hotel. Furthermore, it also recommends that the island’s parish churches and courthouses be considered as part of the cultural/heritage product (JTB, 2015). Furthermore, the plan has proposed that heritage tourism be divided into the following categories:

- The Maroons Forts & Fortification
- Natural Wonders Slavery & Emancipation
- Popular Customs, including Music, Dance, Language and Dress
- Industrial Heritage Pre-Columbian Jamaica
- Churches and Great Houses
• Popular Customs Architecture

Jamaica’s cultural heritage is not only important in terms of its contribution to the buoyancy of the island’s tourism product, but it may also be viewed as an essential element of a larger narrative geared towards nation branding. Given that Jamaica’s cultural heritage is reflective of its overall identity, it forms the foundation of a larger marketing strategy for the tourist industry. Jamaica’s cultural heritage, in a region where most of the islands share a similar history, helps to distinguish Jamaica from other Caribbean destinations. Additionally, cultural/heritage tourism is also considered to be a viable way for Jamaica to sustain and preserve its cultural assets which may help influence one’s decision to visit the island.

Cultural heritage, in Jamaica’s case, specifically diversifies the tourist product, offering an experience that does not exclusively hinge on the sun, sea and sand concept that the island has traditionally been known for. Cultural/heritage tourism is not dependent on its coastline, instead, it pivots around the island’s history, which, like the DNA of humans, is unique to Jamaica and cannot be copied by other countries. The cultural heritage of Jamaica makes it authentic, distinct, and memorable, and this brand position makes Jamaica competitive by providing visitors with an experience that is unique, and cannot be experienced elsewhere. Indeed, cultural tourism presents a radical departure from the homogenization characteristic of most destinations, giving them a holistic and distinct identity; thus making them more appealing to potential visitors. This makes culture vital to nation branding. Cognizant of the viability of its own cultural heritage, the Jamaican government, along with tourism stakeholders, are trying to develop this aspect of the industry.
Notwithstanding the value of Jamaica’s cultural heritage to the tourism sector, some critics are of the view that tourism can also cause cultural degradation (Wood, 1997). This cultural degradation is widely assumed as the tainting of once pristine cultures through the process of commodification for the sole reason of generating revenue for the tourism industry. With the commodification process of tourism being relentless (Judd & Fainstein, 1999) there are many Jamaicans who are concerned about the impact that tourism will eventually have on the local culture. The fear of cultural dilution is real, and the fact that the island is so dependent on tourism perhaps may also spell an end to the island’s local heritage as it being constantly tweaked to accommodate the interests of tourism stakeholders and visitors. When one thinks of the iconic Jamaican phrase “yeah man” and how it has evolved from its original roots to the now re-appropriated tourist version of “yeah mon”. Though seemingly inconsequential, this re-appropriation of a popular phrase suggests that tourism’s influence on Jamaican culture is potentially insidious.

Though it is commonly believed that tourism and culture are interdependent, it may also be argued that, without any attempts at preservation, tourism may in the long run ruin Jamaica’s cultural heritage. This certainly does not bode well for a small nation like Jamaica that lacks resources and capital to develop an alternate industry which would not commodify its culture as much. In the absence of other viable industries, Jamaica can however implement initiatives to sustain and preserve its cultural heritage for future generations. This will however require collaborative effort among citizens, tourism interests and the Jamaican government. This will have to be implemented through various
educational campaigns to get persons to understand the importance of preserving the island’s cultural heritage.

**Sports Tourism**

Tourism, like many other industries, is dynamic, and this allows it to be flexible enough to adapt to challenges, economic and otherwise, that it might face from time to time. Over the years, the tourism industry has emerged from its major offering of “sun, sea, and sand”, to include other activities which include, but are not limited to, adventure, eco-tourism, heritage/cultural tourism, and sport tourism. The latter of which is steadily increasing in terms of its popularity. In fact, destinations such as Australia and Canada have been tapping into the latent potential that exists in this form of tourism, with the main intention of enhancing the tourism product and improving its viability. Consequently, many people in the sport and tourism industries are eagerly pursuing this niche market because of its inherent potential viability (Hudson, 2003). As a concept, sports tourism, largely refers to international trips taken by individuals for the specific purpose of viewing or participating in a sporting event. And, according to Ross, (2001), this form of tourism exists in three forms: sport event tourism, active sport tourism, and nostalgia sport tourism. However, Weed and Bull (2004) describe sports tourism as a distinct interaction of activity between people and place. Hence, any use of sports to brand a place may inherently have to take into consideration, the citizens of a place, and the relationship they have with this place (Rhein & Shields, 2006).

Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing market segments in the tourism industry and it is receiving increased attention because of its social, environmental, and economic impact on destinations (Hritz & Ross, 2010). The rise in sport tourism, according to
(Schwark, 2007), has been credited with increased interest in global sporting events such as the Olympic Games, World Cup Football (soccer), and Formula 1 Grand Prix. However, while sports and tourism have been around for many decades, it is only within the last two decades that destinations have fused both to help in the promotion of their brands. An example of a place that has successfully used sports to promote and enhance its brand is the US city of Indianapolis, which Shimmel (2001) argues, was transformed from an industrial town to one which hosts major basketball tournaments, and the Indy 500, one of the biggest automobile races in the world. Certainly, because of the popularity of sports today, sports tourism has changed from being an area of the tourism industry that catered primarily to the privileged, to be a more inclusive, social, economic and cultural phenomenon (Weed & Bull, 2009). Indeed, more and more persons have the financial wherewithal to travel for the purpose of participating in, or watching sporting events, than ever before. For instance, it was reported that over 10,000 English fans went to Brazil to watch the 2014 World Cup Football tournament (Armstrong, 2014). On the contrary, FIFA suggests that more than 200,000 World Cup tickets were purchased by US residents, the most of any country. This means that more fans from the US travelled to Brazil than from any other country; a fact which may be surprising to many people since football (soccer) is not the most popular sport in the US. This seems to suggest that sports enthusiasts, for a competition like the Football World Cup, are driven to attend such events based on their love of the sport, disposable income and patriotism. And, this is what makes the marriage between sports and tourism a mutually beneficial one.

Understandably, due to the high demand for various forms of sports, many destinations are becoming enthralled with the idea of fusing sports and tourism to form a
viable sub-sector of the tourism industry, and Jamaica is one of these countries. Sport has always been an integral part of Jamaican life, however, the success of Jamaican athletes in track and field, football (soccer) and cricket over the last several decades has brought some recognition that sports can be used to brand and enhance the island’s image, while further diversifying its tourism product. As it pertains to the use of sports to brand Jamaica, Johnson (2013) proposes that Jamaica’s identity is steeped in sports, and outside of reggae music, sports has been influential in anchoring Jamaica’s stature in the world. Given this fact, Jamaica has a natural advantage in this niche market, especially in the area of track and field. It should come as no surprise that the Jamaican government, along with various tourism interests are earnestly seeking ways to benefit from the marriage between sports and tourism. As such, sports tourism is seen as an important part of the marketing strategy to brand Jamaica, thus attracting more visitors to its shores.

In an effort to maximize the benefits of sport tourism, Jamaica recently established *Jamaica Sport*, which is a technical working group created by the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the Ministry of Sport to explore the commercial opportunities provided by sport tourism. In addition, the body also hopes to leverage Brand Jamaica, and sporting events held locally and internationally, to ensure that the country maximizes marketing and promotional opportunities where sports tourism is concerned. Additionally, the minister of Tourism and Entertainment, the Hon. Dr. Wykeham McNeil sees the creation of *Jamaican Sport* as a way for the country to reap some of the economic benefits that have been sparked by the success of its track and field athletes. Moreover, he asserts that the major events attraction programme will seek to target those events that yield maximum economic, social and infrastructure benefits, and present little
or no threat to the social displacement or disruption of normal economic activity (Jamaica Information Service). Hence, in an effort to position Jamaica as the premiere sports tourism destination in the Caribbean, events such as the Jamaica Invitational Track meet, Reggae Marathon and the ISSA Boys and Girls Track and Field Championship (‘champs’), and the Jamaica Soccer Cup are being touted to help Jamaica achieve this goal. The Jamaica Soccer Cup, in addition to providing a platform for persons to participate in football events, will also give participants the chance to explore the parish of St. Elizabeth, which is known for its friendly residents, Black River, as well as Appleton Estate.

**Branding Jamaica as the “Sprint Factory”**

Since its initial participation in the summer Olympic Games in 1948, Jamaica has participated in all subsequent games, and has done progressively better with each staging. However, it was at the 2008 games held in Beijing, China, that Jamaica emerged as not only the sprint factory of the Caribbean, but of the world. At the culmination of the 2008 games, Jamaica won eleven (11) track and field medals, including six (6) golds, and had the most first-place finishes for any country in the world, except for the United States and Russia. It was also at the 2008 summer Olympics that Usain Bolt, with his larger than life personality, and fun-loving nature captivated the world with his blistering speed, setting world records in both the 100m and 200m dash and helped the 4 x 100m team set a new world record. As a small nation of 2.7 million people, Jamaica has the honor of being recognized as the most successful country in track and field based on a per capita average. Moreover, Jamaica also has the distinction of having the first woman (Merlene Ottey) from the English-speaking Caribbean to win a medal at the summer Olympics, as
well as the first woman to win a gold medal (Deon Hemmings) at the games. Other Jamaican athletes such as Shelly-Ann Frazer Pryce, Veronica Campbell-Brown, Yohann Blake and Asafa Powell have also played significant roles in contributing to Jamaica’s track and field success. The achievements of Jamaican athletes over the years have concretized Jamaica’s sporting prowess and has positioned the island as a global sports brand, which is fondly referred to as the “sprint factory” (Johnson, 2013). However, while the island’s greatest success in sports has come in track and field, Jamaica has also managed to make its mark in sports such as football (soccer), swimming, taekwondo, boxing and even bobsleigh (bobsled).

**Branding destination Jamaica through sports**

From the standpoint of benefits, sports provide Jamaica with both tangible and intangible advantages (Rein & Shields, 2006). Since events such as the summer Olympic Games and the IAAF World Championships attract millions of viewers, this media coverage provides free publicity for not only Jamaican athletes, but Jamaica as destination as well. This, according to Robinson et al (2011), contributes to a country’s symbolic step onto the world stage, which by and large constitutes a measure which aids in re-imaging the host city, seeing that the media is keen on framing sporting events from a positive perspective (Rein & Shields, 2006). Hence, when Usain Bolt, Shelly-Ann Frazer Pryce and the other Jamaica athletes perform well in their respective event(s), viewers become interested in their own personal stories as well as that of the country they represent. This initial interest, may inspire viewers to do further research on Jamaica and its culture, thus inspiring persons to potentially visit the island. Additionally, when Usain Bolt does his victory lap with the Jamaican flag, which is the main branding symbol of
the island, and performs his now famous ‘to the world’ pose, some viewers are intrigued, and understandably want to know more about the island’s culture, which, in this case points to a popular culture buoyed by its music. Furthermore, as a result of the success of Jamaican athletes over the years, many track stars are increasingly interested in training in Jamaica. This not only adds credibility to the sports image that Jamaica wants to create, but it also provides an avenue for further visibility, as it will always be mentioned by sports journalists and commentators where, and with whom, each athlete trains, which further promotes the island on the world stage.

Furthermore, sports tourism, if implemented well, stands to generate significant economic benefits to host communities through revenue, infrastructure and employment, to both the national and local economies (Weed & Bull, 2009). Besides, sport tourism may also prompt inward investment, sponsorship income, on-going tourist appeal, and media exposure for Jamaica. Additionally, sport tourism events may attract hundreds of visitors to Jamaica, resulting in huge financial gains for local hotels, tour operators and restaurants, but also other non-tourism related businesses. Sports tourism will also help increase the profile of the various places where events are held, which in essence showcases those places and their people, thereby further enhancing the identity of respective communities. In other words, sports tourism has the potential of creating more positive economic, social and cultural benefits to the host community if well organized. Through sport tourism, you see the essence of a people, what is at their very core—their willpower, resourcefulness, and character. Furthermore, Jamaica can use sports to reshape people’s perceptions of the island which has developed a reputation as a violent country, hence reversing long-held perceptions about the country (Rein & Shields, 2006).
This is important since Jamaica has to rehabilitate its international image for the island to be deemed a desirable destination for visitors. If the island is not desirable for visitors, then, any attempt to use sports to boost tourism will unfortunately be futile.

**Community-Based Tourism**

In many developing countries where tourism is a major sector, rural communities have engaged in community-based tourism to improve their own local economies. As its name suggests, community-based tourism (CBT) is a form of tourism that involves the inclusion, and participation of members of a particular community, in offering tourists a chance to experience their local culture and local environment (Luchetti & Font, 2013). Therefore, community-based tourism operates on the premise that community members have a high level of control over the tourism product. Hence, through this form of tourism a substantial percentage of the benefits, financial, and otherwise, remain in the hands of community stakeholders (Jones, 2005). Accordingly, the overall participation of community members in executing and maintaining this type of tourist-based initiative is crucial to its survival, relevance, and, of course, its profitability. With that being said, it is essential that the citizens of communities, as well as business interests work collaboratively to ensure the overall success of such an initiative. Therefore all stakeholders have to ensure that any attempt to brand a specific community as one that caters to persons looking for a community-type tourist experience, is a message that is coherent and reflective of the product that is truly being offered.

International tourism trends are showing a shift away from ‘sun, sand and sea (3S)’ tourism and toward interactive, experiential tourism. The vision for community tourism is proactive in terms of encouraging viable and sustainable tourism products, while
remaining grounded in and respectful of national values for socio-economic
development, heritage and cultural resources, and sustainable communities. Given that
community-based tourism is strikingly different from the “run-of the mill” mass-tourism,
it has started to carve a distinct niche market that separates it from more popular types of
tourism. This is because it promotes contact with the local community and engenders
different types of experiences that can only come from having been immersed in the local
community (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares, & Pavón, 2011). In the end, both
visitors and tourists get to share common experiences that, understandably, build
relationships and camaraderie between local hosts and the visitors.

Community-based tourism, as it is known in Jamaica, was pioneered by Diana
McIntyre-Pike, hotelier and tourism consultant, and Desmond Henry, who served as
Director of Tourism in the 1970s. Community tourism development presents Jamaica
with a major opportunity to advance its goals of an inclusive tourism sector that
contributes to the nation’s economic and social development. Jamaica has a mosaic of
communities that can offer exciting and distinctive natural, heritage and cultural
experiences that are suitable for the experiential market trend. To take advantage of this
opportunity, Jamaica commissioned the development of a national Community Tourism
Policy and Strategy. The goals for community tourism call for an internationally
competitive community tourism sector that contributes to national interests while
generating benefits for communities.

Over the years, community-based tourism has been increasing in popularity, and,
from all indications, is a niche-market worth promoting. In the case of Jamaica, the
concept of community tourism, has manifested itself most successfully in the community
of Treasure Beach, located in the parish of St. Elizabeth. Treasure Beach is a vibrant fishing village, with laid-back and friendly residents. Located “off the beaten track”, with dry grasslands and a pleasant climate, Treasure Beach has become the hub of community tourism in Jamaica. Treasure Beach represents the Jamaican brand the majority of visitors to the island will never get to experience in real life. In fact, the Treasure Beach community, in an effort to preserve and sustain their environs, have resisted the form of mass-tourism which is arguably insidious in its own right. Hence, in Treasure Beach, one will not find the type of tourism infrastructure that exists elsewhere in Jamaica. And, as such, the local landscape is not dotted with high rise hotels sporting hundreds of rooms, nor fancy top of the line restaurants, nightclubs or other activities which have become mainstays of traditional mass-tourism. Instead, what one will find are small, usually family-operated guest houses/villas, bars, restaurants and mostly secluded beaches whose main inhabitants are local residents or just fishermen plying their trade. These locals tend to be very welcoming to visitors, and will often engage tourists in conversations or even a game of dominoes or beach football (soccer). This type of interaction between locals and visitors kindles a home-like atmosphere where visitors feel more like insiders rather than outsiders who see the island through a purely superficial tourist lens.

On its premiere website (treasurebeach.net), the community boasts that it is not the typical tourist town, with throngs of tourists or vibrant nightlife. Instead, it markets itself as giving visitors an opportunity to learn about the island's vibrant culture and rich history, from the people who live in the area. Treasure Beach has various beach cafes, road-side stands where visitors can indulge in the local cuisine which includes jerk chicken and pork, ackee and saltfish (the national dish), pumpkin soup, and curried goat
(treasurebeach.net). Additionally, the site also suggests that visitors can watch the local fishermen unload their catch of the day, and may choose to have their dinner prepared from the catch which often includes fish, octopus, lobster, crab, and conch. Furthermore, the area boasts over six miles of sandy beaches, private coves, and rocky shorelines; the majority of these are public and they appeal to those who want to swim, surf, or snorkel.

By offering this type of tourism, residents of Treasure Beach essentially get to provide a unique vacation experience that is managed by local members, rather than business interests, who might not necessarily be from Jamaica. This is the case with some of the hotel chains. For example, RIU Hotels, is owned and operated by Spanish business interests, but have been able to operate locally because the Jamaican government sees this as a major investment in the industry, and by extension, the wider society. Through this type of experiential, yet sustainable tourism, local residents get to play a more active role in how the industry is managed, and at the same time, preserve their way of life, instead of having it subverted by mass tourism. And, for tourists who believe that the local culture of a destination should be maintained, this type of tourism certainly appeals to their sensibilities. This is because this form of tourism allows for more flexibility through the exploration of other areas of the island which all-inclusive hotels because of their restrictive and isolationist nature.

All things considered, for community-based tourism to thrive in Jamaica; it needs solid marketing, and, of course, proper implementation. The success of community tourism undertakings and its sustainability is heavily dependent on providing an experience which has a demand in the marketplace. And, this type of tourism can be of social, economic and even environmental benefit to communities like Treasure Beach.
These communities often lack great financial resources and have to find ways to brand themselves and articulate their own visions. In a competitive industry like tourism, conveying the right messages to prospective visitors is key to selling them on a tourism experience. To this end, the Treasure Beach Community Tourism cluster project was launched by Compete Caribbean on March 14, 2014. Compete Caribbean, according to its website (competecaribbean.org), is a private sector development program that provides technical assistance grants and investment funding to support productive development policies, business climate reform, clustering initiatives and Small and Medium Size Enterprise (SME) development activities in the Caribbean region. It is anticipated that this project will result in improved marketing, increased employment, increased revenue and a diversification of service offerings for cluster members. Through the help of Compete Caribbean, the Treasure Beach community is being encouraged to further develop its tourism potential by marketing its unique brand of tourism. With this in mind, stakeholders are being urged to not only develop new marketing strategies to promote this form of tourism, but also create a brand identity, which will assist in driving marketing activities and lead to the improved visibility of Treasure Beach as a tourist destination. This initiative is being sponsored by Compete Caribbean at a cost of US $500,000, while the remaining US $127,000 will be contributed by the cluster, which includes stakeholders such as Treasure Beach Women’s Group and Breds, The Treasure Beach Foundation (Treasurebeachcluster.weebly.com).

Religious/Faith Based Tourism

People are motivated to travel for various reasons, whether it is for leisure, business, or for sports. However, while religious based travel has been around for many
years, it has been experiencing a resurgence that is arguably instigated by the lucrative nature of the tourism industry. Religion, as we know it, has long been an important component of many societies, giving meaning to the lives of its proponents, influencing culture as well as politics. Religious or faith-based tourism, like other forms of tourism, represents a niche segment of the larger tourism industry, and it has its own distinct set of product offerings (pilgrimages, mission trips, etc.). In fact, the religious tourism market has become so lucrative that it is estimated over 300 million people embark on faith-based trips each year, contributing approximately 18 billion dollars to the global industry (Cogswell, 2014).

Religious tourism, according to Sharpley et al. (2005), is defined as “travel that is motivated by faith or religious reasons” (p.161). Hence, travel by individuals or groups of people for the purpose of visiting important religious sites, for example the Wailing Wall (Israel) or Mecca (Saudi Arabia) is considered to be religious tourism. Additionally, mission trips, pilgrimages, religious festivals, retreats, youth trips, and travel that includes the fusion of leisure and religious activities is also recognized as religious tourism (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). Hence, it is fair to say that this sector is motivated by religion and the aspiration of visitors to have an experience that is based almost entirely on some religious activity.

As a potential religious tourism destination, Jamaica has the distinction of having more churches per square mile than any other country in the world. However, while Jamaica is predominantly Christian, it is also comprised of a small percentage of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews. There are also some religious movements, notably Kumina and Pocomania which are a fusion of West African religious traditions and
Christianity. These groups have rituals that are characterized by drumming, dancing, and spirit possession. However, outside of Christianity, the Rastafarian religion is arguably the most popular, counting acclaimed musicians, academics and artists as followers.

Jamaica, as a potential religious tourism destination, is not replete with a rich religious heritage when compared to other destinations such as Israel or Jordan. However, what Jamaica represents in this niche market, is a destination whose citizenry, for the most part, considers themselves to be deeply religious. Building on this proclaimed sense of religiosity, the former Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett proposed that Jamaica include this form of tourism in its overall marketing initiatives to tap into the growing religious tourism market (JIS, 2008). Considering Jamaica’s proximity to the North American market, Bartlett, proposed that Jamaica could be the destination of choice for persons who are motivated to travel, based on their religion. Jamaica is also a member of the Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA); a membership which may help in creating strategic partnerships with religious tourism stakeholders (JIS, 2008).

Wright (2008) suggests that Jamaica is increasingly attracting Christians who travel as part of a group to attend events such as conventions. The construction of the Montego Bay Conference Centre which boasts a holding capacity of over 5000 people has also bolstered the island’s ability to host large events. Additionally, the centre is strategically perched on the water front, and is in close proximity to the Sangster International Airport. Furthermore, Wright (2008) also implies that the “Fun in the Son Gospel Festival” has increased the island’s profile as a top Caribbean destination for religious tourists. “Fun in the Son”, according to its website (funinthesonjam.com), is the premier Christian Festival in the Caribbean, initially geared towards college students, the festival offered a fun filled
alternative to traditional spring break activities. The festival also has the backing of the Jamaica Tourist Board, and is also billed as a wholesome family festival.

Recently, the small Jewish population in Jamaica has also proposed measures to preserve its religious heritage by embarking on a campaign to attract Jews to the island. Jews have been living in Jamaica since the 1500s after arriving with Spanish and Portuguese settlers on their quest to discover the new world. Given the long history of the Jews in Jamaica, the population that remains sees religious tourism as a viable way to add to the tourism landscape, while preserving the island’s Jewish heritage. With this in mind, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) is now in the process of creating “Jewish Jamaica” travel package as a form of heritage tourism that markets the island as a place where Jews can have bar and bat mitzvahs, as well as other religious events (McFadden, 2015)
The tourism industry is arguably one of the largest in the world, and this makes it fiercely competitive also. Certainly, the tourism industry has evolved over the years, and is no longer synonymous with beautiful and exotic tropical islands. Nowadays, the industry is more diversified and includes destinations that offer experiences outside of the traditional offerings of sun, sea and sand. This perceived shift in the tourism sector is arguably a result of the changing needs of the modern tourist. Tourists are now driven to travel not only for pleasure, but also for business, sports and even religion. Additionally, more people have disposable wealth to facilitate greater travel, and many of these same people are also willing to visit places not previously considered “ideal” tourist destinations. Such emerging markets are particularly prevalent in countries in Asia and Africa.

For a destination such as Jamaica, the competitive nature of the tourism industry means that it has to adopt marketing strategies that can help maintain its position in the tourist marketplace. Being one of several islands in the Caribbean reliant on tourism to support its economy, Jamaica is particularly keen on ensuring the viability of the industry on which its very economy is built. Given that Jamaica faces direct competition from islands such as Bahamas, Barbados and the Dominican Republic that have similar offerings, effective destination marketing of the island is important if it is to compete effectively with these destinations. And, just as in business, countries too have to find ways to showcase and leverage their best assets to maintain a fair amount of competitive advantage in a fiercely competitive industry. As it concerns Jamaica, this advantage, may,
with proper planning and execution be realized through the development of a strong, unique and attractive country brand. It has therefore never been more important for a destination to establish and nurture its competitive identity, or brand. This is what makes a destination distinctive and memorable. The brand lies at the core of a destination’s ability to project itself on the world stage, differentiate itself from others, and thereby effectively compete for prospective visitors.

Being dependent on its brand image, identity and reputation to maintain a certain degree of viability, tourism stakeholders have become quite aware of the need to maintain the island’s competitive edge in an industry that already has a bounty of beautiful, and exotic destination offerings. The increasingly competitive nature of tourism in the Caribbean has made gaining a “share of the pie” especially challenging for the islands dependent upon the industry for economic gains. Therefore, Jamaica, has to find viable ways to adapt to the dynamic tourism industry. To ensure that it maintains a semblance of competitive advantage, Jamaica has embraced the idea of branding the island by fusing tourism with sports and culture to enhance the island’s brand, thereby setting it apart from the rest of its competitors. And, by building on its brand strengths such as its natural beauty and culture, Jamaica is seeking to leverage its best assets in creating a brand which is like no other in the Caribbean.

Branding, in today’s globalized and competitive market place, is considered a necessity. Although branding is traditionally associated with consumer products, countries too are beginning to understand the inherent benefits that can emerge from an effective nation branding campaign. Recognizing this, Jamaica has taken steps to brand the island with the hopes of increasing not only the number of tourists who visit its shores
annually, but also increase investments to the island. Capitalizing on its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and general appeal globally, Jamaica has a strong brand that provides it with a veritable platform from which to successfully launch its nation branding efforts. With its distinct brand identity, Jamaica certainly has to be strategic in the nation brand image that it seeks to create. And, as with any form of branding, the island has to do its fair share of research to assess the niche markets it hopes to target, as well as the potential benefits that can be gained by targeting these markets. In essence, Jamaica has to determine what it wants its brand to represent by striking an equitable balance between the needs and desires of its various stakeholders, of which its citizens are the main actors. Since Jamaicans, through their values, attitudes and actions inherently influence the Jamaican brand, its brand identity has to reflect the best of the aforementioned traits. Additionally, the agreed upon brand not only has to be cohesive, but it has to be one that is practical and viable.

In the travel and tourism industry, having a positive national image is important. This is because tourism represents the most noticeable feature of a country’s brand, and, is also its most potent marketing tool (Anholt, 2005). With this in mind, tourism and government stakeholders in Jamaica are keen on identifying viable ways to effectively promote the island, since branding can “help bridge any gaps between a destination’s strengths and potential visitors’ perceptions” (Morgan et al, 2010, p. 65). Since Jamaica faces stiff competition from other islands offering pristine beaches, beautiful scenery, and the ‘experience of a lifetime’, the need for a unique Jamaican identity is more important than ever before. Accordingly, its various stakeholders have to cooperate in creating a potent and coherent tourism product to ensure the success of its branding initiatives.
Additionally, it should also be recognized that branding initiatives do not exclusively revolve around the tourism sector. Rather, it will also require the forging of partnerships with persons in business, manufacturing and even the entertainment industry to promote a consistent image of the country. In fact, it is generally understood that a country that already has a positive image stands a better chance at being successful with its branding initiatives than a country that has a dubious reputation. In other words, a brand cannot be successful unless it has a good reputation. Certainly, when one thinks about countries that have high crime rates, corrupt governments and a history of human rights violations, it becomes immediately clear that, with such tarnished reputations, branding becomes quite difficult.

Through branding, Jamaica aims to control its own image, thereby presenting what is positive about the island. Every country has its own unique set of assets, thereby attracting different types of tourists. Hence, for branding to be effective, it has to target a specific group with a message that is original, believable and relevant (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). Notwithstanding, a strong brand identity is crucial to effectively communicate Jamaica’s brand image. As it concerns Jamaica’s brand awareness, the island is arguably comfortably placed. However, as we all know, no business reliant on the patronage of customers can ever rest on its laurels. And Jamaica, being fully aware of this, consistently seeks to keep its name at the forefront of the Caribbean tourism industry. The island’s brand awareness is also helped by its musical stars and athletes who take its name to the far reaches of the globe through the staging of international events such as the Olympic Games, and musical festivals. However, while such events inadvertently market the island, it is never enough, and like a ravenous lion, it has to
always seek new and exciting opportunities to highlight its brand. Simon Anholt, noted nation branding scholar, has said that “Jamaica, is sitting on a treasure-house of natural brand equity, composed of its cultural, historical, physical and human capital…and has a strong brand- probably one of the strongest in the world for the size of the country, its population and its economy” (WIPO, pg. 22). Brands of course do not exist in a vacuum, and to be successful, they must co-exist effectively with the prevailing zeitgeist. Popular culture and trends in society drive and influence strong brands (Dinnie, 2008). Therefore, the Jamaican brand must be built through consistent communications and reputation management both domestically and internationally.

Over the years, Jamaica has had great success internationally, especially in the areas of music and sports, and this has had a positive effect on Jamaican prominence as it pertains to visible country brands. By creating a strong brand, Jamaica will not only differentiate itself from its competitors in the tourism industry, but customers would, in most cases, also be inclined to pay for the intangible benefits they get from associating themselves with a brand that makes them appear cool, fashionable or clever. However, while creating and maintain a competitive advantage in the tourism sector is not an easy task, Jamaica’s main challenge will be creating a brand that has elements which are not easily replicated by its competitors. Hence, it is very important that the government, along with the private sector combine their efforts in helping to brand Jamaica.

**Threats to Jamaica’s Tourism Product**

The tourism industry, like other industries, is susceptible to various types of threats. Indeed, the nature of the tourism industry perhaps makes it more vulnerable than most other sectors since it is not considered a necessity when one compares its product to
businesses selling essentials such as food, medicine and natural gas. In the real world, if one has to choose between going on vacation and vital medication, many would choose the latter over the former because it carries much more importance. Based on the vulnerability of the tourism industry, it should come as no surprise that it is constantly influx. Indeed, when one considers events such as natural disasters, inflation, and even terrorism, the capricious nature of the tourism sector is especially obvious. All of these events can, in some way or another, influence the sector manifesting themselves primarily in the decrease in tourist arrivals for destinations. Jamaica, is not immune to potential threats to its tourism industry, and by extension its product. In fact, over the years Jamaica has had to deal with the fall-out from several hurricanes and tropical storms, which led to infrastructural damage to hotels, erosion of beaches, and a decline in tourists visiting the island during such events. However, despite the threat that natural disasters pose to the island, other potential threats to tourism include issues of sustainability, crime, tourist harassment, and Cuba. These threats not only pose a problem to Jamaica’s competitive advantage, but perceivably will impact the way Jamaica brands itself, as well as the efficacy of those branding efforts.

The Issue of Sustainability

In tourism, any destination that markets itself on its natural beauty, people and cultural heritage should be concerned about sustainability. Hence sustainability cannot be considered in an ephemeral sense. Instead, it is concerned with the long term preservation of all those elements of tourism which pose a threat to the ecological, social and cultural fabric of destinations. The UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts,
addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

For Jamaica, the issue of sustainability is becoming especially prudent, considering that it is heavily dependent on its natural resources to maintain its tourism product. In this regard, the issue of sustainability has to retain a crucial place in the minds of tourism interests if the industry is to be viable for the long haul.

The tourism industry has, for the most part, been beneficial to Jamaica in providing employment and generating essential foreign exchange for the island. However, the attendant benefits that come with the sector do not always translate well when it comes to the issue of sustainability, especially as it relates to the natural environment. In fact, the rapid expansion of the sector has led to thousands of acres of land given over to the construction of high rise hotels and other infrastructure. What this means is that local communities have to live in the shadow of imposing man-made structures which render once quiet communities an area of commerce, thereby shifting interests from agrarian to commercial activities. As a result of this there is competition for prime land, leading to an appreciation in the value of land and property in areas where the local economy circumvents the tourism industry. Additionally, the rapid expansion of the hotel industry also means that fertile agricultural lands are being given over to the construction of hotels. This does not sit well with many Jamaicans, particularly those who are not seeing the tangible benefits of tourism outside of its structural manifestations. Furthermore, there are many Jamaicans who are of the belief that Jamaica stands to gain more from investing in agricultural than from tourism. To combat the expansion of the tourism industry in areas known for their agricultural activity, some communities, the chief of
them being Treasure Beach, despite embracing tourism, remain largely agrarian, and are staunchly opposed to large hotel chains operating in the community.

Tourism has also been blamed for putting other natural resources such as wetlands, and coastal areas at risk. In fact, members of environmental groups in Jamaica have become quite vocal about the negative impact that tourism is having on Jamaica’s natural environment. Tourism has led to the loss of wetlands, soil and beach erosion, as well as deforestation. However, one of the biggest concerns is the increasing lack of access to many of the island’s beaches by local residents. The limited access to some beaches has earned the ire of many Jamaicans, leading residents to take the government to court to keep Winnifred Beach out of the hands of developers. Winnifred Beach, after a court order remains a public beach, but the same cannot be said about the majority of Jamaican beaches which were foolishly sold to private hotel chains. The action by citizens to ensure that Winnifred Beach remains public, is certainly reflective of the desire by Jamaicans not to have their beloved country overrun by developers, whose main interest lies in making money and not the livelihood of average Jamaicans.

Another issue of sustainability concerns the potential contamination of the Jamaican culture by tourists whose interests in it reduces it to a mere commodity to be consumed, and not preserved. According to UNEP, tourism can turn local cultures into commodities when activities such as religious rituals, and festivals are amended to suit the needs of the tourist. Certainly, when one thinks about the way in which tour-guides, hotel workers, craft vendors and even local residents alter their speech to sound like tourists. Although seemingly inconsequential, it becomes obvious such Jamaicans do not view their linguistic heritage as something to be cherished, preserved and of which to be
proud. This is problematic in many ways, suggesting that what is Jamaican is not good enough when compared to a European or American standard.

Jamaica, as a nation dependent on tourism, has to provide solutions to ensure its own sustainability. Sustainability cannot happen without the cooperation of the government, the citizens and tourism interests, and if this is not done, Jamaica runs the risk of destroying the very thing on which it depends for financial gains. More importantly, the island has to put its citizens first when it thinks about sustainability strategies, as a viable tourism industry cannot be achieved unless the majority of Jamaicans are supportive of this cause. On the other hand, it seems rather unfair that Jamaicans are being denied the right to enjoy the island’s natural beauty in favor of placating wealthy developers driven by capitalist motives. Therefore, feasible solutions have to be put forward in which Jamaicans can exist in harmony with the tourism sector.

Crime and Tourist Harassment

For decades, crime has been an issue of primary concern, both for the government and the Jamaican people. Despite having a stable country, Jamaica continues to rank highly on the list of violent countries on an annual basis. Successive governments have tried, and failed to reduce the incidents of violent crimes to a level suitable for its small population. Crime in Jamaica is fuelled by a variety of factors, but it is widely believed that it is caused by high levels of unemployment, the growing drug trade, gang-related activities, as well as partisan politics.

Given that tourism is the main industry in Jamaica, the high incidents of crime on the island ostensibly poses a threat to the industry as well as its image and reputation. Seeing that Jamaica is in close proximity to North America, its largest market, stories of
violence on the island are normally broadcast on the major news networks in both America and Canada. In fact, during the West Kingston unrest in 2010, major news channels such as CNN and BBC carried stories pertaining to the event, exposing the specter of crime to a large audience, which no doubt included prospective visitors to the island. Recognizing the certain fallout from the negative publicity, the Jamaican government spent US$10 million on marketing campaigns in its key markets to mitigate against the US$350 million financial loss that the industry was expected to take as a result of the uprising (Rose, 2010). Additionally, during such unrests, governments may issue advisories to their citizens warning them not to travel to Jamaica, thereby steering away potential visitors, and potential investors.

Another fallout from crime is that visitors are less inclined to visit areas of the country that are outside of the major tourist zones of Montego Bay, Negril, and Ocho Rios. This means that Kingston, the island’s capital, and business and cultural center is not able to actively attract tourists because of its reputation as a violent city. Kingston has much to offer to the tourist who is interested in Jamaica’s musical and architectural heritage, boasting attractions such as the Bob Marley Museum, Devon House, Port Royal, Trench Town and Emancipation Park. The seeming reticence of travelers wanting to visit Kingston has major implications for the capital city, the chief of which are potential revenue and its limited participation in adding much needed diversity to the tourism product. This also limits the experience of visitors as they are not able to have an authentic Jamaican experience, which includes travelling around the island, eating local dishes and meeting its people.
Tourist harassment, like crime, is another potential deterrent to prospective visitors. And, despite being built on the premise of great hospitality, the Jamaican tourism industry continues to be plagued by conflicts between local residents and tourists. Harassment is not exclusive to Jamaica, but is one of the features of the global tourism industry. Harassment comes in different forms, but visitors usually describe it as the constant badgering to buy goods McElroy (2003). Kozak (2007) contends that harassment from vendors usually takes place on beaches or in the streets as vendors try to persuade tourists to buy various items. Harassment can also be sexual or verbal and includes physical abuse as well. And, harassment of any sort can also spell the loss of business for the sector. This is especially the case if the island develops a reputation as a site of excessive harassment.

Since the viability of the tourism industry hinges on its ability to provide a ‘safe and hassle free’ stay for its visitors, hotel chains such as Sandals and Breezes have embraced the idea of enclave tourism to protect tourists from criminal activities. Enclave Tourism refers to closed-off, all-inclusive resorts that provide all the facilities and amenities for guests, limiting their need to go outside of the resorts during their stay. As a result of this idea, the interaction between guests and tourists is also significantly reduced. Consequently, local residents do not benefit from tourism because tourists purchase food, souvenirs and other items on the hotel compound instead of vendors in the local community.

Crime and harassment act as hindrances to the success of Jamaica’s tourism because they deter tourists who are concerned about their safety from visiting. And, in an industry offering many other choices, many potential tourists are unwilling take the
chance and visit a country where they might be in physical danger when they have the opportunity to go to another destination where they will be relatively safe. Additionally, tourists who are the victims of crime or harassment may develop a negative perception of the island and many may share their experiences with friends and families, dissuading them from visiting.

The Cuban Threat

With measures being taken to restore diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba, many Caribbean islands are concerned that restored relations between the USA and Cuba will make the tourism industry even more competitive. Having been closed off to the US market for decades, the concern is that many Americans will be interested in visiting Cuba because of its “novelty”. North America represents the largest market for islands such as Jamaica, and an open Cuba may mean that many prospective tourists may choose to visit Cuba instead of the traditional destinations in the region. Cuba may also prove attractive because of the powerful and competitive narratives about its political history. Klapper and Weissenstein (2015) suggest that Cuba will likely see a surge in tourists looking to experience a country which was previously closed off. However, Cuba may lack the most basic of infrastructure and administrative expertise needed to viably support a tourism sector. For instance, most of its hotels do not measure up to international standards. In response to the Cuban threat, the current Jamaican Finance Minister Dr. Peter Phillips, has said that the opening up of Cuba may “provide a tremendous opportunity for Jamaican businesses to expand and to help integrate the northern Caribbean economies” (Jamaica Gleaner, 2015).
Limitations

There has not been much academic research on the concept of nation branding from the Jamaican point of view. Given this fact, it was challenging to source data on issues specifically relating to Jamaica. Despite this, information was mostly sourced from government agencies, or government documents available online. Although, I would have liked to include data from a greater resource pool, the content included in this research are authentic since it was mostly sourced from governmental agencies, for example the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), the Tourism Master Plan, and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT). Additionally, access to relevant source(s) of information was limited because the research was conducted outside of Jamaica.

Final Thoughts

As a Jamaican, I have by virtue of living and studying outside of the country, come to recognize the power of my island home. I have met so many persons who have visited Jamaica or want to visit Jamaica and who can easily relate to me based on particular aspects of Jamaica, whether through music, culture, or sport. For me, this is quite significant and fascinating, all at the same time because Jamaica is a small country with a population of under 3 million. This makes me ruminate why anyone, given the plethora of destinations offering similar vacation experiences, would choose Jamaica over the rest. For me, the answer is simply because of what the Jamaican brand means to people, and their desire to be a part of that brand, if only for a short period of time.

There is no doubt that Jamaica’s brand awareness rivals that of larger, more developed countries, and, is therefore something to be optimized to benefit the nation
generally. With this in mind, efforts to brand Jamaica will certainly require the coordination of numerous stakeholders to build a successful brand that is coherent and potent. And, in order to use branding to enhance the island’s competitive edge in tourism and other sectors, it will take the concerted effort of its citizens, public and private sectors, and the government to ensure the viability of Brand Jamaica. The economic and social development of Jamaica, arguably, rests on its ability to effectively brand itself. And, this is the opportune time to capitalize on branding the island since it is enjoying an increased level of global recognition.
(RE) BRANDING JAMAICA’S TOURISM PRODUCT

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