

## HERITAGE IN DMOS' BRANDING STRATEGY: THE CASE OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion and debate, and to draw attention to the extent that 'heritage' is used as a branding strategy in Caribbean destinations' logo designs. A visual methodology was used to analyse the logo designs of 21 Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) member countries representing the English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking Caribbean. The branding strategies of each destination were analysed, compared, and contrasted. The analysis found that member countries of the CTO mainly used a neutral branding strategy in their logos. 52% of the DMO logos analysed adopted a neutral position in their branding strategy. 38% of DMOs have based their branding on heritage and 10% on sun-and-sea.

**Keywords:** Destination branding, Heritage tourism, Caribbean destinations, Visual methodologies.

### Introduction

In the tourism industry, branding is used to communicate with the market, and can positively impact how a destination performs (Park, Eisingerich, Pol & Park, 2013; Walters & Mair, 2012). It is also a way of telling the narrative of the destination (Elliot, Khazaei & Durand, 2016). Tangible (material) and intangible (immaterial) heritage is traditionally used in the branding strategies of destinations in the Caribbean (Park, 2014). Because of their negative image and difficulties in attracting visitors, post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations like those in the Caribbean often use key features of their heritage and history in promotional materials (Séraphin & Gowreesunkar, 2017; Séraphin, Butcher & Korstanje, 2016; Séraphin, Ambaye, Gowreesunkar & Bonnardel, 2016). For these destinations, branding is also used as a defence mechanism designed to protect the good name the destination might have built up over the years (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). 'Heritage' covers cultural heritage and built heritage (Park, 2014).

There is a wide range of publications in the field of heritage tourism. Heritage tourism, and more specifically, cultural tourism is considered one of the most sustainable forms of tourism (Hammouda, 2019; Chauhan, 2021). However, there is limited Caribbean research examining heritage alongside marketing and more specifically destination logos (Séraphin, Yallop, Capatina & Gowreesunkar, 2018). Authenticity has been pointed out by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) as a tourism driving force. In the same line of thought, Chhabra (2017) and (Park, 2014) explained how nostalgia can attract visitors. This form of marketing is also associated with retro-branding (Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016). Declining destinations have been using this marketing strategy to restore their image (Avraham, 2015). However, the use of heritage in Caribbean tourism has also been associated with commodification and staged authenticity (Stonich, 2001; Sealy, 2018). Nevertheless, heritage tourism provides an avenue for the creative expression of Caribbean people and a sense of belonging in what is a culturally and ethnically diverse, but politically fragmented, region (Sealy, 2018; Crick, 2022).

In this study, 'heritage' is to be understood from the angle of 'identity' and 'culture' which includes, but not exclusively, African-Caribbean aesthetics and folk culture (S raphin *et al*, 2018a). This research paper is of importance due to the shortage of research in the field of tourism in the Caribbean, particularly in the area of branding (S raphin *et al*, 2018b). Two research questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: What is the branding strategy used by Caribbean destinations' DMOs in their logos? Is it a strategy based on an idiosyncratic identity (heritage); a more universal stereotype strategy (sea-and-sun strategy); or a neutral strategy to follow the global trend (S raphin, Platania & Pilato, 2017)?

RQ2: To what extent is 'heritage' used (percentage of DMOs using it in their branding strategy, and the form of 'heritage' used (cultural, scientific, or built) in DMOs' logo design.

In order to address the research questions of this study, the DMO logos of specific Caribbean destinations are analysed, compared, and contrasted using a specific framework. The framework used to analyse, discuss, and contrast the logo of DMOs is based on the results of three publications, namely:

- (a) S raphin, H. Ambaye, M., Gowreesunkar, V. & Bonnardel, V. (2016c). This research paper focuses on how logos express the history, identity, heritage etc. of a destination.
- (b) S raphin, H. Gowreesunkar, V. & Ambaye, M. (2016b). The focus is on the construction of the new logo of Haiti as a process that relates to the identity and heritage of the island.
- (c) S raphin, H. Yallop, A. Capatana, A. & Gowreesunkar, V. (2018b). The study explains the central influence of Voodoo in the design of the original logo of Haiti's DMO.

## Background

### The Caribbean As A Destination

The tourism industry is very important for the Caribbean. Some destinations are totally relying on the tourism industry for their survival. (Holder, 1989; Peters, 1980; Sealy, 2018). Out of all the destinations in the Caribbean, 6 of them have stood out pre-Covid in terms of number of visitors (S raphin, Gowreesunkar, Rosel -Chim, Duplan & Korstanje, 2018). They are referred to as the '*Big 6*' (Cuba', 'Jamaica', 'Bahamas', 'Puerto Rico' and 'Aruba'), as they receive at least 1 million visitors annually (figure 1). The weather is the main pull factors for the Caribbean, it is also a push factor (Hubner & Gosling, 2012). Other pull factors include events and festivals (S raphin & Dosquet, 2015), such as The Literary Festival; the San Sebastian Festival in Puerto Rico; Route du Rhum in Guadeloupe; and the Crop Over Festival in Barbados (S raphin & Dosquet, 2015). The islands also have rich folk lore traditions, colonial architecture, beautiful flora and fauna and other rich traditions that could be marketed as attractions.

### The Caribbean: A Heritage Destination?

Five hundred years of colonial history has assured the Caribbean a unique heritage of rituals, customs, values, beliefs, exotic food, festivals, special events and vernacular traditions. Heritage tourism can be and to some extent is used as a branding strategy in Caribbean tourism to diversify destinations away from the stereotypical sun-lust mass tourism image and to project a more eclectic tourism offering. Heritage tourism can be a pull factor due to the fact that each destination has its own unique culture and heritage. However, the tour-packaged brochures,

which are produced outside the region, tend to feature accommodation services and facilities rather than the destination or its special characteristics (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Sealy, 2014). These brochures are typically produced for mass marketing campaigns which sell a standardised product with very little differentiation. Consequently, many visitors are oblivious to, and do not experience, authentic Caribbean culture, heritage or lifestyles, as very often they are encouraged to remain within their all-inclusive enclaves for so called 'safety' reasons (Pattulo, 2006; Sealy, 2018; Williams, 2012). This fact has stimulated interests in this research as a means of observing the extent to which heritage is captured in the tourism logos of the chosen destinations.

Heritage tourism can combat seasonality and the targeted media outlets makes it easier to connect with potential special interests' tourists. Unlike mass tour operators, heritage tour operators are less susceptible to price but instead focus on the quality of the experience and reputation of the destination (Inkson & Minnaert, 2018). The distribution networks for heritage tourists are well placed to deal with small numbers and they provide opportunities for well-connected strategic alliances with actors who can effectively distribute and promote a destination. Heritage tourism can provide destination planners in the Caribbean with new branding opportunities and new marketing outlets from which to attract more allocentric tourists who gravitate towards cultural products.

A Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) report recorded that heritage tourism increases the local value-added (Caribbean Tourism Organisation, no date). Since much tourism revenue is concentrated in the hands of large foreign owned hotel chains based overseas, heritage tourism can enable tourism benefits to spill over into the wider community through networks and links with local entrepreneurs (Sealy, 2018). It can also help to spread tourism benefits geographically beyond the beach and into grass roots organisations outside the resorts. Heritage tourism is also a more sustainable form of tourism since it promotes the conservation and preservation of the natural and built environment. It highlights the need to preserve local customs and traditions that can enhance destination image and provide more branding opportunities and media value to the destination. In the Caribbean, heritage tourism can be a major source of income (compared to other forms of tourism), as this form of tourism, has the potential to engage visitors in a process of co-creating their tourist experiences with locals while bridging the gaps between locals and visitors through engagement with the local communities (Caribbean Tourism Organisation, no date; Seraphin, Gowreesunkar, Zaman & Bourliataux, 2019; Turnquest, 2022).

### **Branding (Logo) Of The Caribbean As A Destination: A Brief Overview**

According to Barisic and Blazevic (2014), a logo is a symbol of visual identity which consists of a variety of graphical and typeface elements. A logo is the final product of a graphic design consisting of various symbols, imagery and representations that may reflect the ethos, culture or values of a place. The corporate name, slogans, graphics, colour and typeface are all features of effective logos. Logos convey visual and graphical messages about the brand quality, origin, personality, associations and ownership (Hem & Iversen, 2004). Logos can be regarded as company assets and can have a financial value attached to them known as the brand value (Muller, Koehler & Crettaz, 2013). But logo symbols can be misinterpreted by tourists or clash with other existing perceptions that the potential tourists may have of the destination. This is particularly problematic for Caribbean destinations due to the different source markets all of which have different cultural orientations and perceptions of the various destinations in the Caribbean. Lee, Rodriguez and Sar, (2012) explained that a logo of a destination should tell the narrative of the destination, and this message need to be understood the same way by all potential visitors. Consumers respond to advertising in terms of their culture, language, values,

beliefs, and perceptions. The emotional appeals, symbols, persuasive approaches, and other characteristics of the logo must coincide with the cultural norms of the target market if the logo is to be effective (Hudson & Hudson, 2017). For logos to be effective they must be appropriately designed, cater to the target market, and need to be used consistently over a period of time (Barisic & Blazeviv, 2014).

Post conflict, post-colonial and post disaster destinations typically have poor images in source markets due to the sensationalised reporting of conflicts and disasters by the international media. It is all the more important for those destinations to think about their branding strategies as potential visitors and investors are actually taking into account the image of a destination when choosing where to go on holiday (Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996; Dai, Wang & Kirillova, 2022) Laws, Scott and Parfitt, 2002; Bose, Pradhan, Bashir & Roy, 2022). Because brand image is very important for visitors (Lee, Rodriguez & Sar, 2012), destinations need to think carefully about their branding strategies (Rafaeli *et al.*, 2008).

## **Methodology And Results**

### **Selection Of Destinations / Logos**

This paper is not considering every single destination in the Caribbean. We have only taken into consideration destinations that are part of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). The CTO is comprised of 26 members (oncaribbean.org [online]): Anguilla; Grenada; Nevis; Antigua and Barbuda; Guyana; Saint-Lucia; Bahamas; Haiti; St. Maarten; Barbados; Jamaica; Saint Martin; Belize; Martinique; St. Vincent and the Grenadine; British Virgin Islands; Montserrat; Trinidad and Tobago; Cayman Islands; Puerto-Rico; Tobago; Curacao; St Eustatius; Turks and Caicos Islands; Dominica; St Kitts and Nevis. We then reduced the list to 21 (table 1), based on data available on the destinations. Our study is therefore taking into consideration 80% of the DMOs logos of destinations that are members of the CTO. Therefore, we consider the sample of this research to be representative. Also, Haiti is not considered for the study because, previous research carried by the lead author has already focused on the study of the DMO logo of the destination. Please refer to table 1.

Table 1: Sample of Caribbean islands DMO logos

	A	B	C
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

### Sample And Reliability

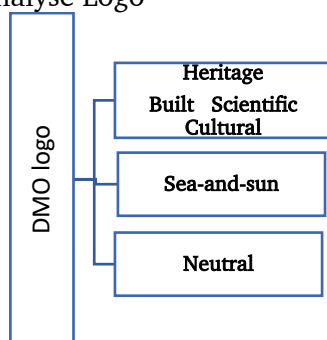
The sample selected for this study is totally representative of the Caribbean area because this sample comprises: (1) English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking Caribbean territories, (2) destinations with different levels of performance, such as the number of visitors and income (3) destinations of different size, (4) geographical location in the Caribbean (5) political regime and (6) social and economic performance. (7) As mentioned previously, the study is based on 80% of the members of the CTO.

## Visual Research Methods And Data Analysis

The paper adopts an interpretative approach through visual methods. Visual methods are a form of observation within the qualitative research domain. The observation of photos, symbols and artefacts is becoming more and more an established form of methodology in business and tourism research (Rakic & Chambers, 2012; Rose, 2012; Pink, 2013; Volo & Irimiás, 2020). Such methods are established in historical and archaeological research for the curation of images and objects. Visual methods are also derived from traditional ethnographic methods used in anthropology and sociology (Glaw, Inder, Kable & Hazelton, 2017). Like any form of observation, the method is subjected to researcher bias. Despite this, this method is very suitable for this research as the researchers are not trying to generalise or establish facts but are looking at exploring an important issue in order to stimulate debate and to draw attention to Caribbean marketing strategies concerning how heritage is captured in DMOs' logos. As with most qualitative research the lack of competence of the observer may hamper the validity and reliability of observations, however, both authors are from the Caribbean – Guadeloupe and Barbados - so their familiarity with Caribbean creole culture and history helped in the interpretation of the logos. The secondary researcher is a trained historian with a BA (Hons) in Caribbean History and has worked in Barbados tourism marketing for 22 years. In addition to this, inter-rater validity was used to validate the observations of the researchers. Inter-rater validity occurs when researchers send their findings to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to see if they concur with the findings of the observer(s) (Silverman, 1993).

The logo of the different DMOs are analysed using a theoretical model (figure 1) developed by Séraphin, Yallop, Capatina & Gowreesunkar (2018), This model was previously used to analyse the logo of another Caribbean island - the Haitian DMO. The observations were then organised into a matrix (tables 2 & 3) using the concepts 'heritage', 'sea-sun-sand' and 'neutral' as codes. The authors used their own knowledge of Caribbean history and destination marketing to interpret the logos' symbols. This was also the method used by Seraphin *et al*, (2018) in work previously published in *the Journal of Business Research*. Visual methods do not have any single established practice for analysing data due to the different disciplines that use these methods and the multitude of objectives and subjects. The approach used in this study is more in line with the historical curation of objects where the historian uses their historical knowledge and expertise to interpret artefacts. The interpretations of the researchers were coded as shown below into conceptual themes from the theoretical framework. For transparency, the logos of the destinations analysed are included in table 1 so that readers can draw their own conclusions. Interpretivists hold the view that reality is socially constructed, subjective and comprise multiple perspectives. This view is in line with Hexter (1971) who contents that historical data is "already out there where they are open to public scrutiny and criticism".

**Figure 1:** Theoretical Model To Analyse Logo



**Source:** The Authors (Adapted From Seraphin, Yallop, Capatina And Gowreesunkar, 2018)

According to the model, destinations and tourism organisations are either adopting, (1) a logo reflecting key elements of the heritage (either built, scientific or cultural) of the destination, (2) a logo based on a universal ‘sea-and-sun’ stereotyped or (3) a neutral approach (a logo with no element related to the previous).

## Results and Discussion of Findings

### Results

Table 2 below provides the results of the analysis of the Caribbean DMOs’ logo. In a nutshell, the majority of destinations in the Caribbean (member of the CTO) have adopted a neutral strategy (11); closely followed by a heritage-based strategy (8); and way behind, a sun-and-sea (2) strategy.

**Table 2:** Analysis of Sample of Caribbean islands DMO logos

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1</b>	Heritage	Sea-and-sun	Heritage
<b>2</b>	Heritage	Neutral	Heritage
<b>3</b>	Heritage	Heritage	Neutral
<b>4</b>	Heritage	Neutral	Neutral
<b>5</b>	Neutral	Sea-and-sun	Neutral
<b>6</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>7</b>	Heritage	Neutral	Neutral

**Source:** The authors

Heritage and more specifically, scientific heritage (table 3), as a branding strategy is very popular with Caribbean DMOs despite the fact that it is not the main strategy adopted. In the following sections we are going to analyse and discuss the strategies adopted by DMOs with a focus on the ones that have adopted a heritage-based strategy. The case of the destinations which opted for a neutral strategy will also be discussed, as well as the potential impacts of such an approach.

**Table 3:** Analysis Of Sample Of Caribbean Islands Using Heritage In Dmo Logos

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1</b>	Cultural heritage		Scientific heritage
<b>2</b>	Scientific heritage		Scientific heritage
<b>3</b>	Scientific heritage	Scientific heritage	
<b>4</b>	Scientific heritage		
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			
<b>7</b>	Scientific heritage		

**Source:** The authors

The following subsections analyse each branding strategy adopted by the DMOs.

### **Built Heritage And Cultural Heritage**

None of the destinations of the Caribbean are branding themselves as built heritage destinations, neither as cultural destinations. This result is probably due to the fact that many destinations have been through a rebranding strategy, to meet current visitors needs and demands (Chacko & Marcell, 2008; Rose, Merchant, Orth & Horstmann, 2016; Séraphin et al, 2018). That was the case of Haiti which branded itself between 1939 and 2011 as a cultural heritage destination for a repositioning. The destination has now adopted a scientific heritage strategy based on sea-and-sun (Séraphin *et al*, 2018)

### **Scientific Heritage**

When it comes to using heritage as a branding approach, scientific heritage is by far the most popular one. The scientific heritage symbols used in the branding strategies of destinations include the use of plants (nutmegs); natural features (mountains; sea-and-sun) and animals (bird, turtle, fish). This is mainly because natural features are major pull factors used by destinations to attract visitors. Moreover, many attractions are based on these natural features. Because of the heavy reliance of the industry on these natural features, they become cause for concern because of the tourism pressure on them (Curtin, Richards & Westcott, 2009; McDowall & Choi, 2010; Puczko & Ratz, 2000; Sheller, 2004; Mason, 2021).

### **Neutral**

By adopting a neutral branding strategy, DMOs in the Caribbean are following the global trend of a neutral branding strategy (Séraphin *et al*, 2017), as opposed to adopting a regional or locally based branding strategy (Da Silva Lopes & Casson, 2007; Dubesset, 2012). It may thus be safer to adopt a more neutral logo design in order to prevent offending local sensitivities or conflict between brands or confusion in the marketplace; and to bring the brands more in line with contemporary Caribbean ideals and values. In more recent times Caribbean cultural ideals more represent European and American ideologies rather than the Afro-centric ideas which are rejected in several islands. However, by adopting a neutral branding strategy, the Caribbean opens itself to be misrepresented by other players in the tourism supply chain. It is disheartening that despite 500 years of colonial history which has given the Caribbean vibrant forms of expression and architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites, the Caribbean still appears to prefer the narrow niche of tropical hedonism in its branding strategies (Cameron & Gatewood, 2008). The move towards neutrality demonstrates the difficulty of reconciling advertising campaigns with the cultural preferences of increasingly heterogeneous international and domestic markets targeted by these destinations. Ideally, it seems that the destinations are adopting a 'glocal' approach. 'Glocalisation entails re-appropriating and reinterpreting distinctive local (national) culture and identity within global settings' (Park, 2014: 126). Another reason for a more neutral approach could be because the destinations in the Caribbean are primarily marketed and packaged through 3<sup>rd</sup> party intermediaries such as tour operators who market each island under their own tour operator branding umbrella. The predominance of all-inclusive resort enclaves in the islands means that tourists to the region do not get to experience true, authentic Caribbean culture at the destination. One must wonder to what extent this may be attributed to neutral branding strategies.



## The Undisciplined Of Tourism

The approaches used by DMOs shows that there is not an agreement in the industry in terms of key elements that should be included in logo design. The results of our analysis do not allow us to identify any significant pattern or correlation that would help to understand why a specific type of destination uses a specific type of branding strategy. If we consider the 'Big 6' branding strategy: Cuba (A1) has adopted a cultural heritage strategy; Aruba (C4), Jamaica (C5), the Bahamas (C7) and Puerto-Rico (A6) have adopted a neutral strategy. The Dominican Republic (B5) has opted for a heritage branding strategy. From this sample within the sample, there is a clear pattern that reflects the worldwide trend, but we cannot conclude which strategy is the most effective. The most visited island of the Caribbean (the Dominican Republic) and the second most visited island, namely Cuba, have both different approaches when it comes to branding. The four other leading destinations have opted for a similar strategy. Based on our findings, we can come to a number of conclusions:

- (1) The first conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that the majority of Caribbean destinations have adopted a neutral strategy.
- (2) The branding strategy does not really impact on the performance of the destination.
- (3) Heritage is still used as part of the branding strategy of destinations but it is not the main strategy adopted by DMOs. When heritage is the chosen approach, scientific heritage is the most popular one. The use of cultural heritage and built heritage is rather marginal.

## Toward A Research Method For The Design Of Dmos' Logo

### Current Practice In Logo Design

The great variety of approaches used to brand the DMOs as well as the variety of design is mainly due to the fact that logos are most of the time used by destinations to stand out. This is the case of the new Haitian DMO logo (S raphin et al, 2016c). In 2012, the DMO organised a competition opened to Haitians from Haiti or from the diaspora. The only guideline was: *'Imagine, create, compose and draw the Haiti of your dreams'*. The DMO received 400 proposals. In 2017, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) organised a similar type of competition as shown in figure 3.

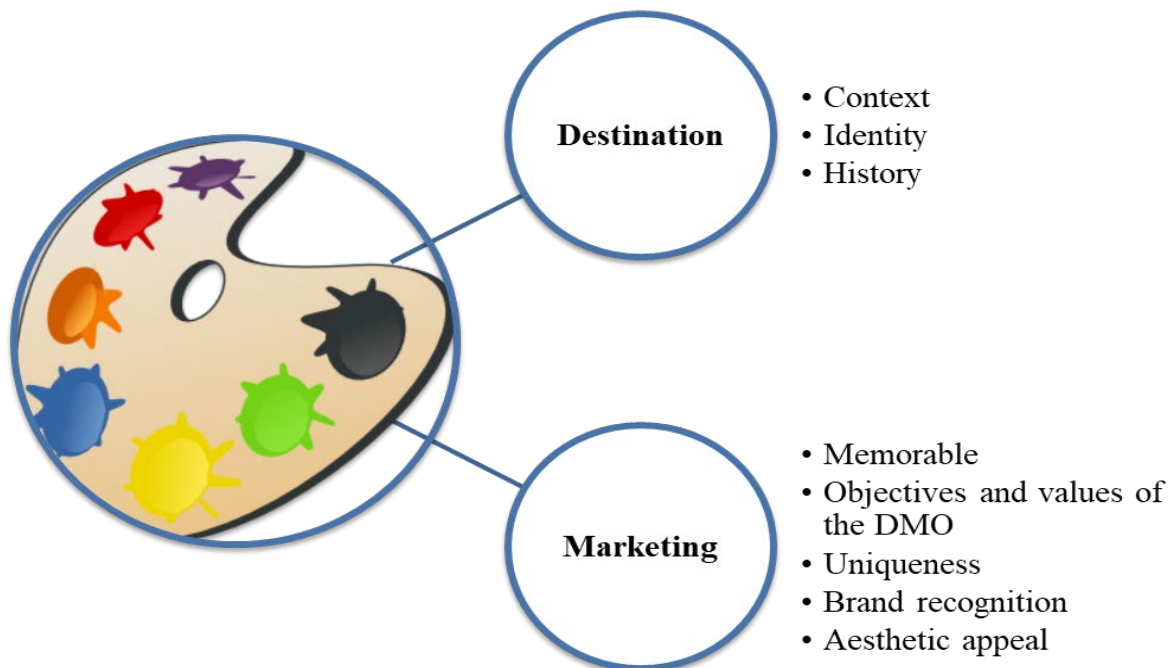
Figure 3: Cto Logo Design Competition



### Good Practice

Existing research have identified key elements that should be included in a logo. Among these are elements referring to the identity, history, tradition and culture of the destination; meaningful colours; values and essence of the destination (Marti, 2008; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2013). Séraphin *et al* (2016c), even developed a framework identifying the key components of a logo as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: Framework For The Design Of Dmo Logo



**Source:** The Author (Adaptation Of Seraphin *Et Al*, 2016)

We are arguing here that DMO logo design should be the results of a scientific approach. This view is also supported by Séraphin *et al* (2016c). This could be done for instance by designing

an online survey (questionnaire) that would cover areas such as visual aesthetics; cultural identity and other destination characteristics. Each question could be associated to a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 for 'strongly disagree' and 5 for 'strongly agree'. Questions would also cover gender, age and exposure to the selected destination culture. The questionnaire would be sent to natives living in the country, and diaspora from the destination, but also to tourists (people who have already visited the destination and potential visitors).

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) could then be conducted on the overall set of completed questionnaires to confirm item relevance. Such a survey would show discrepancies between the way locals and diaspora perceive the logo versus how tourists would. Locals and diaspora have an intimate knowledge of the destination that non-natives would not have. Indeed, as mentioned earlier in this paper, if we compare the old and the new Haitian DMO logos, it could be argued that the destination has moved from a heritage-based strategy to a sun-and-sea based strategy. However, both logos, old and new (figure 5), include heritage symbols. However, the symbolic meaning of the hibiscus is only known by natives from the country (S raphin *et al*, 2018b).

All administrations in charge of tourism need to explore how potential visitors are perceiving the image of the destination they are in charge of, bearing in mind that people from different cultures will have their own subjective and distinctive perceptions of any one destination, which will further complicate marketing strategy. This is part of the destination reputation management (Anholt, 2011). 'Each destination has a different set of associations wrapped up with its brand' (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011: 171).

**Figure 5:** Old And New Logo Haitian DMO



It is worth highlighting the fact that the understanding/knowledge (or not) of a destination impact on how this destination is perceived by potential visitors (Li, Lu, Ying, Jiang, Barnes & Zhang, 2014). Hence the reason why Li et al (2014) suggested that it is important to investigate how much visitors know about the destination. Cognitive and affective image are important when it comes to decision-making (Li *et al*, 2014).

## Conclusion

### Key Findings

52% of DMOs' logos analysed have adopted a neutral position in their branding strategy; 38% of DMOs have based their branding on heritage and 10% on sun-and-sea. By adopting a neutral position, most of the destinations are following the global trend. That said, 'heritage' remains an important element in the branding of Caribbean destinations. More specifically, scientific heritage represents 87% of the DMOs which opted for a heritage strategy. The remaining 13% went for cultural heritage.

## Limitations

The use of visual methodology in this research has its limitations. A potential limitation is that visual materials may be interpreted differently from their intended meaning (Glaw, Inder, Kable & Hazelton (2017). Researchers may interpret material differently based on their own values, ideas, culture, and language. The two authors, however, are Caribbean natives who migrated so they have significant understanding and identify with the logos' symbols and images.

## Future Research

Further research is needed to have a better understanding of the role of heritage in creating demand for Caribbean destinations and its subsequent adoption in DMOs branding strategies. Further research could also explore the thinking of DMOs behind the design - colours, images and symbols that lead to their use. What is apparent is that cultural heritage takes a back seat when it comes to branding Caribbean destinations with neutrality being the preferred choice.

The other question is why? Although speculative, this is probably to satisfy the idiosyncratic needs of the increasingly psychocentric characteristics of contemporary Caribbean visitors. This approach is unfortunate as neutrality conveys a message that the Caribbean is undifferentiated which is far from the truth. A destination logo is critical to the tourist's decision-making process therefore a logo should evoke associations, perceptions, and images about the place's culture and history. A destination logo should evoke positive feelings to internal and external audiences (Hem & Iversen, 2014). It is not clear if the move to neutrality in logo design would achieve this. Certainly, more research needs to be done to understand the thought processes behind Caribbean DMOs logo designs. Surveys and interviews with DMO marketing staff should be forthcoming.

The results of this study may help destination marketers to rethink their destination branding strategy. With 23 UNESCO world heritage sites in the Caribbean, destination planners could be missing out on opportunities for a more sustainable form of tourism and high yielding cultural tourists. Cultural tourism is worth 40% of all international tourism arrivals. Researchers note that cultural tourism is moving towards the mass market, broadening its concept beyond sites and monuments, and towards creativity, lifestyles, traditions, and everyday culture (Kalvet, Olesk, Marek, Tiits & Raun, 2020). The cultural tourism market is estimated to grow at a rate of 20.77% between 2022 and 2027. The size of the market is forecast to increase by US\$6600.71 million (Technavio, 2022). Caribbean destination marketers should consider how they can synergise culture and heritage with the needs of local residents, international investors and tour operators to produce a more sustainable tourism product through its branding activities. Another area for future research would be to observe the branding strategies of the tour operators who sell Caribbean vacations to determine the messages that are conveyed through their branding strategies for Caribbean destinations. Additionally, research should be done on other regions of the world with a similar history and topographical features such as those in the Pacific and Indian oceans to see if the same approach to destination branding is undertaken.

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