NATION BRANDING AND SEMIOTICS:

A CASE STUDY OF THE 100%

PURE NEW ZEALAND CAMPAIGN

ASIA NEPIA

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements, nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Asia Nepia

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And always, my feline companions who remind me that it's worth it

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to identify the value creation mechanism behind the 100% Pure brand, with regard to its cognitive and affective utility. This was achieved by conducting a thorough literature review on nation branding, brand personality, and semiotics. The review identified two main facets on which the following study focused: first, the affective component of nation branding was examined within the theoretical framework of brand personality, and secondly, a semiotic analysis was used to reveal the cognitive component of nation branding.

The existing semiotics literature was used to provide the framework that shaped the analysis of the 100% Middle-Earth campaign, whereupon it was discovered that the main value mechanism was the emotional stimulus created by the brand's ability to make the onlooker long for the product and to stimulate them into purchasing the fictional story being portrayed. This was particularly strong in the current 100% Middle-Earth campaign because of the sketched tiles depicting the adventures of the book *The Hobbit*, made real through corresponding photographs. This technique created a fictional world of New Zealand, fostering a belief that the Middle-Earth fantasy adventures can be maintained by purchasing the product (Cooper, 1994) and eluding to the fact that New Zealand is a fabled land of mystery with adventures one can experience (Larsen, 2005); this made the campaign memorable. The cognitive component of the 100% Pure brand was found to be the brand imagery which *becomes* the affective component during an onlooker's interpretation process; and this dual effect combined makes the value mechanism. Most importantly, this analysis concluded that the messages perceived by onlookers would supply the cognitive stimulus that generates the emotions which support the branding initiatives as well as the 'Lovemarks' effect. As a result, this investigation brought to light how the 100% Pure New Zealand slogan may not be contingent on the success of the campaign in itself, but rather on the consistency of emotional stimulus that is conveyed through the various signs and messages.

Keywords: 100% Pure; 100% Middle-Earth; Nation Branding; Semiotics; Brand Personality; Lovemarks; Nation Image.

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study is to discover the value creation mechanism behind the 100% Pure brand, with regard to its cognitive and affective utility. This will be achieved by first looking at the literature on nation branding as the affective component coupled with literature on semiotics as the cognitive aspect.

How a nation is branded is the fundamental element of that nation's tourism marketing campaign, where every nation brand is structurally influenced by national identity and image (Fan, 2010); all of which consist of, or are conveyed through, signs and their associated meanings. Tourism marketers have taken different approaches throughout the world involving political (Light, 2001), favourable, trendy (Said, 1978; Gruffudd, 1994; Smith, 1992) and even idealised (Lanfant, 1995) sign representations of a nation. However, without consistency between what is being portrayed to tourists and the actual delivery of a sight or experience, a nation brand can fail. As such, it is important to establish what the successful elements of nation branding are, and the existing literature will be reviewed in order to determine these factors, including literature on brand personality which stands prominently as an effective way of creating the necessary consumer-brand intimacy that is required for a successful brand. The Lovemarks theory is used to investigate how the 100% Pure campaign is both a well-loved and well-respected brand in regards to its value mechanism, as well as linking this value mechanism into the brand personality evolution of the 100% Pure brand. Semiotics furthers this in order to evaluate the inner workings of sign interpretation and how an onlooker may interpret the intentional or unintentional messages of signs.

By conducting a semiotic analysis of the current 100% Pure sub-campaign 100% Middle-Earth, a concise dissection of a nation's brand can be undertaken and decoded into the narrative which a nation is trying to tell (Cooper, 1994). It is important for tourism marketers to create a national brand which is consistent in both sign and its associated meaning for the

corresponding nation image, whilst also balancing that consistency with the delivery of the campaign to tourists once in that nation (Aaker, 1996). A review of the current semiotics literature will provide the framework which will shape how the following analysis of the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign will be conducted. Afterwards, the present international tourism marketing situation of New Zealand will be discussed with regards to the 100% Pure New Zealand brand's current and future viability. Conclusions will be drawn from this theoretical review and discussion, and areas for further research will also be identified.

Chapter One embodies the main bulk of literature which explores a compilation of theories on nation branding, along with nation image and a touch of national identity in order to allow for a fuller understanding of how the current theory of nation branding explores and identifies what makes a brand successful. Some of the main facets highlighted are an accurate representation of a country's national identity as proposed by Fan (2010), and Kevin Roberts' (2006) Lovemarks theory of building brand success through the creation of love and respect in a brand's lifetime. Brand personalities are also discussed in the exploration of the brand value creation mechanism by attempting to explicate a picture of the brand personality traits, and how the marketing creators personify the brand in order to entice and relate to the chosen target market.

The chapter finalises with a brief overview on semiotic literature along with a detailed look into semiotic interpretation, including how an onlooker of a brand advertisement may interpret the intended messages by way of personal and social experiences of the imagery, and word associated meanings in one's everyday life. Discussion is presented also on the complexity of the messages, and how the interpretation process can differ from culture to culture; indicating that a brand personality can be interpreted unfavourably if the marketing creators are not conscious of the cultural implications on the associations of the imagery they use in their different target markets.

Chapter Two discusses the methodology used in this dissertation and highlights a method of semiotic analysis suggested by Chandler (2013) which includes various questions that are posed hypothetically as part of the analysis process.

Chapter Three discusses the history of the 100% Pure New Zealand brand and how it has evolved and changed over its lifetime. This section includes perspectives of the brand, and its associations and implications for the New Zealand public; concluding in the most recent evolution of the brand into the current 2013 sub-campaign of 100% Middle Earth.

A semiotic analysis is conducted in Chapter Three; displaying the twelve tiles of the current 100% Middle-Earth campaign and analysing the tiles' associated meanings in their advertised pairs. The 100% Middle-Earth campaign is laid out in pairs, allowing for one sepia-toned drawing scene from the book *The Hobbit* to be followed by an overlaid photograph with a similar layout to the sketch. Each such pair is analysed as one semiotic 'text' with regards to Chandler's (2013) semiotic analysis guide.

Chapter Four discusses the findings of the dissertation, beginning with the success of the 100% Pure brand, and what was found to be the value mechanism as well as valued traits that make 100% Pure a Lovemark. The value mechanism was discovered to be the emotional stimulus created by the brand's ability to make the onlooker long for the product and to stimulate them into purchasing the fictional story being portrayed. This was particularly strong in the current 100% Middle-Earth campaign because of the sketched tiles depicting the adventures of the book *The Hobbit*, made real through corresponding photographs. This technique was found to create a fictional world of New Zealand, fostering a belief that the Middle-Earth fantasy adventures can be maintained by purchasing the product (Cooper, 1994) and eluding to the fact that New Zealand is a fabled land of mystery with adventures one can experience (Larsen, 2005); this made the campaign memorable. Recognising this point as the main value mechanism, the ability of the brand creators to successfully grow and evolve the brand personality with the demands of the target market, along with identifying 100% Pure as

a Lovemark, are also two important supporting factors to the brand's overall success. After identifying the main objective of the study, there is discussion presented with regard to whether or not the brand is good enough and if it will survive, or if will it need to be changed in order to maintain the attention of tourists.

Chapter Five concludes on the findings of this dissertation, once again highlighting the main points that are discovered as well as restating the identified value creation mechanism behind the 100% Pure brand.

Chapter Six finalises this study with a suggestion for further research proposing that primary research into sign interpretation could be conducted on the 100% Pure brand, and/or the emotional stimulus generated when observing the brand advertisements; which would facilitate an expansion on what is known about both the cognitive and affective value of 100% Pure.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

NATION BRANDING

National branding moves away from the more basic notions of tourism and includes economic, cultural and political agendas within its branding strategies. A nation's brand is primarily concerned with how the nation is portrayed on an international platform amongst all other competing nations. Even though the main priority of tourism is to attract tourists, the political agendas encourage tourism policy creators to portray a certain perspective of the country which leads on to economic benefits. As such, during the nation branding process, the preferences of the tourism market are also considered from an economic viewpoint (Fan, 2010).

Branding a nation is meant to:
- Remould national identities
- Enhance a nation's competitiveness
- Enhance political, cultural, business and sport objectives
- Promote economic and political agendas both internationally
  and domestically
- Alter, improve or enhance a nation's image and reputation
  (Fan, 2010, p.100)

Fan (2010) discusses how the first step to building a nation brand is through the identification of a nation's national identity; the nation image is then constructed from a series of identity markers distinct to that country whilst incorporating the necessary political, economic and social frameworks. These markers are then portrayed in a method which communicates to the international community the story of that nation which becomes the basis for the nation brand (Fan, 2010).

Kotler and Gertner (2002) believe that a country with a strong brand identity will be able to gain a competitive advantage internationally over nations that do not have a strong nation brand identity, or have an underdeveloped brand identity, and an even stronger advantage over those

that have a negative brand identity. Many national branding attempts are subjected to scrutiny by the public (Olins, 2002) and academics (Anholt, 2008). While some sources commend the efforts of tourism policy makers and are both happy and satisfied with the nation branding signs and their associated meanings, there are always small pockets of individuals which hold a negative perception.

Bossen (2000, p.128) explores the intrinsic similarities between the government and the tourism industry. His study highlighted parallels in three areas, stating that both:

- Aim at increasing their own turnover
- Desire to emphasize the uniqueness of a place
- Execute the objectification of culture

A nation's image is the story being told to the international community (Lanfant, 1995) where studies on nation brand image argue that a favourable nation image is a critical component to the success of tourism marketing (Olins, 2002; Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). A case study conducted on the nation image of the United Kingdom showed how tourism policy makers favoured images relevant to current trends and fashion over the historical origins of the country, and the their mistaken decision to disregard the country's historical heritage caused the subsequent failure of their international marketing campaign (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012). The ideal nation image is created when those responsible for generating tourism numbers take an already established national identity and combine the main elements of that nation into a cohesive nation brand (Fan, 2010). However, government and tourism policy influences often create novel national identity markers which have little relevance to the actual national identity, and from these the nation brand is formed and then pushed onto the residents of that country (Light, 2001). A national brand that revolves around symbols, events, or fleeting concepts with no ethnic or heritage association, creates a fragile basis of nation branding (Bossen, 2000). It could also be based on pop culture references or popular forms of media

(Hodgen, 2010) making the nation's image a flexible and dynamic construct that exists solely within an ever-changing environment.

The tourism promotion of a nation is meant to endorse that country's national identity and establish that in one's nation brand (Fan, 2010). In many instances, the promotional strategy is used to strengthen the internationally perceived self-image to the nationals of that country while also portraying a favourable nation image to the international market. In some cases, this can be based on the strong perceptions of a few tourism policy creators and how they believe the international community should view their nation amongst all other nations. Tourism promotion can be used in the same method to reflect the political identity and agenda of one's country to both an international and domestic audience (Light, 2001). In the creation of a self-image through tourism promotion, tourism itself becomes the primary component in portraying a nation's image. Again, through tourism promotion, both international and domestic onlookers become entrapped with the notions that are portrayed to them as a spectacle of what that country is about, and what values or experiences it holds (Light, 2001). Nation branding takes national identity and vocalises it to the wider international market whether authentic or not (Bossen, 2000) in a succinct form of relevant signs and their associated meanings.

A nation's self-image generally consists of identity markers which are usually used in support of a national identity claim, which is later presented to onlookers in some manner (Kiely, Bechhofer, Stewart & McCrone, 2001). The symbolic nature of national identity markers is central to the concept; these markers encapsulate the embodiment and characteristics of a nation and its nationals along with displays of significant importance to the international community of one's national identity. These symbols are meant to be carried with pride and in support of one's identity claim (Bechhofer, McCrone, Kiely & Stewart, 1999). They are said to be permanent distinguishing facets of a nation; displayed as unique elements that are distinctive to that nation's past, present and future (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Establishing these markers and displaying them as one's national identity is usually coupled with the creation of pride around that particular marker amongst the nationals; this in turn strengthens the psychological bond between national and place (Triandafyllidou, 1998). Subsequently, this becomes the foundation of the national brand, creating consistency between the story that is being told and the reality of that story in the eyes of tourists (Light, 2001).

Common to under-developed countries when constructing nation brands is the overtaking nature of neo-colonisation; in many instances neo-colonisation highjacks the national identity of societies and re-constructs them into stereotypical identities along with palatable heritage stories (Light, 2001). This method of nation branding was seen to benefit the countries by bringing them a better economy and attracting tourists with an eye-catching nation brand, more so than with a realistic one (Henderson, 2002). Tourism promotional strategies include an array of national identity markers as a method of interaction and appeal to the international community (Light, 2001; Callahan, 1998; O'Connor, 1993; Johnson, 1999; Boissevain, 1996; Palmer, 1998). The most common of these include ethnic identity (Callahan, 1998), rural landscapes which portray a common theme of the nation's natural surroundings (O'Connor, 1993; Johnson, 1999), culture (Boissevain, 1996) and national heritage and tradition (Palmer, 1999). For a complete list compiled by Skinner, Kubacki, Moss and Chelly (2008) please refer to Appendix A.

Change in national identity has been noted to be usually accompanied by a strong political movement or economic change (Olins, 1999) which is also reflected in the nation brand (Fan, 2010). Gade (2003) comments on how a long history of political independence is the first step to achieving a strong method of communicating a nation image to the world, where creating stability for a country also assists with the creation of national identity and nation branding. New Zealand is known for its forward thinking and political innovation which has come through very strongly in the nation's historical tourism branding efforts (McClure, 2004).

Heritage attractions are often used as a primary tool in nation branding. It is believed that strong historical elements in one's nation brand entices questions about the past, and encourages the telling of stories of that nation to both domestic and international audiences (Henderson, 2002). As nations build their nation brand, the question of which heritage attractions and stories are chosen becomes largely a political matter. Heritage is seen as being intertwined with both tourism and politics where both have issues attempting to display an accurate representation of a nation's identity that all nationals are satisfied with (Henderson, 2002). Henderson (2002) also includes the dynamics of social and economic frameworks when considering the choice of heritage attractions for the purpose of nation branding, as well as the previously discussed political and tourism industry agendas. This body of research concludes that to truly appreciate the significance of heritage attractions all of these aforementioned global industry agendas need to be assessed in the evaluation of the branding direction that is chosen.

Many destinations are utilising the potential of promoting local cuisine, in the recent phenomenon of gastronomy tourism which has proven to be beneficial to brand building; cuisine can help strengthen the culture of a destination and be a great aid in tourism branding efforts (Karim & Chi, 2010; Rand, Heath & Alberts, 2003). Gastronomy tourism relates to the eating and drinking experiences of a tourist whilst travelling (Karim & Chi, 2010) and was found to be a niche market in the early 2000's where today it has become one of the key segments of the tourism industry (Long, 2004). Many tourists travel for the sole purpose of food (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Long, 2004; Hu & Ritchie, 1993) and it was recorded by several studies as the primary motivating factor for travel (Ryan, 1991; Boniface, 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004). Because food is a primary motivating factor, many nations have taken into account that a national cuisine can be advocated as an effective method of attracting and re-attracting tourists (Boyne, Williams & Hall, 2002). Nations can include food as their unique product (Karim & Chi, 2010) where cultural methods or traditions of eating have created a centralised memorabilia for many tourists when visiting a destination

(Debes, 2011; Tannahill, 1975; DeSoucey, 2010) or choosing to return to a destination (Karim & Chi, 2010). Enhancing food and culinary experiences portrays characteristics of the locals and the wider community (Tannahill, 1975). Many tourist attractions include food (Long, 2004), and the tourism industry relies largely on the deliverance of food experiences where 40% of tourists' budget is for food (Boyne *et al*, 2002).

Besculides, Lee and McCormick (2002) recorded an increase in tourists travelling for the purpose of cultural experiences. Every nation will include an element of that country's national heritage, though which part of the national heritage it chooses to showcase then becomes a statement to the international community; the expectations of every nation having its own unique national heritage to showcase is largely because of tourist's expectations (Bossen, 2000). Short of museums, preserved historical sights and artefacts, historical cultures and methods of living have long been lost where the commercialisation of native cultures has become a common trait across all nations which are displayed very strongly within the tourist gaze (Tilley, 2006).

Nation branding is meant to be the fundamental frontline for attracting tourists with a genuine, idealised image of one's nation; flattering its unique qualities and reinforcing the national identity (Lanfant, 1995). In theory, a nation's brand is meant to reflect a truthful representation of that nation's national identity, though the link between nation brand and national identity is not yet fully understood (Fan, 2010). Olins (1999) comments on how a nation's brand should define its nationals, not the beliefs of the brand strategists'; creating a solid national identity brand should start with a full understanding of the product (Chernatony & McDonald, 1998), which in this case refers to the nationals that reside within the country in question.

Every brand will consist of a complex group of signs and their associated meanings in the minds of the onlooker (Fan, 2010); these are unique to each country and are usually quite consistent in the minds of people both domestically and internationally; ergo a nation's brand. Any successful brand will have an instantly recognisable and quickly associated

brand image, name, tagline, slogan or feeling which includes all associations and expectations of that product in the eyes of international stakeholders (Aaker, 1996). A successful brand is distinguished from an unsuccessful brand by how effectively it is marketed to the specific audiences targeted. Dissatisfaction occurs when the associated meanings of a brand's signs do not match the product, and in the case of tourism nation branding; the situation is no different (Dinnie, 2007).

Bossen (2000) discusses how a nation's image should resonate with both the tourists and the populace in order to create a strong nation brand used in tourism marketing. This method adopts both the country and its people in a holistic manner where both aspects become part of the tourism product.

Figure 1.0 shows Fan's (2010) diagram of the relationships between national identity, national branding and the dynamic relationship between a nation's image and national branding as government policy and tourism policy influences change the identity markers to suit current events, and current tourism demands.

The inter-relationships between National Identity, Nation Branding and Nation Image (Fan, 2010, p.100)

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Figure 1.0

Presently, most countries have a nation brand and are marketing their country as *the* destination of choice; there is little to differentiate one country from its neighbours as globalisation has proliferated destinations with five star hotels, a consumer focused tourism industry, westernised facilities and each boasting a 'unique culture' (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2002; Piggott, 2001). Although many nation branding efforts take years to establish - creating recognition of the product and a willingness to purchase

(Curtis, 2001); nation branding has been seen to be a necessary element in creating a country image that is sustainable in the long term (Morgan *et al*, 2002). Curtis (2001) gives examples of Ireland and Spain as having successful long-lasting nation branding campaigns due to their brand's consistency, though appropriate communication is still the key to their branding success.

Brands attempt differentiation by using specific signs and their associated meanings to position their brand in a way that targets the product's appeal to be a niche market, reducing the incidence of mass tourism and turning their nation into a unique and fashionable destination for the alternative traveller (Morgan *et al,* 2002). The ability to establish this kind of image and tourism attraction has been seen as the pinnacle of branding success; while destinations that failed to create a niche market feel or a unique identity have not fared well in the competitive structure of the tourism destination industry (Morgan *et al,* 2002).

Tourists use a wide variety of information gathering resources before travelling and an image of a destination is created through these pre-travel research practices (Walmsley & Lewis, 1984; Katz & Lazarfeld, 1955). A tourist's research could be derived from other people's personal experiences, informal sources such as word of mouth (Mathieson & Wall, 1982), product testing through travel journalists reviews, books, documentaries, commercial sources, marketing communication and most commonly - the internet (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994). These methods of communication allow consumers to become familiar with the country and what it has to offer; one can participate in the experience and then re-tell their experiences to friends and family which will also have some anchoring point of reference to the major attractions and/or culture (Curtis, 2001).

Nation Branding is not only dependant on the tourism policy creators but also on the potential buyers. Sheth, Mittal and Newman (1999), and Urde (1999) discuss consumers and what they are looking for when considering brand choices, products and destinations. They comment that a consumer is looking for a lifestyle statement; the potential tourist is

expecting to be emotionally stimulated when considering the destination marketing campaigns. This process includes buying an image of oneself which Morgan *et al.* (2002) observe as the transformation of a destination into a fashion accessory or statement.

According to Hallberg (1995), to be strong a brand needs to hold unique associations for the consumer which in turn creates an emotional stimulation that can lead to the purchase of the product in question. Roberts (2006b) discusses how shopping is primal to the human hunter-gatherer urge of prehistoric humans, where in turn he suggests using that urge to make shopping a necessity; to make it part of human nature. Creating this necessity requires a stimulus to shop and Roberts (2006b) suggests making it emotional, advertise your product as a dream and make consumers want that dream. Shopping can also be advertised as physical or passive, it can be global or local, it can be sensual and social, inclusive of it having the nature to shape and form the buyer as an individual. As such, a nation's brand is anchored in tourist perceptions and the marketing campaign is heavily dependent on its ability to stimulate an emotional response or trigger a system of beliefs that entices tourists to purchase the product and visit that country (Lury, 1998; Hallberg, 1995).

Roberts (2006) believes that the modern day economy is based on attraction which is inspired through seven main facets in order to stimulate the emotional response as discussed by Hallberg (1995) and Lury (1998):

1. Surprise attracts delight – create something which is different or stimulating; a concept that will draw in the attention of a wider audience because it is something that has never been done before or never been seen.

2. Like attracts like – makes the consumers like you, or like something you do. In many online stores there is a recommendation system that is looked upon as the brand personality being helpful or housing empathy for you as the consumer.

3. Lead with the senses – touch, sight, sound, smell and taste have all been commonly used as successful factors of brand personalities.

4. Great design is irresistible – use eye catching displays and innovative advertising.

5. Interactivity leads to commitment – the modern consumer expects to be able to interact with the brand and in some cases, the brand becomes the buyer's personality. Merchandising, personalised email or text updates and brand related music or mobile ring tones are a major source of brand loyalty.

6. Entertainment attracts connection – consumers like to have fun, laugh, socialise and be engaged.

7. Music entices emotion – music can be the deal maker in the success of a brand personality, in the modern age, music accompanies everything and there is such a wide range of music available that it has been used to stimulate an emotional response in the onlooker a lot easier than still frames.

(Roberts, 2006, pp. 36-37)

Kevin Roberts' (2006) Lovemarks theory is depicted in Figure 2.0 below. The basics of the Lovemarks theory is the correlation between a brands *Love* and *Respect* values in the eyes of the mass consumer pool. In Figure 2.0 it classifies a 'Fad' as a branding effort which houses a high love response but low respect for the brand, making it fleeting; though in many tourism branding instances they compete with the 'Brand' (low love, high respect) and 'Lovemarks' (High love, high respect) sectors of the theory.

The Love / Respect Axis (Roberts, 2006, pp. 18)

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Figure 2.0

Respect is achieved through performance, trust and reputation which include the sub-categories presented in Figure 3.0 below:

Important Elements of Respect (Roberts, 2006, pp.74)

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Figure 3.0

While on the other hand, love is gained through mystery, passion, and intimacy which include the sub-categories presented in Figure 4.0 below:

Turning a Brand into a Lovemark (Roberts, 2006)

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Figure 4.0

Global competition creates a necessity to understand semiotic studies and the science of emotional stimulation in marketing, and brands have been seen to be the most successful method of differentiation and creating loyalty to a product above all other marketing forms. In a world where the popularity for certain products is becoming increasingly dynamic, being recognised by consumers in the global market is key to a product's success (Morgan *et al,* 2002).

Consumers are the key element to any brands success, where Roberts (2006) describes the power and influence of an inspirational consumer to the success sum of a brand. An inspirational consumer is characterised by the ability to be technologically savvy to a point where if unimpressed by the brand, he/she could be a substantial stakeholder in the brand's failure. An influential consumer has the increasing ability to personalise their surroundings, inclusive of social webpages and a wide manner of interactive screens. This ability to be *you* in every facet of life has created a generation that is happy to express what they *feel* about something opposed to what they *think*. Roberts (2006) comments on how this is a huge influencing factor in a brand's success because of the fact that an individual who does

not like something will immediately vocalise that to the world through blogs or personal social websites; creating the same negative emotional stimuli's in others who may not have even seen what they are referring too. This link creates a pre-established negative association with the brand or particular advertisement, and can perpetuate the negativity, which in turn hinders the brand's success. In the same way an inspirational consumer who has become intimately involved with the brand can perpetuate the brand's success in the same manner as the previous negative methods, though in many instances a positive inspirational consumer strongly associates themselves with the brand, and are usually very quick to identify mishaps in the product and begin to blame its creators.

BRAND PERSONALITY

A brand is meant to showcase a product's values and characteristics, whether functional or dysfunctional. Successful brands that have established consistency in the market for long periods of time between consumer and brand have managed to convey their values to the consumers in a way that incites emotional reactions to that product, creating an interaction with the brand as if it were a living entity. Brand personalities talk to the targeted consumers in an appealing manner that delivers the intended message with accuracy (Morgan *et al,* 2002). Roberts (2005) strengthens this idea by adding in the value of the modern use of television screens in marketing. His perspective holds the idea that the touch screen of many mobile phones creates intimacy with the consumer and therefore creating an entity of the brand through the intimacy of the phone. He comments that screens feel real and intimate which in turn creates a real entity interaction. Screens also create a window into other worlds that one may not be able to interact with, it becomes a living story that the viewer can relate to and feel involved in; the physical nature of touch screens as previously mentioned can create the emotional response of *keeping in touch.* While in previous years this would be something said on a telephone or written in a letter, the touch screen speaks as a personal friend, as if it were the one you were asking to keep in

touch and come again soon. This interaction can stimulate a loyalty to the screen, or phone; the constant interaction with it, and the friendly reminder that 'I'm only a step away' makes it one's loyal companion, or friend - it entices you to play, to be interactive, to be involved, creating a likable connection between itself and its owner, and in the same way it can convey stories to you as one might tell stories to it. Even though the stories being told may be to another human on the end of another phone, the screen creates the loyal medium for information. Media and news is now predominantly conveyed through screens, where it makes the screen connected or portrays the image that the screen can be connected to all world news and the most up-to-date stories. The story telling method of screen interaction creates a sense of belonging, it allows you to choose what you wish to watch or it will show you what you wish to see, it allows one to create an emotional connection with the screen as a buddy that is interested in the same things.

Screens come in many shapes and forms in the 21st century where the variety of screens have been associated with corresponding personalities, which in many instances allows the marketer to choose a base personality type that would best compliment the branding campaigns efforts. For example, the household screen is seen to be obedient and happy to serve, whereas mobile phone screens are sociable. This can extend to home computers which are said to be open-minded, gaming systems, music players, portable DVD screens and so on (Roberts, 2005). Screens facilitate the movement and sound to also partake in the interaction of a marketing campaign's imagery with the consumer; allowing the brand personality to emerge with the assistance of movement and generally accompanying music (Roberts, 2005).

In the process of building a brand personality, Morgan and Pritchard (2000) comment on how a brand should fashion a favourable image through establishing emotional connections with the onlooker and not be confined to visual aspects alone. In the establishment of an emotional bond, the desired result is for the onlooker to perceive the brand in its intended manner. A

brand emitting a strong emotional meaning has been seen to hold the conversation between the consumer and the brand personality, in turn creating anticipation and embedding promises of the product to the onlooker. It is also this interaction that persuades tourists to visit a destination and re-visit it again over other locations. The emotion creates security and a sense of closeness (Morgan *et al,* 2002) while also being inspirational and portraying a sense of belonging (Roberts, 2009); it is also said that the differentiation tactics of the future will be the ability to win the hearts and minds of the tourists (Morgan *et al,* 2002). Storytelling is seen to be the historical method of which individuals socialise and convey message to one another. In the modern age, the role of screens and marketers in terms of brand success is to become the new best storyteller, and therefore, the brand personality. In the 21st century, humans love screens, it's a visual moving story that combines sight, sound and motion (SISOMO) together in a method that involves the watcher. In some instances the brand personality is interactive, allowing you to touch and investigate the screens imagery whether through curiosity or question or the enticement of a good story or even gossip; the screen can deliver all manner of personalities (Roberts, 2005).

Storytelling through brand personalities is characterised by the ability to touch the onlooker in such a manner that the onlooker wishes to re-tell that story to someone else, creating mouth to mouth marketing. The story needs to make sense and entice an emotional response whilst delivering the story with a level of emotional truth or creativity. They can include memorable characters, have humour, be animated or have the ability to transcend worlds; the brand personality's goal is to have the target audience *love it* (Roberts, 2005).

Kevin Roberts (2006), CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, articulated this emotional stimuli and memorable brand personality or storyteller by constructing a method of winning the consumers hearts and minds with the theory of 'Lovemarks'. His theory describes how successful brands create the emotional reaction by acting with emotion within their campaigns.

Statistically humans primarily think with emotions, where the stimuli of an emotional reaction heightens the consumers chance to act on that feeling and purchase the product being viewed, Roberts (2009) also discusses how there are three secrets to a successful Lovemark:

Mystery   - Mixes dreams, icons and stories to create attractions of
             the unknown.

Sensuality - Exciting all five senses. Sight, sound, touch, taste and scent
             are portals to the emotions.

Intimacy   - Empathy, commitment, passion. It's the small touch, the
             perfect gesture that takes 'Loyalty Beyond Reason'.

(Roberts, 2009, pp. 3)

Brand personalities should be kept consistent for long periods of time by evolving the original brand personality and adapting it to the current demands or political movements. This method of brand consistency can be used to broaden the tourist attractions and activities; it can adopt new values and ideas whilst still being consistent at the core and also growing and developing with the community (Morgan *et al,* 2002).

Fussell (1972) and Culler (1990) state that the distinguishing factor of a tourist are their motivations, even those that are not openly revealed. The suppressed motives could include a status upgrade or change; social pressures; perhaps a desire to realise some sort of hidden fantasy; or in many cases it is an opportunity to pose in a social class that far surpasses their own in their society of origin. Tourists expect everything to be catered for them whilst travelling, creating a commodity instead of holding the traditional values of tourism being an activity or experience (Boorstin, 1967).

Choosing a destination has become a fashion accessory, where many researchers have identified tourist choosing destinations based on a statement of self-expression, or fashion. Fashion and style indicators aid in

ones portrayal of themselves and their personality to the world, tourism choices have become as necessary as clothes or cars. There are all used as tools to communicate a statement of self to their social surroundings (Morgan *et al,* 2002; Clarke, 2000).

As such, a destination has to be emotionally appealing to the onlooker, creating a brand personality that portrays celebrity value or something to be needed. A successful destination portrays itself as the item everyone needs on their shopping list, while a less successful destination will be seen as yesterday's fashion accessory or even a fashion *faux pas*. The traveller chooses a destination that will help define them to both themselves and the people around them; identifying the next popular tourism destination assists in identifying tomorrow's new fashion trend. Furthermore, as tourists become more and more proficient at identifying the upcoming trends on their own, it creates an opportunity to set oneself apart from all other tourists by being fashionable first (Morgan *et al,* 2002; Lurham, 1998).

Sheth *et al.* (1999) and Urde (1999) all discuss the value of tourism destinations being fashionable and how when a tourists makes a decision about what destination to go to next, they are essentially buying into the emotional relationship stimulated by that brand personality. When agreeing to travel to that destination, they are responding to that brand personality's promises.

Even though a tourist's perception of a brand needs to be stimulated and created, arousing an emotional link is not enough in the discussion of success (Lury, 1998). Hallberg (1995) mentions that stimulating emotion within the onlooker without creating a memorable point of reference is useless. It fails to complete the link between the emotional need to be in that destination and actually purchasing the product. His research discusses levels of confusion for the onlooker when viewing a marketing campaign which is not clear in its meaning even if an emotional response is achieved; which can lead to an emotional response to purchase, but without any direction of what to purchase. Modern tourists have been seen to desire

discovery as a primary element in choosing a destination which Morgan and Pritchard (1999; 2000; 2001) highlight that emotional connections communicated to the tourist can be the most important element to exploit in marketing campaigns.

Public sector tourism policy makers again have to create links between the current political pressures when creating their local and regional brand signs. Because brands are concise in nature there are always issues with what is showcased in the nation brand and with that come issues between regional departments in regards to what is seen as being classified as a national marker (Buhalis, 2000; Hall, 2001; Morgan & Pritchard, 2001). The successful management of local, regional and national political marketing is one that has been able to appease all parties whilst representing the nation in a manner that is accurate in nature and portrayed appropriately to the onlooker (Ryan, 2001).

Most tourists visit only ten major countries and Morgan *et al.* (2002) state that this leaves an estimated 93 nations attempting to compete for the remaining 30 percent of the tourism market. Many nations struggle to compete because the most popular nations have long established brand identities. Tourists recognise the references which also display high elements of consistency; this leverages the destination's popularity and is seen to succeed through cohesive representations of one's nation over long periods of time (Curtis, 2001).

Becken (2005) discusses how an over-emphasis on certain tourism icons in a nation can be a detrimental factor opposed to a positive one. That body of research suggests that overemphasis can lead to unsustainability in tourism development as the tourist icons are diminished over time because of tourism traffic or environmental issues and even social impacts. Issues with this occur when the visual images of prime icons being portrayed are of how they look in the past, usually without damage and minus the hordes of tourists. These signs present an illusionary compilation of meaning to the onlooker that the icon is in pristine condition and undiscovered by the mass tourism market, though in many cases there is no absence of tourism in

these areas and the tourist leaves the country with a negative perspective because of the inconsistencies between the messages in the marketing campaign and reality. Another comparable issue that has been of some concern to researchers is the 'appropriation of traditional symbols' or the creation of falsified traditional symbols for purposes other than those they are meant to refer to (Adams, 1984; Berger, 2004; Bruner, 2005; Henderson, 2002; Hughes & Allen, 2005).

Meanwhile, the vast majority of tourists in the modern era have a camera (or one built into their mobile phone) to document their experiences, which turns all of these tourists into semioticians as well. In many instances, the tourist seeks to photograph what has been portrayed in the marketing campaigns (Urry, 1990). These can include souvenirs and tourist sites, or whatever they have seen in tourism brochures, advertisements, travel books, blogs or on the internet; creating a mass of symbols and signs of the country being visited (Berger, 2004). Ultimately, this phenomenon leaves the tourists consuming what has already been portrayed and creating a trip itinerary which is essentially a succession of photo opportunities (Berger, 2004).

Icons are essentially the tourism attractions at any destination, becoming the natural and synthetic assets of a nation's tourism industry. These icons become the adventures that tourists seek to discover; they become recognisable and are often famous for their iconic value and tourism popularity (Becken 2005) - the more famous an icon is in the eyes of an onlooker, the more likely that onlooker is to purchase the product (Jenkins, 2003). Such tourism icons are used for strategic purposes by creating a frame through which the tourist views a nation and its icons. This is referred to as 'objective positioning' where the nation's unique features are used to heighten strategic advantage in the world tourism market. The use of icons is then advanced in marketing by arousing emotional responses within the onlookers, which again allows them to obtain further strategic advantages over other competitors (Chacko, 1997).

SEMIOTICS

The study of sign systems is called semiotics, a method of interpreting signs and their conveyed meanings through communication channels of intentional and unintentional meaning (Echtner, 1999). Eco (1976) houses the broadest definition of semiotics where he defines semiotics as anything that can be interpreted as a sign, Chandler (2002) also expands on this point by including that semiotics includes anything that may stand for something else. Unequivocally, semiotics is described as the study of the structure of meaning where signs and symbols are a vivid part of the human experience, constituting a high percentage of our daily lives. Humans constantly interpret their surroundings; their interactions, communication and the visual components of life are subjected to interpretation (Echtner, 1999). Through semiotic studies the theory of how messages are interpreted has been compiled into an essential part of many marketing strategies. In numerous cases, the interpretation of a marketing campaign by the onlooker is vital to the success of the product that it is advertising, through which direct or indirect communication forms a picture or story about that product or place.

Roland Barthes' (1957) book 'Mythologies' is said to be the first attempt at analysing semiologically the mechanics of language where he suggests that the public wants to view an image that incites an appearance of passion instead of the emotion of passion itself, whether genuine or not. He believes that the visual first impression dictates the future of what is being viewed, creating an almost immediate perception of the subject matter.

The development of semiotics derived from two different avenues, one stemming from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (lived 1857-1913) and the other from the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (lived 1839-1914). From these two divergences of the overall discipline, Saussure declared semiology a *science* which deciphered signs in the broader context of social life where Peirce studied semiology under the name *semiotic* which was classified as a formal discipline of signs (Chandler, 2002). Sebeok (1994) discusses how from the beginning of

civilisation right up to the present era there is "an intrinsic connection between the body, the mind and culture, and that the process that interlinks these three dimensions of human existence is semiosis, the production and interpretation of signs" (Sebeok, 1994, pp. 1-2).

In terms of semiotic studies, the signs being portrayed must first and foremost be clear in nature but at the same time not allow that intention to be seen. In order to create a sustainable and likable brand Barthes (1957) states that the onlooker wishes to see authenticity in a nature that is not made obvious to the truth, he believes that once a tourism attraction is made to be obviously authentic it becomes disliked and perceived as a caricature. Individuals prefer false realities and in some cases, brands and products that successfully create a believable false persona are more successful than those that go for complete transparency and reality.

The tourist reads and interprets all sign systems and they are seen as agents of semiotic analysis because of their nature to travel the world in search of signs and symbols through their tourism experiences. Tourists look at everything as a sign in itself which has been integrated into humanity as a 'typical cultural practice'; in every country one travels to the tourist is constantly searching for typical elements of that culture whether it be language, food, landscape or art, tourists are interpreting their surroundings as significant practices of local life (Culler, 1990).

Over centuries, societies have established through communication and convention an unwritten compendium of agreed associated meanings for the signs and symbols encountered in daily life (Berger, 1984). Barthes (1957) uses the example of myths in the creation of communication systems over time such as the notion that milk is endowed with the myth that it is associated with the purity of a child; this example extends to the reality that objects in themselves have little to no tangible meaning but instead the meanings they are associated with are arbitrary and in turn anything can be endowed with meaning(s). Berger (1984) defines a sign as anything that can be interpreted or is representative of something else. For example, in the modern era, a marketing campaign portraying individuals in 16th century

dress, immediately indicated an association with that certain time in human history. History in itself is abundantly full of meanings that are commonly associated with recognisable signs that can be easily used to portray a story and create emotional responses. Oswald (2012) also discusses the individual psychological subconscious processing of signs and symbols where through the individual's thought processes, he/she creates a personal meaning which extends into the formation of a symbol and can then be used to interpret other signs and symbols with similar associated meanings.

Cross-cultural communication through signs is a time-consuming and difficult issue to manage as it exists within what Lotman (1990) calls the *semiosphere* – which is conceived of as a dome of within which the creation and interpretation of signs occurs; specific to each culture, society and sub-sect. Throughout history there are commonly accepted meanings to certain signs and symbols, though every nation has a different social make-up and therefore one type of imagery in one nation could be drastically different in meaning to another group of nationals. This is linked back to Berger's (1984) original comment on the interpretation of sign meanings where it is highly dependent on the social constructs of the onlooker's background and what social atmosphere they were brought up in (Echtner, 1999). The cross-cultural barrier is given a lot of attention because it is difficult to manage various appropriate semiotic structures when marketing to foreign nations, whilst still conveying the intended messages as consistently as possible (Echtner, 1999).

Echtner (1999) Barthes (1957) and Saussure (1983) discuss the relationship between a word shown in a sign and the corresponding object or concept portrayed and vice-versa. For example, a sign might show imagery of a sandy shoreline whilst at the same time conveying the word associated meaning of "beach' to the onlooker; when interpreting signs, the choice of words and the manner in which they are arranged are fundamentally important to the understanding of that sign. All words will have a dictionary definition, although the manner in which those words are arranged can mean drastically different things from one national to another.

As words and their associated meanings are embedded into various societal cultures differently, marketers' choice of words become irrelevant in meaning but instead constructed in a manner that speaks to that culture through a process of long-term socialisation within that society. This ensures the sign is being marketed to the target audience in a way that portrays the appropriate or intended message. However, Oswald (2012) holds the viewpoint that text is the most minimalistic component of the semiotic analysis process; a formulation of word and object associations to a French man will vary in meaning to a New Zealander, ergo the message of the sign becomes distorted with cross-cultural viewing.

Peirce (1934), Hawkes (1977), Sebeok, (1994) and Echtner (1999) all discuss the growth of the semiotic sign system. Figure 5.0 shows the 'Semiotic triangle' which discusses the way in which signs and symbols are interpreted. Peirce's (1934) semiotic triangle shows a three-way relationship between 'the object or concept', the 'signifier used to represent the object' and the 'interpretant'. Hawkes (1977) comments on how the signs and symbols used not only mean something, but they are used in a manner that means something to someone.

Peirce's (1934) Semiotic Triangle

"This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons".

Figure 5.0

Object/concept - The comprised visual aids used within a sign in order to formulate a meaning to the onlooker. This can include imagery, or socially comprised scenes.

Signifier   - The method in which a sign is represented and the concepts it chooses to represent. For instance a tree can bring the linguistic association of 'Tree' to mind or the word 'Closed' can represent a business being shut. All signs will have a signifier with a 'signified concept' (associated meaning) though if you change the signifier, the signified concept will also change in meaning. For example, a sign showing many trees on a hill can now hold the associated meaning of forest opposed to just tree, or put the word closed on an elevator door and the signified concept now becomes relevant to the elevator door closing not a business being shut. Body language has also been included as a signifier, as seen through the individual within the socially accepted meanings of the gesture being viewed (Dinneen, 1990). For example, one could view an advertisement that has a woman smiling holding a product, where the associated socially accepted meaning of a smile would correlate to happiness, ergo the woman is happy with the product she is holding.

Interpretant   - The onlooker of the sign.

Barthes (1957) discusses how in semiology the *sign* is the combined associated meaning of both the signifier and the signified; it endows an object with meaning, for example, red roses are mythologically perceived as passionate, where the combined meaning of the signifier and the signified compiles into *passion filled* roses. Saussure (1983) also discusses how the theory of semiotics gives importance of how a sign is not usually made up of one intrinsic meaning but instead are commonly used in relationship with other signs, creating a combined meaning of a sign by using the inter-relationship of one sign's meaning in context with another sign's meaning through both linguistics and imagery. As such, many signs will portray a sign in context to an immediate opposite for example, the meaning of one sign could have the associated meaning of happy where its opposite is sad in

a method which entices the onlooker to purchase the product, ergo, by buying the product pictured it will make you happy opposed to sad. Peirce (1934) further dissects signs by splitting them into three categories:

Icon   - *Resembles* the object being signified in some manner or form. This includes anything that is representative of something else within a framework of associated meanings. For example the statue of liberty is an icon but its imagery is intertwined with a collection of social and cultural contexts of the United States of America.

Index   - The interpretant's collected associations with the object in question; the index has a *causal relationship* with the object. This dictates how the individual sees the image. For example a suntan has many meaningful associations such as a beach location holiday, health or any general outdoor exposure, though to an onlooker the image of a suntan will be interpreted through a number of personal and social channels of meanings in order to derive a conclusive point from the sign being viewed. This could range from 'sun exposure equals cancer' to 'sun exposure equals relaxing holiday'.

Symbol - A symbol most commonly refers to words and the *arbitrarily associated* meanings of those words which are created and agreed upon by the social environment in which the interpretant lives and the language in which the symbol is portrayed. Objects can also be associated with symbolic meaning; these are more commonly referred to as the symbolic markers of a destination (MacCannell, 1989). For example, the statue of Liberty is an American symbol of freedom and the American way of life, and when used extensively in this context it becomes a symbol or a symbolic marker of America.

Icon, index and symbol signs are not isolated from one another, because signs operate on many conjoining levels; signs are often an

integration of all three sign sub-sections in order to portray its concept (Mick, 1986). For example an image of the Petra ruins on a tourist's brochure is classified as an icon, but can also be used to represent Jordon. To further the Jordan example, a suntanned individual in a resort in Jordan could be indexed as a symbol used to represent a spa holiday or heightened status.

Societies construct and perpetuate the accepted interpretations and meanings of all signs and symbols, including language; and in this way, humanity itself is the architect of semiotics (Echtner, 1999; Hawkes, 1977). Echtner (1999) and Hawkes (1977) discuss how the human mind gives birth to the shape of the world through varying cultural and social systems which in turn become normal to those living within it; creating a sense of normality around anything over a long period of time which turns into the normal or true method of viewing that 'anything'. The human experience is a constant stream of interpreting signs and symbols within societies which are both mediated and tailored to fit within the socially accepted norms of the concept. In some instances, signs and their associated meanings are used to introduce a concept into the beginnings of being accepted as the norm; it desensitises the viewers over time into accepting that this concept is normal and acceptable within that social structure (Deely, 1990). What is equally important that through the interpretation of signs, there is also the constant practice of determining a lie or a misleading concept (Berger, 2005) where Eco (1976) highlights that if societies can convey messages through signs, then one can equally use sign to convey lies.

The applicability of semiotics to nation branding and national image is that it allows the architect to be cognisant of the fact that each sign or symbol has a preordained construct of meaning(s) from the onlooker's own social system. When marketing a country as a destination to one set of individuals, the campaign needs to be specifically tailored to the interests of that social system for the campaign to be truly successful (Eco, 1976). Signs and symbols are bound to their birthing cultures or social systems; they are in no way universal but instead constructed through social convention. A

sign needs to be learned, and therefore many social systems have rules and regulations on the usage of signs and sign construction within their societal groups (Echtner, 1999; Eco, 1976). Semioticians accept that there are multiple layers of meaning within any sign or symbol which encourages a deeper understanding for the concepts and suggests a method of interpretation which extends beyond the immediate or obvious points (Echtner, 1999).

Uzzell (1984) states that the depiction of certain signs is used as a method of dictating what is routinely done at the destination in question. For example, if one destination campaign solely portrays lounging on a beach, then a high majority of tourists will go and lounge on a beach. Cooper (1994) utilises a semiotic approach to tourism imagery interpretation and how it is used to manipulate the tourist experience in that destination. His research discovered that the language and signs used in the destination marketing campaigns created a 'dream-like' tourist experience in the country in question, where Uzzell's (1984) theory adds to that and dictates an itinerary of what must be done in that country. Cooper's (1994) theory discusses that a 'distinctive language' should be used when marketing tourism in a 'dream like' manner, creating a myth or fantasy experience that one can behold if they purchase that product. Some marketing directions use this method to portray idealised mass tourism experiences or even a safety net or comforting perception of a destination that is not necessarily the case in order to increase purchases. His research concludes that tourism policy creators project a narrative of their nation to the world through the use of tourism marketing techniques in order to create a distinctive story that identifies with that country, and to normalise it as the accepted practice when visiting. Dann (1993) argues that while tourism policy creators market tangible attributes of a destination, they lack in marketing the intangible, which in many instances hold the essence and symbolic nature of the destination experience.

According to Culler (1990) and Boorstin (1967), it is commonly concluded that tourists do not actually like the authenticity of a destination,

but instead revel in the inauthentic experiences and the tangible items available for sale. They both agree that a falsified account or a manufactured version of a cultural aspect is considered more enjoyable by the tourists than the real authentic experience (Culler, 1990; Boorstin, 1967). Cohen (1989) presents an example of this where the tourism marketers of Thailand created an idealistic and myth-like representation of trekking to visit the hill tribes as a method of conveying authenticity of the activity to tourists; even though the event is not culturally accurate, tourists lavish in the idea of participating in an authentic tribal village experience. Cohen's (1989) research also discovered that all cultural tourism experiences hold an element of truth to their historical origins along with underlining tones of 'basic cultural themes' which he discusses as becoming the social norm around that practice due to the invasion of tourism and the lack of authenticity. As previously discussed by Echtner (1999) and Hawkes (1977), the long term delivery of cultural inauthenticity creates a situation where the inauthentic begins to become authentic in the eyes of both tourists and the dominant ethnic core themselves.

Ryan (2002) adds to this point by highlighting that tailoring a culture is used as a method of creating an 'exotic culture'; though exotic is only dependant on spatial distance which segments domestic tourism from international tourism. In addition, the formulation of the 'exotic' can create confusion due to an incomplete understanding of the culture being portrayed, or the reasons behind the fabrication if identified. Tourism attractions have developed and evolved into more of a contrived experience for tourists, making tourism a commodity when the underlining experience can be easily obtained for a fraction of the price or even free (Culler, 1990; Boorstin, 1967). Culler (1990) explains tourism authenticity under two definitions:

- The experiences that are had 'off the beaten tourism track' can be viewed as authentic, because of their raw and unpredictable nature.

- Authenticity can also be experienced at those sights which have been marketed as the symbol of that country, where viewing the sight

itself as it is portrayed in the brochures is also perceived as a confirmed authentic experience (e.g. seeing the statue of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro).

Culler (1990) warns that the second definition of authenticity can create an ultimatum where once a sight has been marked as authentic, it then becomes inauthentic in nature because tourism marketers mediate how that sight is viewed in the nation image and can lead to spoiled deliveries of the sight in the eyes of tourists.

Historically, tourists are perceived to have an arrogant manner as they hold themselves as superior to all those around them, including other tourists and they proceed through their holiday attempting to see all the 'must see' attractions (Culler, 1990). As tourism attracts a higher percentage of the population from wealthier countries, this arrogance can manifest into an air of hostility as all tourists wish the other tourists weren't there so that they can have an authentic and uncontaminated experience, regardless of the fact that the other tourists are also there to see the same 'must see' sights (MacCannell, 1976; MacCannell, 1973). Carroll (1980) comments on how the illusion of tourism has created a commonly perceived notion that the experience imagined is only available to a privileged few. This view is supported by Frow (1991) who suggests that this notion is derived from the denial that travel is common and affordable, making it available to the masses and not a segmented privilege to few. Frow (1991) discusses how historically travel was only available to royals and the aristocratic lifestyle, where the modern day tourist still wishes to believe that they are living the high life of a privileged few that only aristocratic families can afford.

Having overviewed some of the literature on nation branding, nation image and semiotics, the relationship links are shown in Figure 6.0.

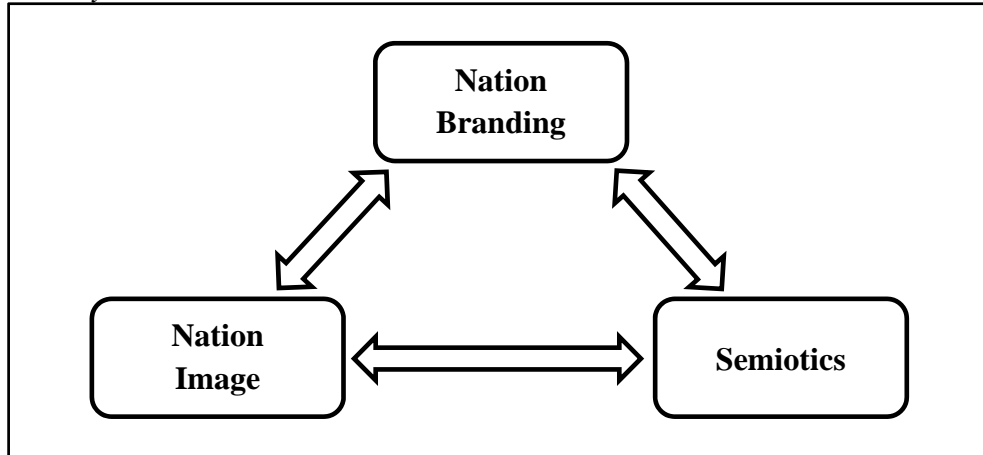*The inter-relationships between Nation Branding, Semiotics and National Identity*

Figure 6.0

CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

This study utilises existing academic literature in the relevant fields to conduct a secondary data analysis. Other secondary data will also be collected from international, governmental and commercial tourism data sources. Furthermore, the 100% Pure New Zealand marketing campaign will be derived directly from the images displayed on the Tourism New Zealand website and examined with regard to the signs and associated meanings contained therein.

Restricting this study to the 100% pure New Zealand campaign facilitates an ability to focus on the relevance of nation branding and semiotics in regards to how New Zealand is portrayed to the international community and its direct translation to how well it achieves brand loyalty. Morgan *et al.* (2002) comment on how the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign was the first major effort to brand New Zealand on an international scale, showcasing the landscape, culture and key markers of the country. The campaign was launched in 1999, and by 2010 it had started a change in the usually depicted signs and the meanings associated with them, attempting to show more than just natural landscape (Tourism New Zealand, 2012). This study analyses the content of the *current* 100% Pure campaign, with regard to the signs used and their associated meanings, which are analysed with reference to the existing semiotics literature.

A semiotic analysis is conducted based on a guideline from Chandler (2013) and Berger (2005). The basis of a semiotic analysis is to make obvious what is only usually hidden within the complex relationships of the content within a sign along with its associated meanings. The subject matter being analysed is commonly referred to as a *text* (Chandler, 2013) and is firstly seen as a complex sign full of other signs. The initial analytical task is to decipher the varying signs' content into individual sign components and determine each sign's associated meaning(s). The main sign coding system is segmented into the following two categories:

Textual Codes - Which can include objective and subjective positioning, lighting, camerawork, subject matters, colour, sound etc.

Social Codes   - Which predominantly includes body language and the associated meanings of body gestures, body positioning and stance

The conductor of the analysis is to take note of any writing within the sign inclusive of how it may add value or change the meaning of a text's imagery and it is suggested that a copy of the text being analysed is presented with the analysis, while taking care to note any shortcomings or inconsistencies in the text's reproduction.

The next step in conducting a semiotic analysis is to hypothetically pose a number of questions regarding the texts sign(s). Through the process of answering the proposed questions, the associated meanings of the text will create a catalogue of meaning; which when viewed together as one cohesive sign, the inter-relationships of the singular signs can be identified, and their combined and separate meanings concluded on.

The following questions are an example of those compiled for the purpose of conducting a semiotic analysis on the 100% Middle-Earth sub-campaign (Chandler, 2013). As stated previously, the process of answering them will illuminate the associated meanings of each sign, which will be outlined in detail in the corresponding sections:

1. What are the important signifiers and what do they identify?

2. Which societal group would identify with this particular set of signifiers the most?

3. What signifiers from the same paradigm sets are noticeably absent?

4. What reality claims are made by the text, does it allude to being fact or fiction?

5. How does the sequential or spatial arrangement of the elements influence meaning?

6. Do separate signs share common signifiers, and how does this affect their separate and combined meanings?

7. How *open* to interpretation does this sign seem to be?

8. For whom was this sign intended?

This study applies an inductive approach to the collected literature where all secondary literature is analysed and assessed together to ensure a holistic outlook on the main proposed discussion topics: *Nation Branding* and *Semiotics*. These two topics are then used as a platform from which the current 100% Pure New Zealand tourism marketing campaign, '100% Middle-Earth, 100% Pure New Zealand', can be analysed with regard to its cognitive and affective utility as per the main objective of this study. Lastly, conclusions are proffered as based on the findings of the subsequent discussion.

CHAPTER THREE: 100% PURE NEW ZEALAND

The 100% Pure New Zealand campaign was created in Queenstown in 1999 when tourism marketing creators decided to advertise New Zealand under one brand name along with one consistent message of the country's tourism attractions and experiences. New Zealand tourism numbers rose substantially in the years following the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign and in the year 2000, tourism numbers increased by 10% along with a 20% rise in tourism spending. Statistically, the campaign was seen as a resounding success. Between 1999 and 2004, tourism numbers rose at an average of 7% per annum and tourism numbers increased by 50% before 2008 (TNZ, 2009; Bowler, 2012b).

The debate continues over who actually coined the term '100% Pure' but what is agreed upon is the success of the tagline and the meanings people associate with it. '100% Pure' was considered to put New Zealand on the world tourism map due to its ability to portray environmental awareness for both a country and an industry. The advertising executives at M&C Saatchi believed that the world was becoming very standardized and there was little to differentiate one tourism campaign from another. The 100% Pure New Zealand tagline originally was meant to highlight the special difference in a world of similarity, where the term *pure* defined a nation as unpolluted and untainted by the rest of the world and the '100%' exclaims the nation's commitment. New Zealand was now going to be seen as authentic and clean, with its ability to provide a 'real' experience. However, shortly after the launch of the 100% Pure slogan by the advertising company M&C Saatchi, an adaptation to the original message was devised with how New Zealand experiences are 'pure' in nature as well as the complimenting factor of the nation being pure and environmentally friendly. This started the evolution of the campaign and the realisation of its adaptability in portraying numerous desirable meanings with a limited number of signs (McClure, 2004) in order to fit various demands and opportunities.

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) research at the time indicated that tourists were looking for a particular type of vacation when considering New Zealand, mainly consisting of landscape, adventure, culture and people. Through the research process an identikit was constructed of the ideal New Zealand visitor, to profile and characterise the intended visitor in order to identify a marketing strategy that provided all the necessary elements where the tourists in question would gain the most from their vacation experience. The basis of this early mould was a tourist who wished to interact with people, valued culture, was knowledgeable, financially well-off, and had a desire to experience adventure away from the mass tourism crowds (TNZ, 2009).

100% Pure New Zealand was carefully crafted in order to be used in a method that showcased the country in an appealing light whilst also speaking to and attracting its target tourist market. Essentially, the 100% Pure tagline was seen to be translatable in any language with a simple message which made direct marketing to different cultures in different languages easy. The campaign was trialled in Japan and America with the knowledge and understanding that each culture's socially construed sign associations differ from that of New Zealand. The trial proved successful, where the intended message of the 100% Pure New Zealand wording was interpreted accurately (TNZ, 2009).

The campaign widened very quickly and was seen as a leader of brands in the international market, though debates rapidly arose with regard to the exact nature and message of the word "Pure" in the campaign. Uncertainties and queries were expressed about how a single word could portray *all* of New Zealand as environmentally friendly and pure in nature, when the reality of the situation did not match such a claim. Academics and professionals in the environmental regulation and monitoring fields felt that the claim was inaccurate and misleading because of their focus on the environmental situation, where being 100% Pure was far from the truth (Whitworth, 2012). An article from 3 News (2012a) discusses how the 100% Pure claim was always doomed to fail since it is stating that a nation

is environmentally pure when no nation can actually achieve that status, where international and local media will always attempt to expose the truth of tall claims because they are easily discredited. Studies have supported the environmentally unfriendly claims based on water quality of lakes and rivers, dumping practices and dying lagoons. The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research has multiple studies available to the public showing statistical information on continually deteriorating water quality and endangered species. The awareness of environmental issues in New Zealand is becoming more apparent and publically available (Whitworth, 2012).

South (2009) posits that tourists are becoming increasingly aware of the false nature of New Zealand's claim to be 100% Pure, largely because the media focuses mainly on environmentally unfriendly incidents. As such, the tourists' ability to interact freely with locals and experience local life for themselves has become a highly vulnerable avenue to perceive the reality of the situation. He further states that tourists do not want perfection, they want honesty (South, 2009), though the 100% Pure brand relies heavily on a fictional paradise comprised of environmental friendliness. However, while the media reproaches the campaign because of the shameless lie it's selling to the wider international community, 98% of international tourists believe that New Zealand is as environmentally pure as they claim it to be (Goh, 2009). This has shown on many occasions that the campaign does match the tourists' expectations and it is preforming at a high enough level to satisfy (Goh, 2009), proving that those who constantly attack the 100% Pure campaign are a minority group with little to no sway. There are obvious disadvantages to tourists seeing the reality that New Zealand is not being 100% Pure as promised. Recently, there have been articles publicising the stories of tourism operators who are embarrassed of the litter accumulating in tourism activity areas while leading tour groups (Blackstock, 2012). Further examples of such negative publicity include an incident where tourists were aerially sprayed with pesticides while in a National Park (New Zealand Press Association, 2012), which is of particular concern not only because of the safety hazard, but also because of the increasing international

interest in environmentally friendly and organic products (Joris, Koen, Wim, Jeroen & Van Huylenbroeck, 2011).

Even though environmentalists condemn the campaign, they also support the belief that the 100% Pure claim can be aimed for and achieved in many industries through sustainable practices if integrated correctly into the nation's culture through governmental policies (Cumming, 2010). While nearly 90% of nationals believe that the 100% Pure campaign is a global advantage for New Zealand, around 45% doubt the accuracy of the claim. Another study showed how nationals believe that despite the lies behind 100% Pure New Zealand, there is no other country in the world that is cleaner (Murray, 2012). This is supported by a recent NZ Herald poll (2012) of 500 nationals which showed that according to 43% of those sampled, New Zealand can claim to be at least 80% pure (Wade, 2012).

When the 100% Pure brand was being constructed, pressure arose from regional tourism organisations in regards to what was being advertised and for what purpose, all contesting for a voice in the imagery and style of imagery that should be incorporated into the campaign. Initially, everyone wanted a piece of the advertisement opportunities but once all the regional offices' observations were deliberated, it became apparent that the campaign's direction of simplicity could not include all of what New Zealand had to offer. This posed the challenge of choosing what was to be showcased in a way that displayed a vast majority of what New Zealand has to offer in a simplistic and focused campaign (TNZ, 2009).

The importance of branding was given deep consideration and statistical research of other major brands at the time showed that a brand name held 50% of market value to that brand and everything else that made up a product was only given 10% value (TNZ, 2009). Contemporary brand developers segmented a brand into four discernible qualities:

- Essence or key propositions
- Values, attributes or qualities
- Expression, tagline or imagery representation
- Customer experience and perception

The 100% Pure New Zealand campaign succeeded for a long time with the dominant '100% Pure New Zealand' tagline complimented by images of picturesque landscape (Bowler, 2012b). The initial imagery of the campaign contained a variety of landscapes portraying a message of 'nature in all its purity' (TNZ, 2009). The reasoning behind this tactic was to allow people to become familiar with the brand and campaign in order to build a favourable image before adding in more sophisticated messages within the campaign's core structure. Though as time passed Tourism New Zealand only spoke of the campaign in a positive light when confronted with negative issues in regards to the 100% Pure claim resulting in TNZ explaining away many of the problems by tweaking the intended meaning of the 100% Pure tagline in order to veer away from the negative stigma (TNZ, 2009). The 100% Pure campaign was seen to be simplistic enough to be used in the media and presented in such a manner that the original environmental meaning of the 100% Pure message was easily conveyed. Again results of the campaign were quick and positive; within a little under four years the brand was recognisable at such a high level that in comparison, many marketing campaigns from other countries had taken decades to achieve the same statistical returns (Bowler, 2012b).

The point of creating an easily recognisable and positive association brand was to allow the 100% Pure product to be seen as being trustworthy in the eyes of consumers. This was the beginning of creating an element of trust and served as a foundational basis for all future marketing attempts. Statistics showed that Australian, British and American tourists showed an average of 80% satisfaction between the campaign and messages of New Zealand and the actual experience they had (TNZ, 2009). Tourists were found to be equally split on the meanings they associated with the campaign signs; some agreed that New Zealand is being accurately portrayed whilst others felt they have been cheated or mislead (Goh, 2009; Blackstock, 2012; Joris *et al*, 2011). Much of the disparity in opinions and the interpretation of the various signs' meaning seems to be solely based on the variation of one's exposure to the campaign; many that had chosen the product solely based on the 100% Pure claim were found to be disappointed when

confronted with anything short of their high expectations (Goh, 2009; Blackstock, 2012; Joris *et al*, 2011).

Historically, New Zealand's tourism funding is insignificant compared to other countries and therefore the tourism industry swiftly began looking for other cost effective opportunities for marketing the tourism industry by linking their campaign with the promotion of other New Zealand industries. Initially, Tourism New Zealand sought assistance from the wine and film industries. The determination of all the combined industry efforts created a commitment towards the development of the success of the tourism campaign. Many participating industries saw the positive response to the 100% Pure campaign and shared in the success of that response in a manner that reflected those positive associations onto their products or services as well.

TNZ also used the America's Cup to promote New Zealand tourism with the 100% Pure campaign. Much of the advertising showed the beauty and wonders of the sea and the sky, whilst conveying messages of experiencing the outdoors in amongst these two elements. The Rugby World Cup was the next big sporting event that was utilised similarly. In the years leading up to the 2011 Rugby World Cup TNZ funded the 100% Pure giant rugby ball that travelled all over the world. The purpose of this part of the marketing campaign was to showcase New Zealand as a country with a lot to offer its visitors, providing visual aids to enhance what a visitor to this nation can expect and promoting travel to New Zealand either prior to, or for the event itself. The giant rugby ball also provided general tourism marketing at a lesser level by being the backdrop of millions of photos and media coverage shots; it created interest in the 100% Pure campaign while also promoting the Rugby World Cup event. The 100% Pure Rugby World Cup direction was then used at the time of the World Cup under the subset campaign of '100% at home'. This campaign theme was used to welcome tourists and foreign competing rugby teams to New Zealand whilst providing consistency through the long term media exposure of the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign (Snedden, 2010; Eames, 2009). Though after

the successful winning of the All Blacks in the Rugby World Cup 2011 became seen as a national identity fad where members of the public retaliated against the extensive nation branding; many disgruntled employees of Air New Zealand strongly rejected the All Black re-colour, claiming that the nation is going overboard with its claim to rugby and nation pride (Weekes, 2012).

During 2001-2004, *The Lord of the Rings* feature film trilogy showcased New Zealand on a phenomenal scale internationally; millions of viewers were stunned by the landscape which in turn drew great attention to the natural landscape of the nation. TNZ saw the opportunity to seize the popularity brought on by the movies and a strong set of brand values were created to run in line with the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, alongside featuring New Zealand landscape and providing tours around the sights that were used during filming throughout the country (TNZ, 2009; Agee, 2004). *The Lord of the Rings* motion picture trilogy has also given New Zealand an associated meaning of 'mythology made real' with the intangible dreams that New Zealand is how the world should be instead of what it has become (TNZ, 2009, pp. 31).

Looney Tunes, a subsidiary of American giant Time Warner, had water branded with the 100% Pure NZ slogan (FMCG, 2011) and the presence of TNZ at the National Restaurants Show in Chicago 2008 marketed New Zealand tourism through the subset campaign "Pure NZ – Wines to Dine for" (Johanson, 2008). The 100% pure NZora entry in the Chelsea flower show of native New Zealand flora coupled with garden ornaments carved out of fern trunks gained international popularity for its unique plants and in turn its place of origin (Commercial Horticulture, 2004). Watties launched a "Heinz Watties Pure NZ Vegetables" range profiling New Zealand growers from different New Zealand regions while always ending off with the 100% Pure NZ marketing slogan (Chalmers & Gillham, 2010) and high priority was given to many industries that traded internationally in 2006 under the 100% Pure slogan where a subset campaign was launched called "NZ new thinking".

The 100% Pure campaign was intended to give New Zealand trade and retail industries a centre stage position in the international gaze (Donaldson, 2006). There is wide recognition that much of New Zealand is reliant on the 100% Pure tagline and consequently there is common agreement that the brand name cannot change. However, the agricultural industry's environmentally un-friendly practices have received a significant amount of bad press over the years which called into question the lack of sustainable practices within the industry (Harris, 2007) and subsequently provided strong support for the public's disillusionment with the 100% Pure façade.

Due to the New Zealand tourism industry's minimalistic funding, New Zealand tourism marketing creators invested heavily into the use of the internet and other online social media sites. YouTube, Twitter and Facebook have become extremely popular modes of tourism marketing and communication for tourists, where the use of the internet has provided top viewer numbers in a cost efficient manner. The use of social websites allowed TNZ to rapidly adapt their marketing efforts to respond to the changing interests of tourists quickly and at minimal cost. They were also one of the first tourism offices to abandon heavy reliance on television advertising and tourism magazines in favour of other media sources. TNZ was the first tourism office to utilize the popular Google Earth site allowing them to contractually place a 100% Pure New Zealand layer over the top of the Tourism New Zealand Google Earth function on the TNZ website. The use of YouTube allowed the screening of the 100% Pure NZ youngest country commercial to over 600,000 viewers and advertising on mobiles has increasingly become the next frontier with the growing popularity of smartphones (TNZ, 2009; Roberts, 2009).

Research has always been seen as the most important aspect of the success of New Zealand tourism marketing agendas; TNZ prides themselves in the regular research that is conducted on visitor expectation upon arrival and their satisfaction of their experiences before their departure; their research shows that 90% of visitors to New Zealand are satisfied with their

experiences and 97% of those tourists feel they would strongly recommend New Zealand to friends and family. Through the course of TNZ's research, it was noted that available tourist activities were the highest contributing factor to tourists' satisfaction during their stay in New Zealand, followed by accommodation and the environment (TNZ, 2012c).

It became evident over time that tourists were soon bored with the 100% Pure tagline, and it no longer held the same message of importance as it once did, so in 2004 100% Pure took on a number of subset campaigns in an attempt to broaden the messages of New Zealand tourism with the same recognisable tagline of 100% Pure. The campaign's marketing direction took on a more forceful message of "why wait any longer, visit New Zealand today", which was an attempt to give potential tourists a 'call to action' to go to New Zealand since many tourists expressed a longing to go to New Zealand at some point in their lives. The new direction tried to give potential tourists a close up on the activities and adventures they would have in New Zealand in an attempt to stimulate an emotional response. This was achieved by moving the landscape into the background of the imagery and moving people forward, showing an interaction with the experience being shown in a method that stimulates the interpreter to feel as if they were there actually doing it themselves right then and there. This initiative attempted to ensure that tourists were feeling as if there were a part of the landscape or a part of the activity that they were viewing instead of just showing a serene natural landscape that one had to imagine interacting with.

Through the changing of the campaign and the new emerging research, TNZ perfected their composition of the supposed characteristics of the potential New Zealand tourist. In comparison to earlier profiling efforts, the modern New Zealand tourist was now an experienced traveller, financially independent as opposed to financially well off, who consumed a wide range of New Zealand products and not just adventure and natural landscape sights. These tourists were very prepared and booked their tours with operators that displayed an air of authenticity in the experiences advertised (TNZ, 2009).

By 2007, the methods of communication had changed from merely communicating a message to truly enhancing the emotional response in buyers in an attempt to communicate not what New Zealand has to offer but what New Zealand feels like. The "What's On" campaign was launched as an attempt to attract Australian tourists to New Zealand and was largely aimed at the big city populations of Australia; visitors from this subset rose by 5.4% in 2006 and rose again to 5.9% in 2007. While these percentage increases seem small, the actual rise in tourist numbers was quite significant and therefore it was considered a good effort since tourism numbers from other countries were stalling around the same time. Other subset campaigns included "What do you say, UK" which aimed at stimulating word of mouth marketing techniques by allowing British citizens to talk about their experiences in New Zealand. A compilation of their various experiences were then tied together into a running advertisement – by using tourists and their opinions in the campaign the advertisements were seen to be 'real' and relatable, where an interpreter could take in the opinions of all their other fellow citizens and feel like they are connecting with them on a deeper level.

The "NZ life back promise" was the America specific subset campaign that gave the emotional impression that New Zealand would leave you feeling rejuvenated and refreshed, giving you back your life. In an attempt to regain the attention of the larger international tourism market, New Zealand re-launched their 100% Pure campaign again in 2007 as "10 years young". The re-launch was considered an extension of the original campaign slogan instead of a re-branding effort and the 100% Pure New Zealand tagline was retained but regarded as a subset campaign instead of the main campaign. The 10 years young campaign re-kindled the interests of tourists worldwide and was seen to portray New Zealand in a favourable light for both the tourists and the locals. The campaign captured a historical element of Māori legends and culture, along with accompanying music which was hailed as the main attractive element to the campaign. The way in which the campaign was presented aimed at enticing the tourists to do further research into the country instead of just giving them everything on a

silver platter, and all of the advertisements had the Tourism New Zealand website at the bottom right corner or links to the website after online advertisements.

However, the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign was seen by some to have left the impression that New Zealand is vast in landscape but empty, which various overseas media exploited as suggesting that New Zealand was boring and that there was nothing to do. Coupled with the growing pressures to either become an environmentally pure nation, as the campaign suggested, a decision was made to change the emphasis of the wording and create a more personalised direction for the campaign, heavily focusing on the 'Pure' nature of the tourist in question instead of alluding that the country was pure (3 News, 2012c; Nash & Milne, 2011). 100% Pure evolved once again into its newest campaign direction in 2011, changing from 10 years young to New Zealand, 100% Pure You. The new campaign focus is meant to draw more tourists into choosing the New Zealand product instead of choosing another destination for their next vacation (Bowler, 2011). The old focus on overbearing landscapes and sweeping vistas was now exchanged for tourists being the dominating imagery in the advertisements. The new messages sent via the meanings associated with the depicted signs are meant to focus solely on the individual, highlighting experiences that can be obtained instead of the activities that are available; the message now sates the demand for an emotional connection and attachment with the holiday experience, suggesting that 'more' can be felt.

The new New Zealand, 100% Pure You re-launch aggrieved Māori who felt that they were undervalued and excluded from the new campaign. They questioned why they were largely excluded, and issued a call to re-work the cultural elements of Māori back into the campaign (Harris, 2007). Issues included questioning the appearance of the native culture in the hands of non-Māori with many concerns relating to authenticity (Rushworth, 2010). The Māori minority group saw the lack of Māori culture in the campaign as communicating the message that New Zealand is racist (E2NZ, 2010) or that the Māori culture is dying or dead (Rushworth, 2010).

However, the 100% Pure You campaign advertisements include individuals in the imagery from all races, not just white tourists (TNZ, 2012a), which conveys the idea that all races are welcome (TNZ, 2012a).

The new collection of signs in this marketing campaign presents activities that give the notion that the experiences are happening within New Zealand, which in turn gives one the impression that the activity can be performed at any destination; alarming some tourism investors (Rushworth, 2010). Since 100% Pure You has been praised for its continued agile nature and easily adaptable message, the underlying core element of the 'you' emphasis is planned to be used in the promotion of the 100% Middle-Earth subset campaign for a 24 month window during the screenings of Tolkien's: *The Hobbit – An Unexpected Journey*. This campaign depicts New Zealand as Middle-Earth in an attempt to create an emotional pull to experience the adventure of Middle-Earth as the characters in the movie have; and therefore buy into the New Zealand product (Bowler, 2012a).

In 2012, 100% Pure New Zealand was segmented into five major market sectors (TNZ, 2012a):

- Business events - "Beyond Convention" is the subset campaign which aims at attracting business convention clients by offering them unique convention locations. TNZ began marketing as a business event destination in 2011 where they aspired to showcase New Zealand's ability to host such events by offering destinations that go 'beyond' the ordinary and 'beyond' the norm. This subset campaign proposed business conventions on yachts against the stunning backdrops of New Zealand's natural scenery (Watson, 2012).

- The youth market - aged 18-29 - Much of the youth market is comprised of backpackers who use social media and the mobile web for all tourism purposes. Much of TNZ's social media initiatives have been in a response to the growing demand for the availability of those services as many tourists in this age category expect it (Roberts, 2009).

- Film: "*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" - 100% Middle-Earth - the recent release of Tolkien's *'The Hobbit'*, has been seen to give New Zealand a 24 month window of opportunity to advertise New Zealand under the 100% Middle-Earth campaign with 100% Pure New Zealand as the subheading. Due to the success of *The Lord of the Rings* 100% Pure NZ marketing efforts, the release of *The Hobbit* was pre-empted this time around and was delivered with force and full attention (Bowler, 2012b).

- Sports events: "The Rugby World Cup 2011" - The Rugby World cup was seen as a preview of New Zealand's ability to host major world events in hopes to draw more world scale events in the future (Prendergast, 2012).

- Other future initiatives have been proposed and are on their way in most of the sub sectors. During 2012 there has been a growing demand for high-end luxury tourism from the Asian market, in particular; nouveau riche Chinese. This demand has been responded to by TNZ advertising for premium accommodation and service against the natural landscapes of the country but delivered in an intimate kiwi style (Spreitzer, 2012).

Australia has always been given a high priority in research and marketing efforts being New Zealand's closest neighbour. Regular research is gathered to ensure that the Australian market profile is always kept up to date. Subset campaigns targeted at drawing in Australian tourists has been prominent throughout the 100% Pure campaign. The most recent campaigns have been "Go with someone who knows" which was an attempt to promote New Zealand as a coach tour destination and "The South Island road trip" which was a collaborated effort of drawing tourism attention to many businesses through the attraction of consumerism (Burgess, 2012; Bowler, 2012c).

Even though Christchurch was not expected to benefit from any tourism revenue during Rugby World Cup 2011 as the main rugby stadium

and the bulk of the city's accommodation was destroyed by earthquakes, an unexpected phenomenon developed a demand for tours around the sights of the Christchurch earthquake destruction zone. The realisation and harnessing of this demand has assisted with the city's rebuilding initiatives (3 News, 2012b).

The re-launching of the 100% Pure campaign proved that the tagline and message could withstand the market pressures for many years to come while also proving to be unique in comparison to other tourism campaign efforts. It has inspired the tourism policy makers and the 100% Pure campaign continued to evolve (Bowler, 2012b), and in doing so, so did the tourists. TNZ's updated data relating to potential tourist profile noted that the '10 years young campaign' tourist profile was drastically different from their previous tourist profiles. The new tourist utilised mobile phones and the mobile web as their first and foremost method of contact with the world. Creating advertisements being made to fit mobile screens presented difficult challenges as it also precluded the use of music or vocals with only minimalistic imagery whilst trying to deliver the correct message. Other challenges included the unpredictable nature of the economy and a growing interest in carbon footprints and rising fuel prices. In the wake of an increasingly growing interest in one's carbon footprint, other European countries attempted to use the opportunity to advertise themselves as 'closer than New Zealand' while showcasing similar sights at half the travel distance.

Regardless of the decreased numbers of tourists travelling to New Zealand, it was still ranked as the top tourist destination in 2006 and the fifth in 2007. New Zealand also seemed to withstand the global health epidemics and terrorist crisis; tourists still travelled to New Zealand despite the global panic (Bowler, 2012a). The campaign has also been heavily scrutinised by both international and local media along with the New Zealand public, and it has proven to withstand a lot of negativity whilst still drawing in a high level of tourists. The major issues New Zealand tourism has had to contend with are in regards to the nation's distance from

everywhere else in the world and the lack of established environmental protection practices. With interest in environmentally friendly practices growing globally and a demand for environmental practice exposure and transparency, Qualmark, New Zealand's service and accommodation standard rating system has added in a secondary rating system for business environmental practices called Qualmark Green (TNZ, 2009; Yeoman, 2009); this allowed tourists to view individual business practices based on the Qualmark Green criteria, and many eco conscious tourists used this as a guideline of what businesses they wish to support. The 100% Pure tagline has always been associated with its environmental practice message and in an increasingly green-aware market, the tagline has both attracted tourist attention and called for scepticism on the "Pure" claim; essentially it has been seen that the 100% Pure tagline has become more of a standard that New Zealand wishes to aspire to, rather than a statement of fact.

The 100% Pure NZ campaign is simple with the ability to be easily noticeable to a wide variety of people, and research has shown that consumers like simplicity in a world full of mixed messages and complex choices; with the campaign's simplicity and short messages, 100% Pure provides a clear and concise message. Alongside its long-term public exposure and positive recognition, it creates an easily identifiable product ready for purchase. The eco-status of New Zealand has always been, and still is, an attractive quality when considering purchasing, and it attracts eco-friendly and clean-green tourists in the process. The eco-friendly brand association has been a strong and a unique quality for the 100% Pure campaign, which makes it worthy of discussing, therefore promoting word of mouth marketing (Yeoman, 2009). Yeoman (2009) comments on how the nationals of New Zealand also take pride in the tourism marketing campaign, which in turn strengthens it and gives its messages a foundation in reality. The only contestable fact is its ability to keep the clean-green and environmentally friendly image alive through the individual efforts of government, local businesses and residents.

The success of the change to New Zealand, 100% Pure You is due to its long standing consistent messages of the country, even if the emphasis has shifted slightly. Through the evolution of the campaign, Bowler (2012b) has said that the evolution of marketing itself must also keep pace with the ever-changing tourists' demands. TNZ statistics boast an 8.9 out of 10 satisfaction rating with the credit awarded to the organisation's ability to keep up with the expectations and demands of target markets through diligent research. As such, it has been statistically deduced that New Zealand is one of the most desired destinations in the world where visitor satisfaction is said to over-exceed the expectations of tourists. Bowler (2012b) describes how the meanings associated with 100% Pure You are meant to entice the tourists who are already considering New Zealand as a travel destination where the advertisements bring the emotional stimulus to actually commit and buy the product.

Brem (2012) discusses how evolution is not only founded in the expectations and demands of tourists but also in the ever-changing nature and availability of technology. TNZ prides themselves on their ability to house the tourism industry and all its participating businesses. Their efforts include the availability for New Zealand tourism operators and small businesses to be connected to the wider international community through the TNZ website. The use of the internet has allowed small tourism businesses a voice and an opportunity with small budgets to be seen alongside major international players that would usually dominate all advertising avenues due to extravagant marketing expenditure. Brem (2012) believes that the success of the 100% Pure campaign line is attributed to the success of the website and its reliance on connection as it allows a gateway into all tourism information in a collaborated effort which is easy to follow and understand, intuitive, and again consistent with the 100% Pure campaign slogan and messages; throughout the website one can become familiar with the product by simply recognising the brand.

The latest addition to the 100% Pure campaign family is the recently released sub-section campaign of 100% Middle-Earth which has been New

Zealand's nation image since August 26th 2012 in anticipation of J.R. Tolkien's "*The Hobbit - An Unexpected Journey*" (Bowler, 2012a). This subset campaign has overridden 100% Pure You and New Zealand has been advertised solely as 100% Middle-Earth, 100% Pure New Zealand. The 100% Middle-Earth campaign is planned to remain the nation's sole image for the duration of 24 months. In the four months since the campaign's release, tourism flight bookings have increased by 84% in comparison to monthly statistics of the same month the previous year (Gillies, 2012). The campaign has also achieved immediate success once again in the marketing industry where on the 13th of December 2012 the 100% Middle-Earth campaign won 'World's Leading Destination Marketing Campaign' in the World Travel Awards 2012 grand final (TNZ, 2012e). Many marketing efforts are planned to be initiated during this new campaign including customised 100% Middle-Earth, New Zealand Customs entry passport stamps and an Air New Zealand safety video (Samways, 2012) along with a 23meter lenticular display of the 100% Middle-Earth campaign imagery at Auckland International Airport (TNZ, 2012d).

In 2013 100% Pure sub-campaigns dropped the word *Pure* and solely become dependent on the 100% as its consistent recognisable tagline opposed to how in previous years all sub-campaigns were marketing with the whole 100% Pure tagline. In terms of the Middle-Earth campaign, 100% Middle-Earth has become the sub-campaigns name with no reference to New Zealand or the long-time consistent 100% Pure tagline. The campaign name is not stated anywhere short of newspapers and other media references where there is a necessity to state the name of the campaign when images are not available (Bowler, 2012; Bowler 2012e; Gillies, 2012; TNZ, 2012b; TNZ, 2012e; TNZ, 2012d). Overall, the content of the campaign has become predominantly comprised of visual images excluding the traditional text tagline and only in reports covering the 2012 World Travel Awards is the campaign name stated in conjunction with 100% Pure New Zealand (Samways, 2012).

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF NEW ZEALAND'S NATION IMAGE TODAY

A semiotic analysis of the imagery in the main Tourism New Zealand website 100% Middle-earth campaign is conducted in order to assess the messages being portrayed in the most recent campaign along with how New Zealand is seen internationally. The 100% Middle-earth campaign is comprised of sixteen images split into eight artistic sketches and eight corresponding photographs working in pairs to complement each other. The pairing system has been cleverly constructed to first write a story of the journey of the fourteen companions from *The Hobbit*, then slowly fading out and into an overlay which matches the landscape and person composition to show actual people engaging in the same kind of journey; suggesting that *you* can also engage in this fantastical adventure.

The Tile 1 pair sets the beginning of the advertisement's story, revolving the Middle-earth campaign narrative around the already popular and well-loved characters and journeys of J.R. Tolkien's '*The Hobbit*'. In terms of creating an eye-catching response, the website advertisement fades in and out of each tile slowly across the top of the main page. It also establishes an emotional attachment by creating a way to connect with the onlooker through a multitude of the book characters as individuals, races and parts of the journey, whilst also juxtaposing the book's story with real world activities in similar landscape settings and seemingly similar adventures. By following the storyline of an already established story the Lovemarks effect is already in motion (Roberts, 2006), as it's enticing the mystery of adventure through the stories already known to the onlooker.

The text portrays a personalised meaning for tile set 1, as it presumes you have already bought the product and it is now unveiling *your* journey with the added text of 'beneath southern sky' indicating that your journey is located in the southern hemisphere. The text between tile 1 and tile 1b remains the same, strengthening the parallels between the two where tile 1 invites the onlooker to be a participant. The sketches solidify the ideas and associations of the campaign with a mythological world, where in tile 1 the emphasis on the character 'Thorin Oakenshield' in the foreground of the composition can portray male prowess and the ability to conquer the background landscape, while tile 1b compliments the male foreground character with a soft female character.

Tile 1

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Figure 7.0

Tile 1b

"This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons".

Figure 7.1

Tile 1b includes an element of invitation from the foreground woman, with a look of familiarity turning back towards the onlooker which further draws the onlooker into the situation. The first Tile's masculine dominance can be viewed as rugged individualism where Hirschman (2003) describes the term as portraying the meaning of one who wishes to take on competition, either within themselves or with others, in a natural wilderness with the end goal of being transformed from 'a weakling into a warrior'. Tile 1 still holds an element of warrior associations which could be interpreted as communicating that Middle-Earth is a land with warriors such as those portrayed in the early days of New Zealand's tourism marketing, the subtle suggestion of warriors to an onlooker who has some familiarity with New Zealand may automatically rekindle the link. The two tiles together idealise the activity of hiking while both portraying that the activity should not be solo but instead engaged with a group of close peers as is in line with *The Hobbit* story. The mixed sexes of the companions in Tile 1b allow variations in who can participate in the activity whilst Tile 1 only portrays levels of masculine dominance. Tile 1b solidifies the message that this is the beginning of the journey by showing individuals walking off into the distance, towards an abundant landscape whilst also clearly indicating the pleasant temperate climate of this southern location. This would typically attract a single or young couple travelling together on a budget, who are interested in seeing the beauty of the land while seeking the simple adventure provided by trekking with friends. The Tile 1 set entices an emotional response through the portrayal of a fictional journey made real. Barthes (1957), discusses how through the process of semiosis an interpreter wishes to perceive a false reality, and in the case of the Tile 1 set, the false reality is the sketch of Tile 1; which is translated into a fantasy made real in Tile1b. Even though obviously a false reality to begin with, the 100% Middle-Earth campaign uses this technique to create a *believable* false reality in a manner which Barthes (1957) discusses as being a main facet for a successful brand.

The Tile 2 set stimulates the imagination of the onlooker as being privy to the ethereal Elvish culture, while also displaying the opportunity to

participate in a refined wine culture. The text of the Tile 2 set attracts the attention of those who have personally associated themselves with the wizards of J.R Tolkien's stories while also suggesting that magic is alive in this Middle-Earth. Tile 2b gives little indication to a specific place except for a small text box stating 'Lake Wanaka'.

The imagery of Tile 2 can stimulate an emotional response to those that have connected with the Rivendell elves, giving a small indication to the text's suggestion of wine, but more importantly the added imagery of musicians suggests an overarching theme of high culture. The reality of the imagery of wine culture with little place association refers to the idea of travelling cultures within the tourism industry and tourism motivations; suggesting that culture can be visited and therefore returned from (Lurry, 1997). The mixed imagery of wine culture and the wizard associations hold the common marketing perceptions that wine culturists are looking for a wine experience with the importance of learning at its core (Ravenscroft & Westering, 2001), The associated imagery and text of mystery and wizards which hold the embodiment of knowledge in *The Hobbit* creates an enticing experience for a dedicated wine culture enthusiast. Wine culture imagery is said to embody the messages of enjoyment, which is portrayed through the smile of the female and appreciative body language of the pair in Tile 2b, along with knowledge (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997) which as previously mentioned, is portrayed through the associated meanings of the Wizard race. The merging of cultural practices with food and wine consumption also portrays the ideas of social distinction (Warde, 1995), which the associated Elvish race and culture depicts on a lesser level. The tile set communicates a level of wealth or prestige in being able to engage in a private wine tasting session at a lakeside winery, or by being a part of the elite Elvish culture. The effectiveness of this tile set is particularly well formed in Tile 2b where the Lovemark aspect of intimacy is shown through the private wine tasting experience with a supposed married or intimate couple and the winery's sommelier. This pair of tiles would be effective in attracting an established couple, looking for sophistication and romance, while still enjoying the country's picturesque scenery with the comforts of modern facilities.

Tile 2

"This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons".

Figure 8.0

Tile 2b

"This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons".

Figure 8.1

The text "See wizards turn water into wine" strongly embodies the historically endowed meanings of wine which correspond with Barthes' (1957) identification that the mythological story associated with wine is that it is a converting substance. The text of this tile set embodies these historical meanings of wine's transformative powers; it can make a weak individual strong or a sad one happy. Barthes (1957) expounds further on such meanings of wine as being for those of class and status – particularly so for men. A man that can demonstrate his ability to appropriately drink wine has control over one's life and conveys his sociability; wine consumption is seen as participation in a ceremony, while all other alcohol is perceived as little more than a means to becoming intoxicated, devoid of all class and structure.

The lack of emphasis on Tile 2b's background landscape draws the attention to the activity rather than associating the wine tasting with a particular place. As such, the combined meaning of this text speaks of one's journey to seek sophistication through wine tasting, whilst experiencing a mythical world. Even though this text is embedded with a plethora of meaning, the particularly strong historical associated meanings around wine do not allow for a very open interpretation of the sign.

The Tile 3 set communicates adventure in Middle-Earth, alluding to the fact that in ancient caves there are otherworldly creatures to be discovered. The smaller text boxes give two place suggestions where to find these acclaimed ancient caves along with one text box stating the word 'adventure'.

The dark theme of Tile 3b suggests adventure in the unknown with a close companion; which in reference to Tile 3 suggests another world beneath the ground. New Zealand has traditionally advertised itself as a destination with a mythological pioneering identity which has sanctioned the accepted culture of adventure tourism and adventure activities. The imagery of such adventure activities has been seen to portray the meanings of forging success through hardship in the outdoors.

Tile 3

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Figure 9.0

Tile 3b

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Figure 9.1

An adventure activity in a seemingly dangerous setting has also had the associated meanings of social distinction through the achievement in something unique or challenging (Kane, 2009). Even though many adventure activities are regulated and safe, the emotional and mental adventure or thrill is what the tourists feel through the advertisement and wish to experience (Kane, 2009). The word 'adventure' also holds the suggested meaning of a unique experience that most people will not actually participate in, making it special and desirable (Zweig, 1974). These Tiles would do well to attract males that are seeking adventure either with a friend or established partner, and those who are not afraid to explore the dark to find the hidden treasures of the land. The Tile 3 set invokes a level of perceived underground adventure and successfully fosters the appearance of adventure, as opposed to adventure itself, allowing for a successful delivery of a believable falsified reality (Barthes, 1957).

The text and combined imagery of the Tile 4 set is extremely disconnected in nature. While on one hand the text suggests that in Middle-Earth one can fly, the Brown Wizard is not flying in the sketch while Tile 4b's supposedly flying individual is not the focus of the image. The landscape from Tile 4 to Tile 4b is also disconnected, where the Brown Wizard is travelling through a forest, Tile 4b is water based in a lagoon style setting with a small text box highlighting water activities as the main attractions. Tile 4 suggests urgency as is in line with *The Hobbit* story with an emphasis on solidarity through the character associations with the company of animal companions. While contradictorily, Tile 4b portrays associations of relaxation, with fellow human companions enjoying three different water-based activities. The only thing linking the two Tiles together is the shape or flow of the eye-catching picture composition and identical text use, which is a tenuous link at best.

Tile 4

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Figure 10.0

Tile 4b

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Figure 10.1

The overall effect is significantly less impacting than that of the other campaign Tiles, but may still successfully attract a younger set of tourists, who are seeking to travel with friends that would perhaps identify with the thrill of being in the forest on some sort of all-terrain vehicle, but would also enjoy the water-based activities and relaxation portrayed in Tile 4b.

Landscape is often used as a semiotic signifier to suggest an adventurous land (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003) where the text speaks to horse enthusiast through the word coupling of 'blaze' and 'trail' traditionally suggesting a horse trek (Gaudry, 2004), in conjunction with fields of gold alluding to the imagery of a beautiful countryside that can be ridden through and experienced. Tile 5b has taken this terminology and used it to portray a modern interpretation of a horse trek by the added imagery of bike riding through grassy plains. The smaller sub text suggests that this is a family friendly activity and recommends a specific location, thereby re-visiting the urge to purchase the activity. The parallels of Tile 5 and Tile 5b are the ability to pursue an adventure together, giving the message of how Middle-Earth is a family friendly location and not fraught with danger. It appears that this Tile set is aimed at marketing the country to the decision-maker of a family group, indicating that there are safe adventure activities available; ones that can be enjoyed by their whole family, while simultaneously exposing them to the beauty of the natural landscape and getting away from crowded metropolitan areas.

Tiles 6 and 6b again draw attention to the wonders and delights throughout Middle-Earth. The sign depicting a collection of tourists engaging with the environment has been utilised in marketing to portray the message that a tourist needs to be highly involved with the activity in order to fully experience New Zealand (Becken, 2005). The Tile 6 set text compliments the imagery in both tiles by associating the horse's four legs and the imagery of water to swimming horses. In regards to meaning this tile set is simple in both imagery and text creating a very translatable and real experience.

Tile 5

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Figure 11.0

Tile 5b

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Figure 11.1

Tile 6

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Figure 12.0

Tile 6b

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Figure 12.1

In Tile 6 three companions on horseback ride across a river whilst being observed by another third party, while Tile 6b portrays exactly the same background landscape lines, water, and three horses carrying riders. Again the messages convey companionship and adventure through a transferable mythical landscape in a tangible and believable manner. This cleverly suggests that the fantastical tales in '*The Hobbit*' are not so far from the truth, and are commonplace here in the real world of New Zealand (Morgan *et al*, 2003). This type of imagery would effectively attract a wide variety of tourist profiles including families, couples of various ages and even young people travelling with friends. However, horse-trekking is often seen as a prestigious and rather expensive activity, which may limit this tile set's applicability to only a wealthier tourist clientele.

The text of the Tile 7b set appeals to the sensuality aspect of a Lovemark, it suggests that you can experience luxury by dining against the backdrop of clouds touching the mountains and makes this seemingly other-worldly experience real and tangible; allowing one the opportunity to experience it.

The mountain giants of Tile 7 create a sense of wonder, alluding to the mystical nature of moving mountains. In contrast, the landscape of Tile 7b has been used to convey the meaning of self-expression through unique activities and experiences such as taking a helicopter to dine in a mountain scape which challenges the average urban lifestyle (Morgan *et al,* 2003). Tile 7b conveys the ideas of wealth, whilst both tiles communicate a level of companionship through the experience. Meanwhile, Tile 7 shows how a group of companions can experience wonder and surreal adventure by using subjected positioning of the two mountain giants that mirror the objective landscape line of Tile 7b, and evoke an emotional response of awe and wonder as though this particular mountain range has been carved by giants (Becken, 2005). The remote location and helicopter strongly indicate that these Tiles are aimed at attracting wealthy tourists that would delight in experiencing the prestigious and exclusive beauty that this wonderland has to offer.

Tile 7

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Figure 13.0

Tile 7b

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Figure 13.1

Tiles 8 and 8b bring the Hobbit race into the campaign whilst also finalising the journey by portraying the ability to experience the mystery of Middle-Earth and discover the real shire of Hobbiton. The showcasing of the Hobbiton attraction makes the Middle-Earth campaign real, while the text suggests that the experience is so *unreal* you will never forget it. The wording communicates a level of wonder and uniqueness to the Middle-Earth experience as it is both fictional and non-fictional, tangible and intangible.

All sixteen tiles together promote an instantly recognisable and already famous product which stimulates the emotional connectedness and the consideration to purchase (Jenkins, 2003). The use of landscape also communicates to the recipient a deeper urge to belong, either physically or emotionally, and the landscape imagery touches individuals at a more visceral level. The added imagery of companionship throughout the whole campaign creates a sense of unity and can entice and unite groups into purchasing the product as a joint effort to experience the mythical journey and enhance one's self through experiences as a collective (Larsen, 2005). The campaign name 100% Middle-Earth is not stated anywhere on the Tiles themselves, though it is portrayed visually instead through the sketched tiles. This method dictates a journey from beginning to end and paints a story of Middle-Earth life and culture, showing how it can be experienced by pairing each fantasy sketch with a corresponding real world comparable activity or experience photograph. The mix of fantasy and reality entices the imagination and a need for emotional attachment to an otherworldly adventure; the expressions of Middle-Earth culture can be felt through the advertisement sequence stimulating mystery, intimacy and sensuality.

Overall, each of the tile sets are cleverly targeted at slightly different tourism markets, catering to and effectively attracting each one with tailored scenes and activities which makes the campaign both beautiful and effective. It suggests that anyone can visit Middle-Earth and anyone can be a part of the abundance of adventure that this country has to offer.

Tile 8

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Figure 14.0

Tile 8b

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Figure 14.1

As such, this image of New Zealand is based on a pop culture reference and seemingly fleeting fad, though it has been done in a method which captures the attention of that fad in the eyes of the public and uses it to its advantage for a chosen duration of time which seems fitting. The use of 100% Middle-Earth as a sub-campaign under the umbrella of the 100% Pure campaign shows its flexibility and ability to change and merge in and out of popular fads as they arise, and revert back to the original umbrella campaign once they have died down. This method of marketing flexibility provides a level of sudden national expression, for example, New Zealand is now internationally seen as Middle-Earth, a place of fantasy right out of one of J.R. Tolkien's books, but in twenty four months, New Zealand will simply be New Zealand again.

The sub-campaign has removed all New Zealand associations whilst still managing to keep the main emotional feelings of the umbrella campaign, although which is visually different, the messages and emotional stimuli remain the same. The current 100% Pure You campaign moved the visual imagery of people into the foreground with the activities and landscape as the backdrop, and all the 100% Middle-Earth campaign tile sets but the seventh retain this picture composition. The consistency in imagery can prove useful once the campaign ends where tourists that may have seen the 100% Middle-Earth campaign can still feel the same emotional stimulus with the 100% Pure You imagery even without the sketches and movie associations. Each tile also shows a different activity where in the normal campaign, the tourist is portrayed in a way that makes them a part of the experience being viewed and again offers a variety of activity imagery. Both campaigns involve the onlooker in the activity in such a manner that they feel as if they were actually there, enhancing the intimacy of the images.

The links between New Zealand and the 100% Middle-Earth campaign are weak as there has been considerable emphasis on the person engaging in an activity and little focus on where that activity is taking place. The small sub texts in the campaign are all light blue with standard small font and if the onlooker was not interested in where that activity took place, there would be no motivational pull to search the image further for an indication of location; the only benefit being that Middle-Earth is in New Zealand and nowhere else.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

THE 100% PURE BRAND

The advertising directors in control of 100% Pure have been careful to make sure that the brand evolves and grows, enhancing its personality over each re-launch and making it become more intimate and real through the technological era. It also houses an array of sub-campaign launches which both reinvent and re-entice the public's most current obsessions or demands, showing that as a brand personality, it can depict the ability to be in with the most current trends. Because it has been personified as an individual, the 100% Pure brand personality is real and believable, able to change, grow, and find interest in the most recent trends. The current campaign is visually stunning, though based on a pop culture vogue which Hodgen (2010) deems as a recipe for nation brand failure. However, because 100% Pure houses many sub-campaigns, the fleeting trend instead works to the benefit of the brand's overall success instead of being detrimental to it. This is achieved through the brand personality's ability to be involved with the latest fads and as such the 100% Middle-Earth campaign has succeeded in drawing in fans of both the book and movie *The Hobbit*. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy campaign generated such hype and success that *The Hobbit's* advertisement as 100% Middle-Earth was able to draw in fans from the older movies and *The Lord of the Rings* books as well, emphasising how New Zealand *is* Middle-Earth regardless of which book you read or which movie you saw.

New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign is praised for its longevity and has given a sense of value and recognition to both the national population and the international community, upholding its consistent message of 100% Pure for almost a decade. Throughout its lifetime the brand has received an expected amount of negative media, though as discussed in the Lovemarks theory (Roberts, 2006), 100% Pure tells a great story, whether based in reality or not, the story feels true; hence why many tourists remain satisfied and loyal to the brand despite some poor reviews. Relating this point to the 100% Middle-Earth campaign, the storytelling is now seen as 'fiction made

real' through the changing from drawing to photograph. It can be seen as a method of storytelling through the books journey whilst also allowing tourists to plan their vacation with the corresponding photographs of the real places they can experience in Middle-Earth. Uzzell (1984) states that during an onlooker's interpretation of the brand's advertisements, they absorb an indication of what is routinely done at the destination in question. This becomes prevalent in the onlookers mind and Cooper (1994) discusses how this method of marketing allows the onlooker to be manipulated by the sign, hence allowing tourism creators to mediate and moderate tourism flows to what suits their brand at that particular point in time. This supports the opinion that tourists enjoy a falsified reality more so than a transparent representation of tourism activities (Barthes, 1957). As such, it can be surmised that tourists are happy to be told what to do and experience, rather than deciding strictly of their own volition (Cooper, 1994).

Part of the success of 100% Middle-Earth is in the marketing director's ability to exhibit New Zealand as fantasy made real, whilst still leaving enough to the imagination that it can be questioned whether New Zealand *really is* Middle-Earth. Furthermore, the 100% Middle-Earth campaign creates the intrinsic connection Sebeok (1994) discusses, where semiosis links together one's body, mind and culture in a way which allows an onlooker to make sense of their realities. This brings their dreams to the forefront of their minds and allows them to continue their constant interpretation of signs and symbols in an attempt to enhance or understand their existence or desires. Such a notion can entice an onlooker to purchase the product in an attempt to discover and understand more (Cooper, 1994). 100% Pure has managed to allude to the fact that what is being perceived is commonplace in New Zealand culture, predominantly revolving around the activities more so than the place. The campaign has created a believable culture of food, landscape and arts, making the tourists' experience significant to them (Culler, 1990).

The word and image correlations in the 100% Middle-Earth campaign allows the interpreter to merge the words into the imagery and

create a meaning or associated story around what the sign is trying to communicate (Saussure, 1983). As the campaign is set up in pairs, the story is told through the word arrangement in the sketched tile, and follows through on the word associations created from the fantasy tiles into the photographed tiles; allowing the mind to join the two together. For example, in Tile 2 the word *'Wizard'* imparts the image of an older man with a pointed hat as depicted in *The Hobbit* movie, where once Tile 2b is introduced, the mind immediately associates the sommelier with the wizard; hence, creating a connotation that the sommelier is turning water into wine. Links such as these are present throughout the whole sub-campaign, and are part of the basis upon which the fantasy is made real. Oswald (2012) comments on how text is a minimalistic component in the semiotic analysis process, though in the 100% Middle-Earth campaign text is used to enhance or endow further meaning association to the imagery; corresponding with what Barthes (1957) describes as a value mechanism in brand success.

For the first time the 100% Pure You direction was not made clear anywhere in the campaign, and the New Zealand tourism website still retains the 100% Pure New Zealand tagline instead of the new campaign's proposed New Zealand, 100% Pure You slogan. Furthermore, the marketing of the new 100% Middle-Earth campaign was amalgamated with 100% Pure New Zealand, and not the 100% Pure You slogan which solidifies the notion that the new slogan has been largely ignored since its release.

The apparent situation is that New Zealand nationals are happy with their current nation image because there is an abundance of commonplace activities and adventures that one can relate to in their everyday life. As Morgan *et al.* (2002) state, the purpose of 100% Pure was to portray the emotional message that what is being seen in the advertisements is typical to everyday New Zealand life, and the campaign is no longer just landscape and outdoor adventure but instead includes a travelling culture, and outdoor activities that can be experienced by anyone. The campaign caters for all categories of tourists, from those interested in luxury travel to backpackers,

and even solidifies the notion that New Zealand is equipped to cater for families with small kids and teenagers.

Tourism has made all of the previous brand activities part of the national identity traits and made them available to every New Zealander, while at the same time broadening their associations. This allows any New Zealander to support their own country in a manner that suits them; for example, if an individual is not interested in rugby, they can show nation pride through sailing or cricket. If they have no desire to conquer the wild as part of their everyday life, then they can always indulge in the food and wine culture of their local restaurants and cafes. This shows that Fan's (2010) proposed national identity relationship is relevant, though not as fundamentally as originally proffered. Instead, through the concept of Lovemarks (Roberts, 2006), the campaign has illuminated the fact that what is being perceived as part of the country's national identity is half fiction.

Fan (2010) maintains that the long term success of any nation brand must be rooted in the accuracy of *realistically* portraying the culture and national identity of the country in question. However, through the semiotic analysis of the current nation image of New Zealand, along with the history of the 100% Pure campaign, the way in which the nation is being portrayed is far from accurate in reflecting both the culture and national identity of the country. Those in charge of the 100% Pure campaign as a nation brand have taken care that it has become a highly respected and loved brand, generating loyalty from both nationals and the international community. However, a more accurate relationship between nation branding, nation image and nation identity in the New Zealand context is shown in Figure 15.1. The original proposal from Fan (2010) as shown in Figure 15.0, was that the root of a nation's image should first begin with the country's national identity, and in order to establish and maintain competitive advantage those elements would need to merge together to form a nation brand; which in turn becomes the nation's image in the eyes of the international community. However, this does not appear to be the case for New Zealand. Even though New Zealand's national identity has been largely fabricated, its nation

branding initiatives have still created a successful nation image internationally. It is apparent that the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign has managed to re-invent New Zealand's national identity through its own proliferation of successful nation brand storytelling.

The inter-relationships between National Identity, Nation Branding and Nation Image as suggested by Fan (2010)

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Figure 15.0

A revaluation of the inter-relationships of National Identity, Nation Branding and Nation Image
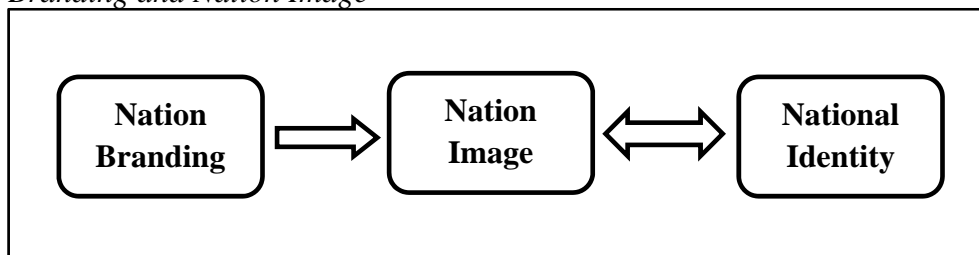

Figure 15.1

The creators of the 100% Pure campaign have made such a concerted effort to portray a reality in the imagery seen to be normal to every New Zealander's daily lives, that it has come to be perceived as the truth. The capacity of the 100% Pure campaign to continually house numerous sub-campaigns under a single umbrella campaign demonstrates that the success of the brand is through its ability to speak and relate to all nationals. Considering the effectiveness of sub-campaign marketing efforts, the original umbrella campaign only holds an idea and a memorable slogan, though in what particular way each interpreter chooses to associate that slogan is varied enough to remain relevant to both New Zealand nationals and the international community.

The 100% Pure campaign's success was found to be rooted in the emotional stimulation it generates from the advertisements' imagery, instead of a memorable slogan or common imagery markers. It was made obvious

that 100% Pure is a Lovemark with high respect from both its nationals and the international community whilst also being loved by the tourists, marketing professionals and nationals. As previously stated, the reality of the story being told is largely fabricated through the emotional stimulation of mystery, sensuality and intimacy, especially with the 100% Middle-Earth campaign. The continuing success of the campaign is in its ability to tell a story in which one wants to participate – it makes the fantasy a reality and therefore believable. The imagery makes the onlooker want to be there, it makes them want to associate themselves with either the fantasy cultures and races or the actual real life activities and people. In the case of the 100% Middle-Earth the campaign, it allows the onlooker to dream and therefore become emotionally stimulated into wishing for that dream to become a reality. Cooper (1994) discusses how a 'distinctive language' needs to be used when marketing a destination in a 'dream-like' manner which alludes to the onlooker believing that purchasing the product will allow one to behold a fantasy or myth-like experience. In some instances, consumers may wish to just allow themselves to be taken away by the fantasy and solely buy into the fiction, where the success of the campaign again lies in the ability to provide an experience as close to the advertisement as possible that it satisfies the consumers' expectations of a fulfilled experience.

IS 100% PURE NEW ZEALAND ENOUGH?

Based on a review of the extant academic literature and the history of 100% Pure, it is evident that 100% Pure is an on-going success. The effectiveness of the campaign combined with its breadth of sub-campaigns allows the brand to grow and evolve from one fashion vogue to the next, and still relate as such to every individual. The campaign's success was said to be rooted in the consistency of the 100% Pure tagline, though it now seems that the emotional stimulus is the main facet for success. The creation of a successful emotional stimulation throughout the whole campaign is the key factor in its success and Kevin Roberts' (2006) Lovemarks theory is directly relevant to the 100% Pure campaign. Little attention has been given to the new re-launch of New Zealand, 100% Pure You; calling into question

whether the re-launch is now being dulled down or forgotten due to the lack of association with the 100% Middle-Earth release.

The technological era has done wonders for 100% Pure, as it has allowed the onlooker to become more intimate with the campaign and also personified it in a way that allows it to grow and develop; enhancing its ability to draw in the onlooker. Tourism statistics have proven the campaign's success in attracting more tourists than ever before while still allowing the imagery and messages to speak to all nationals in one way or another. As such, it may be reasonably concluded that 100% Pure is all New Zealand needs for the time being.

WILL THE BRAND SURVIVE?

The long term survivability of the campaign is questionable. Currently, the success is based on the ability to appeal to a wide range of nationals and tourists, though it is getting very broad and keeping the original umbrella campaign slogan's core message through an array of different applications based on the product or service it is being attached to at the time of viewing is no doubt proving increasingly difficult. It is plausible that 100% Pure could lose its edge by becoming too broad, and the disregard of the New Zealand, 100% Pure You launch reflects negatively on the brand's future.

The numerous re-launchings have proven to be successful statistically, but there remains some speculation as to whether the bulk of this success is based on the potency and consistency of underlying emotional stimulus included in all of the campaigns, or whether it stems from the core slogan itself and the associations and meanings surrounding it. In terms of future success, the 100% Pure campaign's constant joint advertising with other industries could eventually lead to its downfall, if the attracting factor for the campaign's success and loyalty is in fact a particular type of emotional stimulus. The inability to monitor how the campaign is being portrayed in other industry advertisements and what emotional traits

are being perceived could be perilous. One negative advertisement could damage the belief systems and emotional connections currently present in an onlooker; most likely by stimulating confusion in an onlooker who is familiar with the regular emotional tourism branding messages.

MAYBE IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

New Zealand's current nation image and nation brand is working on a multitude of levels as it addresses a broad range of activities, hobbies and interests for both the New Zealand public and international tourists. In addition, it provides inspiration to experience New Zealand for not only international, but also domestic tourists. The campaign allows all industries to be a part of the 100% Pure family and in this way it has spread its advertising success and created national pride through its associated meanings. New Zealand's tourism industry success is largely riding on the recognition factor of the 100% Pure campaign. It is, however, questionable whether changing the slogan wording would be a detriment to the success of the campaign or if maintaining the emotional stimulus under a new tagline would still be successful regardless. It appears that there is a small group of individuals attempting to expose to the public what they perceive to be the false nature of the campaign, but so far this has made negligible impact on the campaign's overall success.

Through an evaluation of the literature, changing the campaign name would be risky and could either be detrimental to tourism numbers or achieve little in noticeable difference from the current 100% Pure campaign line. The change of slogan could be seen as admitting to the claimed inaccuracies, and the altering of the wording to New Zealand, 100% Pure You was an interesting step in testing the water to gauge how people might respond to the amendment. As this argument has not gained traction, it appears that the reality of the situation is that Tourism New Zealand will not disregard a worthy and recognisable slogan for the sake of a little local negativity.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study has undertaken an in-depth explorative review of the various relevant academic literature currently available with regards to the composition of a successful nation brand. Specifically, this review identified two main facets on which it focused: first, the affective component of nation branding was examined within the theoretical framework of brand personality, and secondly, a semiotic analysis was used to shed light on the cognitive component of nation branding. Having established a thorough understanding of these theories, New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign was first examined as a national brand and it was concluded that New Zealand has forged itself as a land of adventure, which has been kept consistent in the current 100% Pure sub-campaign, 100% Middle-Earth in regards to the imagery used within the advertisement. The 'New Zealand, 100% Pure You' direction has attempted to legitimise the activates shown in the imagery of the campaign as part of everyday New Zealand life by veering away from the landscape and focusing on activities as the main part of the tourism experience.

New Zealand began to cohesively brand itself under the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign in 1999, and has since been the epitome of tourism marketing success and praise for almost a decade. However, in this secondary research study it was discovered that the original interrelationships and elements for a successful tourism campaign from a theoretical perspective were not relevant to the 100% Pure campaign. Fan's (2010) inter-relationship model of national identity, nation branding and nation image was revised as a result of the analysis and discussion of the current 100% Middle-Earth sub-campaign, where it was concluded that the current national identity of New Zealand was largely based on an extremely successful nation brand, and not vice versa as previously assumed. Furthermore, the 100% Pure campaign's ability to merge in and out of current vogue is a significant component to its overall success. This flexibility allowed the brand personality to grow and evolve with the current societal trends, creating mystery, sensuality, and intimacy enabled it to be

classified as a Lovemark instead of just a brand. In summation, this progressive facet of the campaign explains how the brand personality, and the brand itself, are hinged primarily on the growing expectations and interrelations with international tourists instead of nationals.

Secondly, a semiotic analysis was conducted to identify the signs utilised in the 100% Middle-Earth sub-campaign and discern the meanings associated with them. One crucial element was the fact that there were a large variety of activities on display, allowing the campaign to appeal to many different groups within society including families, young couples, and friends travelling together while also catering for a whole range of financial budgets. This analysis established that the messages perceived by onlookers would supply the cognitive stimulus that generates the emotions which supported the branding initiatives as well as the Lovemarks effect. Although a significant portion of the campaign was fictional, the Lovemarks effect was proven to still be very successful where the overall impact was that of a desirable fantasy; a dream made real. It created an array of intense emotional responses including longing for adventure and belonging; a desire to be a part of the characters in the book and their journeys. However, the use of actual photographs alongside the drawings managed to keep the promises close enough to reality so that the actual tourism experience would not disappoint tourists' expectations. Essentially, it demonstrated that New Zealanders live this fantasy as part of their everyday lives, which also enhanced the cultural appeal of the campaign. Perhaps most importantly, this investigation brought to light how the 100% Pure New Zealand slogan may not be contingent on the success of the campaign in itself, but rather on the consistency of emotional stimulus that is conveyed through the various signs and messages.

The value mechanism was identified as being a merging of three main components. First, the primary finding was how the emotional stimuli created by the imagery made a bonding between the advertisement and the onlooker which allowed an emotional relationship to be established. Secondly, the emotional stimuli heavily related to how well brand creators

were able to produce a likable or memorable brand personality. And lastly, the ability to make 100% Pure a Lovemark whilst also invoking mystery, sensuality and intimacy through the imagery and its associated meanings allowed 100% Middle-Earth and 100% Pure to penetrate to the forefront of the onlooker's mind so as to relate and involve them in the imagery.

The campaign also included all of the suggested markers of a successful brand from a semiotic standpoint, where 100% Pure and 100% Middle-Earth both portrayed a dream-like representation of New Zealand shrouded in a believable fantasy whilst marketing the nation as a unique tourist experience as proposed by Cooper (1994) and Barthes (1957). Barthes (1957) also suggests that an image that uses text in a manner which endows more meaning onto the imagery is also a notable value adding mechanism in a brand's success. The 100% Pure campaign adds value by being successful and maintaining an ability to connect the onlooker's body, mind and culture in a manner which brings their needs and dreams into the forefront of their mind. This method allows the onlooker to identify what is being perceived with an instinctual need to purchase the product in an attempt to learn or discover more about themselves or their world.

Altogether, the 100% Pure campaign was found to be a profusion of both semiotic and branding success, where the imagery and word associations allowed the 100% Pure campaign to remain consistent in meaning and emotional stimuli through re-launches and sub-campaigns, which in turn assisted with the recognition and favourable emotional connection in the eyes of tourists. This study concludes that the identified affective and cognitive value mechanisms generate a high proportion of the brand's success and longevity.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could expand this secondary resource study by adding a quantitative primary research objective regarding how a sample of both nationals and international tourists view the 100% Pure campaign and

what meanings they associate with the campaign's signs and imagery. Equally, a similar study could be conducted in terms of discovering what national and international tourists feel when they observe and interpret the 100% Pure campaign. This could be extended to the different re-launches or sub-campaigns, making it more diverse; conclusions could be drawn on the consistency of either the emotional stimulus experienced or sign-associated messages received.

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A<small>PPENDIX</small> A

Communicators of National Brand (Skinner, Kubacki, Moss & Chelly, 2008)

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Figure 16.0