

A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH AFRICA ADDRESSING KEY TOURISM CONCERNS

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ABSTRACT

For a country's tourism industry to survive, it needs to be sustainable. Sustainable tourism entails planning and management of tourism in a holistically manner by addressing environmental-, financial and local community concerns. The primary objective of this study was to develop a framework for sustainable tourism in South Africa utilising internet research. The desktop research structure followed were to assess current information, develop an analytical framework, conducting a contextual analysis and finally to integrate the findings. The sustainable tourism framework contained eight pillars whereby the first five pillars are country specific and the last three pillars are tourism specific. Country specific concerns to address include the political climate, economic status, socio cultural demographics, technological development, ecological protection, whereas tourism specific concerns include tourism policy, market dynamics and global relations. The framework can be empirically tested and the extent of importance of the concerns can be established to indicate which are critical and which not as important to ensure sustainable tourism in South Africa.

Keywords Concerns, Sustainable, Tourism

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

For a country's tourism industry to survive, it needs to be sustainable (Keyser, 2009:25). George (2007:360) defines sustainable tourism as considering current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (The United Nations World Tourism Organisation 2015:1). Sustainable tourism is thus a form of planning and management that looks at tourism holistically and addresses different interests such as environmental, financial, local community and tourism interests (World Economic Forum, 2014:22). According to the World Economic Forum (2015:4), an enabling environment, the travel and tourism policy, infrastructure and natural and cultural resources of a country influence sustainable tourism.

Tourism represents one of the biggest economic industries in the world (Hall, 2008:1), is seen as a major player in international commerce, and is one of the main income sources for many developing countries (The United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2015:1). Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors worldwide (Dwyer & Spurr, 2011:1). The tourism industry is directly responsible for one out of every twelve

jobs in advanced and emerging economies worldwide, and for every job created within the tourism industry on average, two more jobs are created within tourism related sectors (UNEP, 2015:1).

Tourism is not just an industry, but a complex system with many interrelated components, and involves various stakeholders (Van Mai & Bosch, 2010:1). Furthermore, the tourism industry in all its complexity, literally involves thousands of organisations; these organisations plan, develop, and promote the functions within destinations (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012:71). Stakeholders in tourism include tourists (as the demand), tourism industries and national government organisations (as the supplier) and the local communities as the hosts (Pavlovich, 2003:205; Timur, 2012:12).

The successful political transformation in South Africa has virtually unlocked the country's tourism potential to the rest of the world. It has a population of approximately 41 million people and a land area of nearly five times the size of the United Kingdom. South Africa's tourism attractiveness lies in its diversity with a variety of impressive scenery, diverse cultures and moderate sunny and hot climate. It also has well-established sport facilities with good communication and medical infrastructure services. Although South Africa is well-known for its already well-established network of national parks and is regarded as a global leader in ecotourism, it has not been able to realise its full potential in tourism. (Government of South Africa, 2015:1).

The above discussion indicates that South Africa has the potential to grow its tourism potential. The potential for tourism growth is substantiated in that tourists can combine their South African visit with other nearby tourism destinations internationally known for their attractions such as the Victoria Falls and Okavango swamps (Government of South Africa, 2015:1). The increasing potential for tourism is confirmed by Dwyer and Spurr (2011:2) who state that tourism has grown to become a major socioeconomic activity world-wide due to several influencing factors, amongst others: greater disposable income available for travel; fewer working hours, paid holidays and annual vacations; rapid and dispersed economic development leading to greatly increased business travel and major improvements in transportation including air travel services and highway networks. Page and Connell (2006:4) remind us that the tourism industry is characterised by continuous change and development.

This discussion leads to the research question to be addressed in this paper: *Which concerns must be taken into consideration when developing a sustainable South African tourism framework?*

In this paper, background is provided to the role that tourism plays in the global and South African economic environment. The objectives and the research methodology are then outlined. Thereafter desktop research of the key concerns (factors) for a sustainable tourism framework will form part of the empirical

research. These results will then be concluded by discussing the important concerns to take cognisance in the development of a sustainable tourism framework for South Africa. Guidelines will be provided on how these concerns should be addressed and the issues to be considered to ensure sustainable tourism in South Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is therefore to develop a framework for sustainable tourism in South Africa. To give effect to the primary objective of this study, the following secondary research objectives have been formulated:

- To highlight the importance of tourism and its contribution to economic growth;
- To explore the role of using desktop research as a research approach;
- To examine literature on the concerns influencing sustainable tourism in South Africa, and
- To develop a framework for sustainable tourism in South Africa addressing the concerns influencing sustainable tourism.

In the following section, the methodology of this paper, desktop research, is discussed.

DESKTOP RESEARCH

Desktop research is also known as secondary research (Hague & Wilcock, 2015:1) whereby secondary data is obtained from various sources and analysed (Crouch & Housden, 2012:22). It includes accessing non-published sources (Hague & Wilcock, 2015:1), prior research reports, newspapers, magazines, journals, government and non-governmental organisation statistics (Schutt, 2009:453) and the internet as a source of information (Benson, 2009:1). According to several authors (Benson, 2009:1; Crouch & Housden, 2012:22; Cude, 2004:32; Marvist Consulting, 2005:1), the advantages of online research are:

- It is more economical and saves money;
- It is available in an electronic format;
- Large amounts of information can be retrieved quickly;
- Published data can be leveraged from many sources;
- A researcher can rule out irrelevant information faster;
- It provides a preliminary assessment and a more in-depth analysis of current issues;
- It produces both a contemporary- and historical framework;
- A quick reference can be made to the already existing information without much effort; and
- It assists in primary research to gain background to the study under investigation and provide an additional dimension to primary research.

Reports are then created based on the information sourced (Marvist Consulting, 2005:1). Further value is added when reports are compared and analysed and set within a particular context or are critically reviewed

(Schutt, 2009:453). For this paper, secondary information were sourced and analysed to identify the key success factors necessary for a sustainable tourism framework for South Africa.

However, Prescott (2008:1) warns about the pitfalls of internet research such as lack of overall quality control, incomplete information and small samples to generate results. In spite of these drawbacks, desktop research is useful as it helps determine whether there are findings, which could be built upon, which could be further tested, or establish speedily whether further research is in fact needed (Crouch & Housden, 2012:22). The researchers followed the following structure as recommended by Hague and Wilcock (2015:1)

- Assessment of current information;
- Development of analytical framework;
- Contextual analysis; and
- Integration of findings.

The researchers firstly utilised internet research as a starting point, and then completed a comprehensive review of national and international secondary sources in the form of textbooks and journal articles to enhance and verify the information. This approach ensured quality control and verification of information sourced. The researchers evaluated the information to determine if information gathered was applicable within the South African context. Thereafter, an analytical framework was developed for sustainable tourism in South Africa. The content was then further refined and contextualise. Finally, the findings were integrated into a summary to provide guidelines to what should be included within the framework for sustainable tourism in South Africa. It is envisaged that due to the limited information regarding sustainable tourism success factors in the South African context, the results of the study could assist government and tourism decision-makers alike how to market South Africa as a tourism destination leading to increased tourism income and economic growth.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT INFORMATION

Various South African authors (Du Plessis, 2002; Du Plessis, Saayman & Van der Merve, 2015; Jonker, Heath & Du Toit, 2004; Keyser, 2009) debate tourism sustainability. Keyser (2009:54) states that various destinations face the dilemma of tourism economic growth with the less desirable social and environmental impacts within the destination. Du Plessis *et al.* (2015:10) propose that South African tourism role-players should develop policies and marketing strategies that include sustainable aspects

In the following section an overview is provided of the key concerns relating to sustainable tourism in South Africa. Firstly, a PESTE analysis was conducted to compile Table 1 indicating the specific general country concerns that influence sustainable tourism as found in literature and elaborated on by several authors.

Table 1: General country specific concerns influencing sustainable tourism

General country specific concerns at destination	Authors
Political climate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political instability • The presence of xenophobia • The behaviour, actions and decisions of the president of the country • Social- and labour unrest • Democracy instability with increased likelihood of civil war • The influence of ethnic discrimination on tourism demand • Loss of funds due to government corruption 	Chauhan & Khanna (2009:41) Marshall (2008:505) Strachan (2015:1) Jung & Sunde (2014:54) Wakefield (2015:1) Mann (2014:1) Ata & Arvas (2011:161)
Economic status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing of tourist products and services • Inflated seasonal prices of conventional goods and services • Property price escalation due to foreigners buying holiday homes • Exchange rate volatility • High tourism taxation 	Forsyth & Dwyer (2009:77) Keyser (2009:331) Mazurek (2014:83) Perera & Vlosky (2013:7) Saayman & Saayman (2013:104)
Socio-cultural: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altering the authenticity of local culture to make it more appealing to tourists • Influence of tourism on domestic culture leads to westernisation • Growth of prostitution in tourist area • Exploitation of economically vulnerable communities • Begging by children and homeless people • Disproportionate demand on infrastructure e.g. local public facilities, traffic congestions and overcrowding 	Cole (2008:195) Keyser (2009:389) Sharpley (2008:198) Travis (2011:146) Walker & Walker (2011:339) UNEP (2015:1)
Technological development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technological developments available in country • Adoption rate of innovation methods by locals • Existence of user friendly web-based portals • Extent of implementation of sophisticated multimedia technology • Availability of mobile application technology in country 	Bothma (2011:5) Buhalis & Law (2008: 610) Corrocher (2011:548) Argyropoulou, Dionyssopoulou & Miaoulis (2011:368) Premchaiswadi (2010:532)
Ecological protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degradation of water quality and water pollution • Extent of air pollution • Lack of tourist quotas at natural attractions • Climate change and global warming effects • Poor land use for tourism development • Tourist consumption of already scarce natural resources 	Bounaim (2013:1) Daniel (2013:1) Keyser (2009:353) UNEP (2016:1) Korstanje & George (2012:337) Ravi & Bhattacharya (2014:519) Department of Environmental Affairs (2016:1)

In addition to the country specific concerns, there are also tourism specific concerns related to sustainable tourism in South Africa as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Tourism specific concerns influencing sustainable tourism

Tourism specific concerns at destination	Authors
Tourism policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the formulation of tourism policies • Inclusion of all stakeholders in tourism development projects • Viability of local tourism incentive programmes • Lack of travel exports through bilateral agreements • Short-term investment of government in the tourism industry • Complicated visa regulations and requirements 	Edgell, Allen, Smith & Swanson (2008:32) Van Wyngaardt (2015:1) González (2011:1400) Weaver (2006:73) Wray (2009:677) Democratic Alliance(2013:6)
Market dynamics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to satisfy ever-changing consumer needs • Keeping up with market trends • Availability of skilled labour • Having a distinct tourism market position • Low entry barriers and limited tourism regulations 	Basan (2012:59) Cooper & Hall (2008:83) Keyser (2009:226) Mitchell (2015:1) Davis (2010:16)
Global relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to adhere to International Criminal Court agreements • Lack of foreign investment in country • Lack of local- and international tour operators' relationships • Perceived neutrality and peacefulness of country 	Tladi (2015:1) Mbola, 2015:1 Al-Saadi (2014:46) Czinkota & Ronkainen (2012:30) Laffey (2015:1) Weaver (2006:73)

In the contextual analysis section, a discussion of the concerns mentioned in Tables 1 and 2 follow.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Based on the results of the desktop study in Tables 1 and 2 a framework was developed for sustainable tourism in South Africa and presented in Figure 1. The framework includes general country specific concerns as well as tourism specific concerns as identified in literature.

The diagram illustrates a conceptual framework with two main components on the left, labeled 'Independent variables', and one component on the right, labeled 'Dependent variable'.

Independent variables:

- General country specific concerns** (represented by a rounded rectangle):
 - Political climate
 - Economic status
 - Socio-cultural
 - Technological development
 - Ecological protection
- Tourism specific concerns** (represented by a rounded rectangle):
 - Tourism policy
 - Market dynamics
 - Global relations

Dependent variable:

- Sustainable tourism** (represented by an oval)

Arrows indicate the flow of influence from the independent variables to the dependent variable. Five arrows point from the 'General country specific concerns' box to the 'Sustainable tourism' oval, and three arrows point from the 'Tourism specific concerns' box to the same oval.

Figure 1 indicates the concerns (independent variables) which can influence sustainable tourism in South Africa. The framework (Figure 1) proposes that variables such as the political climate, economic status, socio-cultural, technological development, ecological protection, tourism policy, market dynamics and global relations can provide an enabling country environment for sustainable tourism.

Political climate refers to political instability, wars, coups, xenophobic attacks and labour unrest. Tourists will not travel to these locations, especially if outbreaks occur regularly (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003:319; Saayman, 2000:40). There is no doubt that political instability leads to cancellation and reduced bookings to travel destinations where these circumstances prevail as indicated by Chauhan and Khanna (2009:41). For example, China, Australia and the United Kingdom issued travel warnings to their citizens not to travel to South Africa in the month of April 2015, due to xenophobic attacks within the country (Media24, 2015:1). Mann (2014:1) concludes that individuals that have been victim to racism while travelling abroad would possibly not visit that specific destination again. Corruption is a structural problem of politics that damages confidence and public trust in systems which affect people's daily lives and therefore can be linked to tourism (Ata & Arvas, 2011:161). According to Marshall (2008:505) the behaviour, actions and decisions of a president of a country can seriously influence how the country is perceived internationally. According to

Jung and Sunde (2014:54), the stability of a democracy within a country can favourably increase the view of a nation in the international community. Labour- and social unrest in a country can cause foreign investors to be wary of investing in such countries (Wakefield, 2015:1). Safety and security of tourists is a prerequisite for a thriving tourist destination (Chauhan & Khanna, 2009:41). Elements of safety include political stability, low crime rates, transportation safety and similarities in laws between the host and origin country (Dwyer & Kim 2003:381). Moreover, tourism-related organisations within South Africa have voiced their concerns on the long-term impact of repeated negative publicity on the country's tourism industry (Booyesen, 2015:1). Based on the discussion above political climate in this study is defined as concerns relating to political instability, xenophobia, racism, social- and labour unrest, corruption, stability of democracy and the behaviour, actions and decisions of a president.

Economic status is concerned with employment rates, cost of living, inflation, the currency exchange rate and taxation (World Economic Forum, 2013:22). Tourists tend to visit destinations perceived as good value for money, therefore pricing of tourism products is imperative to the sustainability of the tourist destination (Moscardo, 2004:17). During peak tourist season some destinations artificially inflate prices of goods to maximise their income from tourists. This, in turn, increases the cost of living for the local people. Saayman and Saayman (2013:104) caution that exchange rate volatility can signal risk associated with a destination, which can lead to tourists not visiting the destination and/or cancelling their trip. Due to the economic benefits that tourism offers, governments of many countries have started to impose a wide range of taxes on tourism (Gago, Labandeira, Picos & Rodríguez, 2006:2). However, in many countries the taxes imposed on the tourism sector are increasing the price elasticity of demand, which is not beneficial to the tourism sector as this industry is particularly sensitive to issues related to fiscal incentives and tax competition (Corthay & Loeprick, 2010:1). A reduction in punitive taxation levels can assist the tourism industry in contributing even more towards economic development and fulfilling the demand for international travel to a greater extent (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013:i). Due to the popularity of certain destinations, tourists (international tourists) tend to buy second homes in such areas and by doing so, increase demand for property (Keyser, 2009:384). Based on the above discussion, economic status refers to concerns relating to pricing of tourist product and services, inflated seasonal pricing, escalation of property prices, exchange rate volatility and tourism taxation.

Socio-cultural impact in tourism is the total sum of social- and cultural influences that affect the local society as the direct result due to contact the local people have with tourists (Travis, 2011:145). Loss of and staged authenticity of local culture can occur in an attempt to meet tourist demand (UNEP, 2015:1). Keyser (2009:389) indicates that westernisation of local cultures can occur as a result of the interaction between tourists and local community. Tourism can also be blamed for changes in social morals that can lead to the growth of prostitution and religious decline within the local communities (Travis, 2011:146). Prostitution

which is linked to tourism (sex tourism) can increase the spread of HIV/Aids to economically vulnerable communities (Keyser, 2009:383; Sharpley, 2008:198). Cole (2008:195) argues that the increase in begging by children and homeless people within the tourist destination can be linked to tourism activity. Furthermore, the increase in tourism activity within a tourist destination can lead to excessive demand on public facilities, traffic congestions and overcrowding (Walker & Walker, 2011:339). Based on the discussion above in this study socio-cultural concerns relate to authenticity- and westernisation of local culture, demand on local facilities, exploitation of economically vulnerable communities and the increase of prostitution and vagrants.

Technological development refers to the advances made in the technological environment within a country (Smit *et al.*, 2011:67). Tourism companies operate in a business environment where innovation is an important part of their survival due to globalisation (Sorrensen, 2007:25). The adoption of innovation methods in destination management will enable countries to promote and support their tourist product; this will ensure quality levels and the diversification of services that will lead to the increase of each country's share in international tourism demand (Argyropoulou *et al.*, 2011:366). More and more potential travellers seek travel information through web-based portals developed by destination management organisations (DMO) and these portals should be user friendly and provide current information about the destination (Corrocher, 2011:548). Mobile technology is growing rapidly worldwide and, as a result, mobile users can use their phones to seek information regarding tourist destinations via the internet (Premchaiswadi, 2010:532). Sophisticated multimedia technology, digital maps and virtual reality promotion of tourist destinations are increasing in popularity (Argyropoulou *et al.*, 2011:368). Based on the above discussion technological development can be defined in this study as keeping up with global technological developments and innovation, having user friendly web-based portals, sophisticated multimedia technology and mobile application technology.

Tourism that focuses on the natural environment is a fast growing part of the tourism industry (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015:1). South Africa's natural resources form the foundation of the tourism industry and attract a vast numbers of local and international tourists every year (Burger, 2008:524; Parker & Khare, 2005:32). The South African tourism industry is greatly dependent on its natural resources for future global sustainability (Burger, 2008:524). Within the South African tourism context ecological concerns relate to water-, air- and noise pollution, poor use of land, destruction of natural habitats, deforestation, climate change and global warming (Daniel, 2013:1; World Wide Fund For Nature, 2015:1). Keyser (2009:353) argue that the tourism industry is water intensive, and if not managed sustainably it could lead to water shortages, degradation of water quality and water pollution. Transportation (air, rail and road) in tourism is one of the leading causes of air pollution due to the increasing number of tourists

and their need for greater mobility (UNEP, 2016:1). Tourist quotas should be used to reduce visitor levels at natural attractions to limit the impact between human and nature (Agnew & Demas, 2014:2). Tourism development should consist of appropriate land use measures as poor land use can lead to environmental problems (Rivett-Carnac, 2009:9). Furthermore, if tourism is not planned sustainably the increase in tourist consumption will have a negative impact on already scarce natural resources (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016:1). Increased international interest in conservation and sustainable development formulated that local tourism policies cannot be formulated in isolation (Weaver, 2006:73; Wray, 2009:677). Tourism planning should be integral to the entire resource analysis and development of an area (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, 2015:1). Unplanned and uncontrolled tourism can destroy the resources in a country (UNEP, 2016:1). Based on the above discussion ecological concern in this study can be defined as degradation of water quality, water- and air pollution, the increase of climate change and global warming, poor land use that leads to environmental problems, the lack of tourist quotas at natural attractions and the consumption of scarce natural resources.

The purpose of a tourism policy is to provide a framework that guides the development and management of the tourism industry in order to achieve its goals (Hall, 2009:42; Saayman & Swart, 2004:16). Policy-making is of particular importance to tourism, whether on international-, national-, provincial- or local scale, because of its role in governing the tourism industry and its associated activities (Hall, 2009:42). A tourism policy should promote the growth of travel exports through bilateral agreements with other countries (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, 2015:1). Tourism policy formulation is unique to each tourist destination, and therefore should be destination specific and the participants in the formulation of such policies should be carefully considered (Edgell *et al.*, 2008: 32). Tourism policies are becoming central to tourism planning and cannot be made in isolation, it is imperative that all stakeholders be included in tourist development projects (Weaver, 2006:73; Wray, 2009:677). South Africa was criticised over its latest visa requirements legislation in 2015, and was warned that these new visa regulations could seriously affect its tourism industry (Booyesen, 2015:1). Therefore, due to the scope of tourism as a global economic sector, governments need to realise its potential for long-term investment and to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental objectives when formulating tourism policies (George, 2007:147). In 2015, the South African Department of Tourism launched a Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP) to ensure the country attracts more tourists; the TIP will also include a subsidy for tourism businesses to participate in trade exhibition and marketing road shows both locally and internationally (Van Wyngaardt, 2015:1). The impact of this programme on tourism in South Africa remains to be seen. Based on the discussion above concerns relating to tourism policy includes: the participation in the formulation of tourism policies as well as ensuring all stakeholders is involved in tourism development; the viability of tourism incentive

programmes; the short-term investment of government in the tourism industry; the lack of bilateral travel export agreements and the implementation of complicated visa requirements.

Market dynamics refer to non-marketing activities that can influence the tourism competitiveness of a country; and pose opportunities or threats to a country (Smit *et al.*, 2011:67; Tait & Tait, 2015:70). According to Cooper and Hall (2008:83), the ability of destinations (countries) to keep up to date with the ever changing needs of the consumer is crucial to their sustainability. Furthermore, destination managers must also keep track of market trends within the industry to ensure that their product offering is not out dated (Horgan, 2015:1; Mitchell, 2015:1). The availability of skilled labour can influence how effective a countries' tourism industry operates (Keyser, 2009:226). Furthermore, it is vital for tourist destinations to clearly identify their market position as this will result in successful performance within the market place (Basan, 2012:59). Additionally, low entry barriers and limited restrictions and regulations imposed in the tourism industry encourage the explosion of small firms (Davis, 2010:16). Based on the above discussion market dynamics can be defined as keeping up with changing consumer needs and market trends, having a clearly identified market position and the availability of skilled labour as well as barriers to entry into the tourism industry.

Global relations refer to the relationship between nations and/or countries and their foreign policies (Merriam-Webster, 2015:1). According to Al-Saadi (2014:46), tourism can contribute to closer global relations between countries, especially neighbouring countries. International travel agents develop contact with South African travel agents to arrange specialised package deals, such as golfing tours, nature activities, and also with regard to special needs of their clients, such as language or physical challenges (Republic of South Africa, 2016:1) Furthermore, a country's membership to international organisations can promote international cooperation and peaceful governmental behaviour (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2012:30; Voeten, 2014:285). The South African government failed to arrest Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant of arrest for President Al-Bashir on "seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sudan's Western region of Darfur" (Mbola, 2015:1; Tladi, 2015:1). South Africa was obligated to comply with the interdict as the country is a member of the ICC (Mbola, 2015:1). Furthermore, tourists prefer to visit tourist destinations which are synonymous with peace or neutral countries such as Switzerland and Sweden (Laffey, 2015:1; Potapkina, 2010:1). Other issues pertaining to international relations are foreign investment in the tourism section and investment opportunities for South African companies in other countries and for development for the partner countries (Wakefield, 2015:1). The ability of a national economy to profit from tourism depends on the availability of investment to develop the necessary infrastructure and its ability to supply to the needs of tourists (Agaraj & Murati, 2009:83). Based on the discussion above global relations is concerned with relationships between countries in the form of adhering to ICC proclamations, foreign investment due to relationships, the

peacefulness and neutrality of a country and the relationship building between local- and international tour operators.

Table 3 provides a summary of the contextual analysis of concerns relating to sustainable tourism in South Africa.

Table 3: Summary of the contextual analysis

Definition of factor	Sources
Political climate are concerns relating to political instability, xenophobia, racism, social- and labour unrest, corruption, stability of democracy and the behaviour, actions and decisions of a president.	Ata & Arvas (2011:161); Booysen (2015:1); Chauhan & Khanna (2009:41); Dwyer & Kim (2003:381); Goeldner & Ritchie (2003:319); Jung & Sunde (2014:54); Mann (2014:1); Marshall (2008:505); Saayman (2000:40); Wakefield (2015:1)
Economic status refers to concerns relating to pricing of tourism products and services, inflated seasonal pricing, escalation of property prices, exchange rate volatility and tourism taxation	Corthay & Loeprick, (2010:1); Gago <i>et al.</i> (2006:2); Keyser (2009:384); Moscardo (2004:17); Saayman (2013:104); World Travel & Tourism Council (2013:i); World Tourism Organisation (2013:22)
Technological developments can be defined in this study as keeping up with global technological developments and innovation, having user friendly web-based portals, sophisticated multimedia technology and mobile application technology	Argyropoulou <i>et al.</i> (2011:366); Corrocher (2011:548); Premchaiswadi (2010:532); Smit <i>et al.</i> (2011:67); Sorrensen (2007:25)
Socio-cultural concerns relate to authenticity- and westernisation of local culture, demand on local facilities, exploitation of economically vulnerable communities and the increase of prostitution and vagrants	Cole (2008:195); Keyser (2009:389); Sharpley (2008:198); Travis (2011:145); UNEP (2015a:1); Walker & Walker (2011:339)
Ecological concerns can be defined as the degradation of water quality, water- and air pollution, the increase of climate change and global warming, poor land usage that leads to environmental problems, the lack of tourist quotas at natural attractions and the consumption of scarce natural resources	Agnew & Demas (2014:2); Burger (2008:524); Daniel (2013:1); Department of Environmental Affairs (2016:1); Keyser (2009:353); Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (2015:1); Parker & Khare (2005:32); Rivett-Carnac (2009:9); United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015:1); UNEP (2016:1); Weaver (2006:73); World Wide Fund For Nature (2015:1); Wray (2009:677)
Tourism policy can be defined as the participation in the formulation of tourism policies as well as ensuring all stakeholders are involved in tourism development; the viability of tourism incentive programmes; the short-term investment of government in the tourism industry; the lack of bilateral travel export agreements and the implementation of complicated visa requirements	Booyesen (2015:1); Edgell, <i>et al.</i> (2008:32); George (2007:147); Hall (2009:42); ; Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (2015:1); Saayman & Swart (2004:16); Van Wyngaardt (2015:1); Weaver (2006:73); Wray (2009:677)

Definition of factor	Sources
Market dynamics can be defined as keeping up with changing consumer needs and market trends, having a clearly identified market position and the availability of skilled labour as well as barriers to entry into the tourism industry	Basan (2012:59); Cooper and Hall (2008:83); Davis (2010:16); Horgan (2015:1); Keyser (2009:226); Mitchell (2015:1); Smit <i>et al.</i> , (2011:67); Tait & Tait (2015:70);
Global relations is concerned with relationships between countries in the form of adhering to ICC proclamations, foreign investment due to relationships, the peacefulness and neutrality of a country and the relationship building between local- and international tour operators.	Agaraj & Murati, (2009:83); Al-Saadi (2014:46); Czinkota & Ronkainen (2012: 30); Laffey (2015:1); Mbola (2015:1); Merriam-Webster (2015:1); Potapkina (2010:1); Republic of South Africa (2016:1); Tladi (2015:1); Voeten (2014:285); Wakefield (2015:1);

In the following section the integration of the findings will be presented.

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS

It is thus clear from the preceding discussion that for sustainable tourism in South Africa, it is essential to establish an enabling environment. This enabling environment must take into consideration the general country specific as well as tourism specific concerns of potential tourists. As can be seen in Figure 1, sustainable tourism is based on eight pillars whereby the first five pillars are country specific and the last three pillars are tourism specific.

The first pillar considers tourism government structures and institutions, and other areas of governance that affect sustainability (World Economic Forum, 2014:21). Political climate includes attitudes towards political instability, xenophobic attacks, racism, corruption, current president (presidency), stability of democracy and labour- and social unrest (Abu, Karim & Aziz, 2015:46; Asongu, 2015:2040). Therefore destinations need to consider their political climate to ensure that tourists perceive the destination as safe and stable and by doing this ensure a steady stream of tourist arrivals which eventually will ensure tourism sustainability. The second pillar in Figure 1 depicts the economic aspect of sustainable tourism, the availability of resources and the distribution thereof, as well as the pace of economic development, employment rates, economic potential, cost of living, inflation and currency exchange rate (Dwyer & Spurr, 2011:4; World Economic Forum, 2015:22). Therefore tourism plays a role in the sustainable economic development of a country by providing employment, the multiplier effect to different industries and foreign currency generation. The third pillar (socio-cultural sustainable tourism) is concerned with the social environment, cultural mentalities as well as customs and traditions (World Economic Forum, 2014:21). The socio-cultural pillar focuses on strengthening local supply chains, developing community-based initiatives, education, cultural heritage and securing benefits from tourism (World Economic Forum, 2013:21).

The fourth pillar technological development refers to the advances made in the technological environment within a country (Smit *et al.*, 2011:67). Tourism companies operate in a business environment where innovation is an important part of their survival (Sorrensen, 2007:25). The adoption of innovation methods in destination management will enable countries to promote and support their tourism product; this will ensure quality levels and the diversification of services and product offerings that will lead to the increase of each country's share in international tourism demand (Argyropoulou *et al.*, 2011:366). In the tourism industry the country that can offer the best technology development and adopt to technological advancement will ensure sustainable tourism within the global market. The fifth pillar, environmental sustainable tourism, refers to natural- and mineral resources, access to water and pollution levels (World Economic Forum, 2013:21). This pillar is concerned with limiting the harmful impact of tourism on the environment and the long-term conservation of attractions (World Economic Forum, 2014:21). By ensuring environmental protection and implementing tourist quotas at natural attractions the impact on the environment will be limited and a sustainable tourism product will be ensured.

The sixth pillar focuses on the recognition of tourism in the sustainable development policies of a country and the presence and implementation of a clear tourism strategy that embraces sustainable development principles. Jonker *et al.* (2004:1) recommend that sustainable management policies become an integrated and imperative part of the South African critical success factors and that safety and security provisions should be built into national, provincial and local tourism, resulting in specific tourism security initiatives. The seventh pillar is market dynamics and refers to a situation within the market setting where destinations compete for the patronage of the potential tourist (Smith *et al.*, 2011:70). The demand for many tourism products and services is known to rely greatly upon the overall perception the tourist have of the destination (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011:5). There is a need for the overall appeal of the tourist destination that is superior to those of an alternative tourist destination to impending tourists to ensure tourism sustainability (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009:340). The eighth pillar, global relations in terms of tourism, relate to relationships between nations and/or countries, their foreign policies and include the peacefulness of nations, international openness, diplomacy, neutrality and membership to international organisations (Gouws, 2011:62; Jonsson, 2012:15; Merriam-Webster, 2015:1; Voeten, 2014:285). According to the World Economic Forum (2015:6) the international openness of a country can directly impact tourists' decision to select a tourist destination. Therefore, for a tourist destination to be sustainable it is essential that they maintain good global relations.

These eight pillars are integrated and as changes occur within one of the pillars it affects the other. For example, the South African President Jacob Zuma replaced the country's Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, with a new unknown Minister of Finance (political pillar). This decision resulted in the South African currency (ZARs) plummeting to a record low (economic pillar) of R15.3857 against the American Dollar

and R23.4239 against the British Pound after the news broke internationally (Mkokeli, Paton, Ndzamela & Ensor, 2015:1). Furthermore, due to volatility of the South African Rand in 2015 (economic pillar), South African tourism (SAT), who market South Africa internationally (market pillar), had to increase marketing to attract tourists (Birns, 2015:1). The weakening rand eventually resulted in a situation where SAT had to discontinue their international marketing campaigns as their budget was depleted (Birns, 2015:1).

To conclude, sustainable tourism should thus meet the needs of local communities by improving their quality of life while satisfying tourism demands and supporting the long-term attractiveness of an area for tourism (World Economic Forum, 2014:21).

CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

The paper has provided insight into concerns influencing sustainable tourism in South Africa. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken on concerns that may influence sustainable tourism in South Africa. The framework in this paper is all-inclusive as it covers country specific and tourism specific concerns that influence sustainable tourism in South Africa. The framework can be empirically tested and the extent of importance of the concerns can be established to indicate which are critical and which are not as important to ensure sustainable tourism in South Africa. Based on the framework (Figure 1) the concerns that can possibly influence sustainable tourism can be tested by means of the following eight hypotheses:

- H_{1.1}: There is a relationship between the political climate in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.2}: There is a relationship between the economic status of a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.3}: There is a relationship between socio-cultural variables in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.4}: There is a relationship between technological development in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.5}: There is a relationship between ecological concerns in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.6}: There is a relationship between tourism policies prevalent in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.7}: There is a relationship between market dynamics in a country and sustainable tourism.
- H_{1.8}: There is a relationship between global relations of a country and sustainable tourism.

Based on the findings of the tested framework and hypotheses, strategies to limit or overcome the concerns for sustainable tourism in South Africa could be provided.

LIMITATIONS TO RESEARCH STUDY

The concerns relating to sustainable tourism in South Africa was mainly obtained by desktop research and was not supported by empirical research. The research was highly dependent on published data relating to concerns regarding sustainable tourism in South Africa. The perceptions and opinions of the researchers based the current concerns relating to sustainable tourism in South Africa determined which concerns were

included in the study. A variety of internet sources was used in this study due to the fact that the study aims to provide current concerns and these concerns have not been explored in academic journals. In spite of these limitations useful and current information was presented relating to the concerns of sustainable competitive tourism in South Africa.

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INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL & CULTURAL TOURISM OF LIMESTONES

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays industrial tourism is obtaining certain popularity in Japan and participants enjoy being in touch with the local industrial productions, its present role, history, or even the landscape of the factories itself. On the other hand, limestone generates characteristic natural landscape, such as canyons, limestone caves, springs with rich minerals, or lapies fields which are enjoyed by tourists who are inclined to love natural landscapes. This paper attempts to collect the landscape properties which are unique in limestone cities, and discuss on their potentials as tourists' attractions, exemplifying limestone cities in Japan.

In addition to the already-known attractions of nature, limestone invites lime or cement industry and has built industrial town. Limestone production has change the small villages into developed city with tower of suspension kilns, cement silos, huge limestone conveyers on high-quality infrastructure and urban entertainments, such as wide roads, community centres, movie theatres or pubs. It is found out that recent stream of "Industrial Tourism" started inviting new layers of tourists there, such as enthusiasts or even general people. Cement or lime production companies introduces the tours at working limestone mine sites not only for understanding of company's activities or social contributions, but also for enjoying the panoramic canyon of quarries. On the other hand, abolished industrial sites are converted into history museums and increasing numbers of enthusiasts are visiting the reminiscence of past, i.e. industrial heritage. Some limestone cities still keep the unique local festivals which worships the traditional god of limestones, or local restaurants create new method to emphasize the character of the city, offering menus warmed with quicklime, which produce enough heat to boil the cuisine. It is found out that those excellent tourist's attractions are almost individually carried out, without "stories" which may connect each other as "limestones-originated pleasures". (295 words)

FEATURE EXTRACTION OF ENGLISH INTERVIEWS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract—Human beings often talk with other people. We are getting information from others as an everyday experience, using many effective arts in order to obtain a cooperative response. An “interview” is more specific way of talking, and it is the technique to gain the particular data effectively which the interviewers want to know through the conversation. In this paper, we metrically analyzed some English interviews: *Larry King Live* on CNN. *Larry King Live* is one of the CNN’s highest-rated shows and Mr. King is regarded as the first American talk show host to have a worldwide audience. He was born at Brooklyn in New York on November 19 in 1933, and educated at the Lafayette High School. For comparison, we analyzed English news materials from *CNN Live Today*, as well as the inaugural addresses of the three U.S. Presidents: George Bush (Jan. 20, 1989), William J. Clinton (Jan. 21, 1993), and George W. Bush (Jan. 20, 2001). In short, frequency characteristics of character- and word-appearance were investigated using a program written in C++. These characteristics were approximated by an exponential function: $[y = c * \exp(-bx)]$. In this analysis, we used an approximate equation of an exponential function to educe the characteristics of each material using coefficients c and b of the equation. Moreover, we calculated the percentage of American basic vocabulary to obtain the difficulty-level as well as the K -characteristic. As a result, it was clearly shown that the interviews have the same tendency as English journalism in character-appearance. Moreover, we could show quantitatively that the interviews are a little easier to listen than the CNN news.

Keywords—Metrical linguistics, Statistical analysis, Text mining

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings often talk with other people. We are getting information from others as an everyday experience, using many effective arts in order to obtain a cooperative response. An “interview” is more specific way of talking, and it is the technique to gain the particular data effectively which the interviewers want to know through the conversation [1].

In this paper, we metrically analyzed some English interviews: *Larry King Live* on CNN, and compared these with English news (*CNN Live Today*) and the inaugural addresses of the three U.S. Presidents. In short, frequency characteristics of character- and word-appearance were investigated using a program written in C++. These characteristics were approximated by an exponential function: $[y = c * \exp(-bx)]$.

As a result, it was clearly shown that the interviews have the same tendency as English journalism in character-appearance. Moreover, we could show quantitatively that the interviews are a little easier to listen than CNN news.

II. METHOD OF ANALYSIS AND MATERIALS

The materials analyzed here are as follows:

Larry King Live (Jan. 21, 2004-July 13, 2004; 20 materials in total)

Larry King Live is one of the CNN’s highest-rated shows and Mr. King is regarded as the first American talk show host to have a worldwide audience. He was born at Brooklyn in New York on November 19 in 1933, and educated at the Lafayette High School [2]. We selected 20 interviews, and analyzed interviewer’s English, that is, the utterances of Mr. King. For reference, the interviewees’ data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Data of the Interviewees in *Larry King Live*.

No.	Interviewee's name	Status	Aired date	Gender
1	Bill Clinton	frm. President	June 24, 2004	m
2	Dan Rather	CBS news anchor	June 18, 2004	m
3	Macaulay Culkin	actor	May 27, 2004	m
4	Colin Powell	Secretary of State	May 4, 2004	m
5	Don Rickles	comedian	May 2, 2004	m
6	Dick Clark	TV personality	Apr. 16, 2004	m
7	Peter Jennings	broadcast journalist	Apr. 1, 2004	m
8	Donald Rumsfeld	Defense Secretary	Mar. 19, 2004	m
9	Ben Affleck	actor	Mar. 16, 2004	m
10	Toby Keith	country singer	Jan. 21, 2004	m
11	Theresa Saldana	actress	July 13, 2004	f
12	Ann Richards	frm. Texas Governor	May 20, 2004	f
13	Hillary Rodham Clinton	Senator	Apr. 20, 2004	f
14	Karen Hughes	one of Bush's closest advisers	Apr. 6, 2004	f
15	Tanya Tucker	country singer	Mar. 23, 2004	f
16	Tammy Faye Messner	TV personality	Mar. 18, 2004	f
17	Linda Evans	actress	Mar. 15, 2004	f
18	Katie Couric	TV news personality	Mar. 4, 2004	f
19	Veronica Atkins	widow of Dr. Robert Atkins	Feb. 16, 2004	f
20	Sharon Osbourne	rock star	Feb. 12, 2004	f

Thus, while the interviewees are male in Materials 1 to 10, they are female in Materials 11 to 20.

For comparison, we analyzed 20 English news materials from *CNN Live Today* aired on January 2-31 in 2003, as well as the inaugural addresses of the three U.S. Presidents: George Bush (Jan. 20, 1989), William J. Clinton (Jan. 21, 1993), and George W. Bush (Jan. 20, 2001).

The computer program for this analysis is composed of C++. Besides the characteristics of character- and word-appearance for each piece of material, various information such as the “number of

sentences,” the “number of paragraphs,” the “mean word length,” the “number of words per sentence,” etc. can be extracted by this program [3].

III. RESULTS

3.1. Characteristics of Character-appearance

First, the most frequently used characters in each material and their frequency were derived. Then, the frequencies of the 50 most frequently used characters including capitals, small letters, and punctuations were plotted on a descending scale. The vertical shaft shows the degree of the frequency and the horizontal shaft shows the order of character-appearance. The vertical shaft is scaled with a logarithm. As an example, the result of Material 1 is shown in Figure 1.

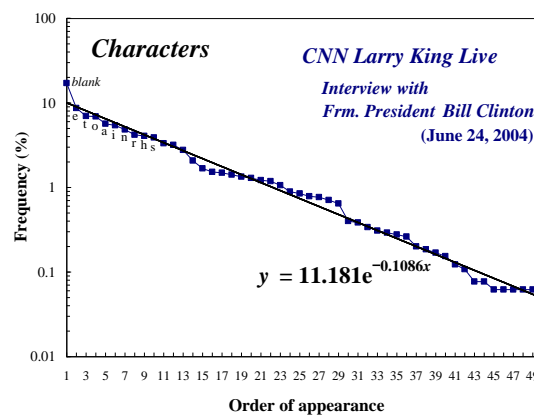


Figure 1 – Frequency characteristics of character-appearance in *Larry King Live*.

There is an inflection point caused by the difference of the degree of decrease between the 13th and the 14th ranked characters, and the degree of decrease gets a little higher after the 26th character. This characteristic curve was approximated by the following exponential function:

$$(1) \quad y = c * \exp(-bx)$$

From this function, we are able to derive coefficients c and b [4]. In the case of Material 1, c is 11.181 and b is 0.1086. The distribution of coefficients c and b extracted from each material is shown in Figure 2.

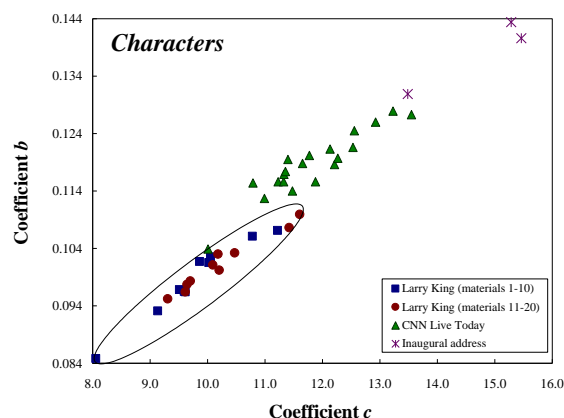


Figure 2 – Dispersions of coefficients c and b for character-appearance.

There is a linear relationship between c and b for all of the 43 materials. Previously, we analyzed various

English writings and reported that there is a positive correlation between the coefficients c and b , and that the more journalistic the material is, the lower the values of c and b are, and the more literary, the higher the values of c and b [5]. The values of coefficients c and b for interviews are low: the value of c ranges from 8.0567 (Material 5) to 11.605 (Material 11), and that of b is 0.0848 to 0.1099, compared to the case of the CNN news (c is 10.009 to 13.548, b is 0.1039 to 0.1279) and inaugural addresses (c is 13.484 to 15.461, b is 0.1309 to 0.1434). Thus, while the interviews have a similar tendency to journalism, the inaugural addresses are similar to literary writings.

3.2. Characteristics of Word-appearance

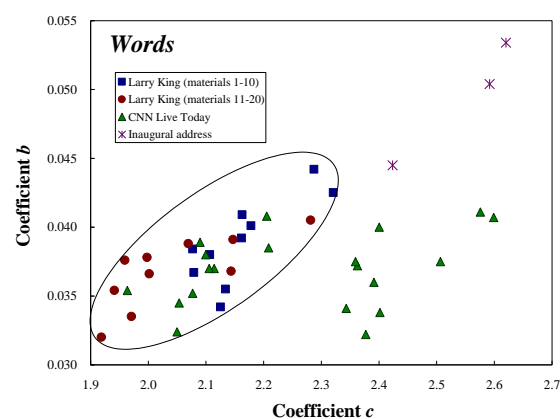
Next, the 20 most frequently used words in some of the materials are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – High-frequency words for each material.

	Larry King (Bill Clinton)	Larry King (Colin Powell)	Larry King (Theresa Saldana)	Larry King (Hillary Clinton)	CNN Live Today (Jan. 2, 2003)	Inaugural address (G. W. Bush)
1	the	the	you	you	that	and
2	you	you	the	the	to	of
3	to	that	to	to	the	the
4	of	in	a	of	this	our
5	and	to	and	and	at	a
6	a	a	did	do	police	we
7	that	of	he	in	in	to
8	do	and	was	with	of	in
9	it	it	what	is	he	is
10	I	have	do	a	they	not
11	in	is	that	what	and	will
12	is	he	were	think	are	are
13	president	I	in	be	a	that
14	was	with	with	it	here	it
15	on	do	who	on	on	this
16	back	be	have	back	case	but
17	be	at	I	that	point	for
18	Clinton	don't	Jeff	he	able	by
19	did	state	of	I	as	I
20	have	this	right	this	been	us

The definite article *THE*, the personal pronouns *YOU* and *I*, and auxiliary *DO* (*DID*) are often used in interviews. In addition, interrogatives such as *WHAT* and *WHO* are also used frequently in Materials 11 and 13. As for personal pronoun *YOU*, it ranks as the most frequently used word in the 8 interviews in which the interviewee was female, except for Materials 14 and 19, in which *YOU* ranks the 2nd. Thus, personal pronoun *YOU* tends to be more often used, when the interviewee is female. For interviews and CNN news, some content words such as *PRESIDENT* and *POLICE* are ranked high, because the number of words for each material is not so many.

Just as in the case of characters, the frequencies of the 50 most frequently used words in each material were plotted. Each characteristic curve was approximated by the same exponential function: [$y = c * \exp(-bx)$]. The distribution of c and b is shown in Figure 3.



Dictionaries, Houghton Mifflin, 2003), and $n(i)$ means the respective number of each basic word. Thus, we can calculate how many basic words are not contained in each piece of material in terms of word-sort and frequency. The values educed are shown in Figure 5.

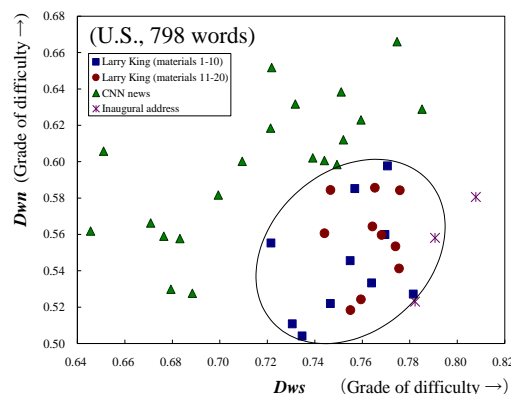


Figure 5 – Two types of difficulty using basic English vocabulary in the U.S.

The closer the value is to 1, the more difficult the material. As for the degree of word-sort (D_{ws}), when we analyzed the English textbooks in Japanese junior and senior high schools, the difficulty increases as the grades go up. Thus, the validity of using the variety of words and their frequency of the American basic vocabulary as the parameters to extract the difficulty was accepted [7]. According to Figure 5, the difficulty of interviews ranges from 0.722 (Material 2) to 0.782 (Material 6), which is almost identical with the half of the news materials. The difficulties of the three inaugural addresses are high: 0.782 to 0.808. The most difficult interview (Material 6) is almost equal to the easiest of the inaugural address.

As for D_{wn} , because the most frequently used words in each material, that is, *THE*, *OF*, *TO*, *AND*, *IN*, *A*, etc., are common in every material, and the characteristics of word-appearance are also similar among them, the range of values for D_{wn} is assumed to be tight.

Thus, we calculated the values of both D_{ws} and D_{wn} to show how difficult the materials are for listeners, and to show which level of English the materials are compared with others. In order to make the judgments of difficulty easier for the general public, we derived one difficulty parameter from D_{ws} and D_{wn} using the following principal component analysis:

$$z = (a_1 * D_{ws} + a_2 * D_{wn}) \quad (5)$$

where a_1 and a_2 are the weights used to combine D_{ws} and D_{wn} . Using the variance-covariance matrix, the 1st principal component z was extracted: $[z = (0.349 * D_{ws} + 0.9374 * D_{wn})]$, from which we calculated the principal component scores. The results are shown in Figure 6.

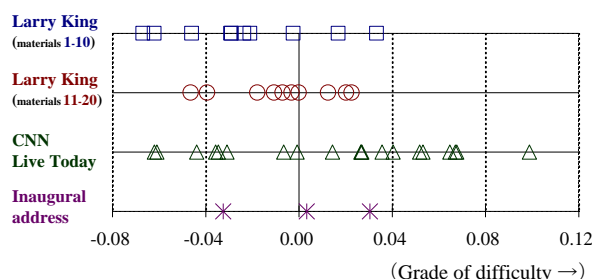


Figure 6 – Principal component scores for difficulty shown in one-dimension.

According to Figure 6, we can judge that the eight news materials are more difficult than all of the interviews and inaugural addresses, using our way of measuring difficulty. The difficulties of the interviews in which the interviewee was female are from -0.0464 (Material 20) to 0.0226 (Material 19), which are similar to the inaugural addresses: -0.0325 to 0.0304. The easiest of all the materials is one of the interviews in which the interviewee's gender is the same as the interviewer's, Material 9; its principal component score is -0.0669.

3.4. Other Characteristics

Other metrical characteristics of each material were compared. The results of the “mean word length,” the “number of words per sentence,” etc. are shown together in Table 3.

Table 3 – Metrical data for each material.

	Larry King (materials 1-10) (avg. of 10 materials)	Larry King (materials 11-20) (avg. of 10 materials)	CNN Live Today (avg. of 20 materials)	Inaugural address (avg. of 3 materials)
Total num. of characters	7,574	8,141	3,600	10,046
Total num. of character-type	63	64	56	57
Total num. of words	1,423	1,506	640	1,830
Total num. of word-type	496	516	273	646
Total num. of sentences	119	113	34	110
Mean word length	5.342	5.413	5.651	5.516
Words/sentence	13.248	13.505	19.660	16.629
Repetition of a word	2.850	2.896	2.287	2.810
Commas/sentence	0.770	0.778	1.428	1.181
Freq. of prepositions (%)	12.209	11.912	15.045	14.075
Freq. of relatives (%)	4.125	3.968	3.973	2.844
Freq. of auxiliaries (%)	0.922	0.915	1.142	2.261
Freq. of personal pronouns (%)	13.395	14.045	6.721	10.479

Although we counted the “frequency of relatives,” the “frequency of modal auxiliaries,” etc., some of the words counted might be used as other parts of speech because we didn't check the meaning of each word.

3.4.1. Mean Word Length

The results of the “mean word length” for each material are shown in Figure 7. The “mean word length” is 5.129 (Material 5) to 5.546 letters (Material 8) for Materials 1 to 10, and 5.249 (Material 20) to 5.562 letters (Material 13) for Materials 11 to 20, which are low, compared with the CNN news and inaugural addresses. As much as 13 materials of the 20 CNN news materials are longer than interviews. Moreover, 4 interviews in which the interviewee was male are shorter than the interviews in which the interviewee was female. Thus, we can see that when the interviewee is male, the male interviewer tends to use short-length words.

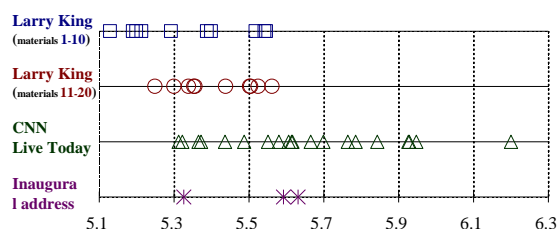


Figure 7 – Mean word length for each material.

3.4.2. Number of Words per Sentence

The results of the “number of words per sentence” for each material are shown in Figure 8. The “number of words per sentence” for the interviews in which the interviewee was male is 7.092 (Material 5) to 15.054 words (Material 7), and it is exceptionally high: as much as 23.250 words for Material 8. When the interviewee was female, it is 10.718 (Material 14) to 18.046 words (Material 20). In this case,

as much as 12 materials of the 20 CNN news materials are longer than Material 20. Also from this point of view, the interview materials seem to be easier to listen than the CNN news and inaugural addresses.

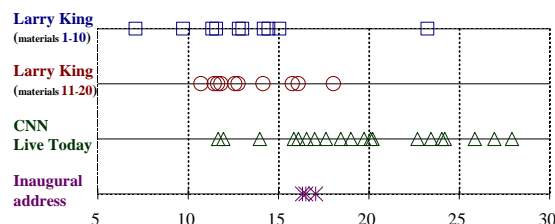


Figure 8 – Number of words per sentence for each material.

3.4.3. Frequency of Auxiliaries

We also examined the “frequency of auxiliaries.” There are two kinds of auxiliaries in a broad sense. One expresses the tense and voice, such as *BE* which makes up the progressive form and the passive form, the perfect tense *HAVE*, and *DO* in interrogative sentences or negative sentences. The other is a modal auxiliary, such as *WILL* or *CAN* which expresses the mood or attitude of the speaker [8]. In this study, we targeted only modal auxiliaries. As for the result, the “frequency of auxiliaries” is highest in the inaugural address, the average of the 3 materials is 2.261%, and lowest in interviews, the average of Materials 11 to 20 is 0.915%. As for Materials 1 to 10, it is 0.922%. Therefore, it might be said that while the President tends to communicate his subtle thoughts and feelings with auxiliary verbs, the style of Larry King’s talking can be called more assertive.

3.4.4. Frequency of Personal Pronouns

As for the “frequency of personal pronouns,” it is as high as 13.395% and 14.045% for Materials 1 to 10 and Materials 11 to 20 respectively. This is because the frequencies of *YOU* and *I* are rather high in the interviews, as was mentioned before.

3.4.5. Word-length Distribution of Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs

We also examined word-length distribution of “nouns,” “verbs,” “adjectives,” and “adverbs.” As examples, the results of Nouns and Adverbs are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10 respectively. Judging from Figure 9, we can see a tendency that in the case of Nouns, shorter words are used in the interviews, compared with the inaugural address. On the other hand, as for the case of Adverbs, the frequency of 4-letter words is rather high in the interview materials. It is as much as 48.837% in Material 1.

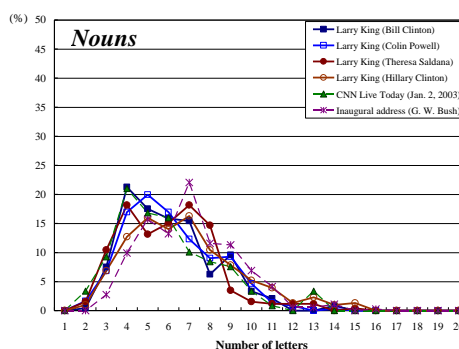


Figure 9 – Word-length distribution of nouns.

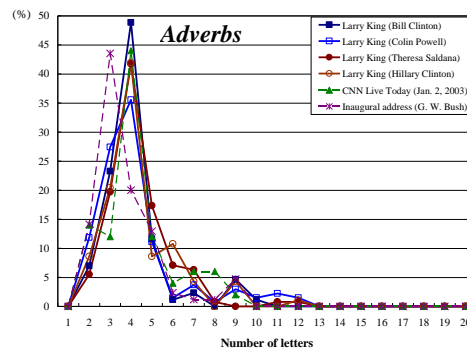


Figure 10 – Word-length distribution of adverbs.

3.5. Positioning of Each Material

We tried to make positioning all of the 43 materials, doing a principal component analysis of the educed data by the correlation procession. The results are shown in Figure 11.

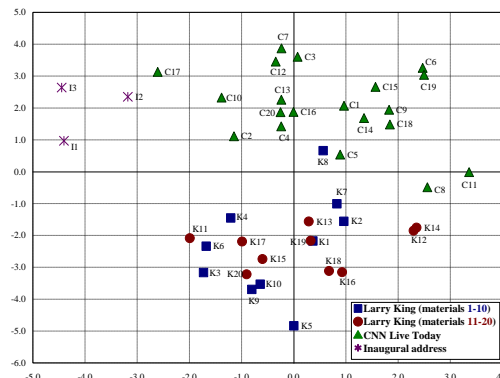


Figure 11 – Positioning of each material.

We could assume that while the first principal component expresses whether an utterance was turned to the public or to an individual, the second principal component defines whether an utterance is broadcast English or speech style English.

IV. CONCLUSION

We investigated some characteristics of character- and word-appearance of interviews: *Larry King Live* on CNN, comparing these with English news and the inaugural addresses of the U.S. Presidents. In this analysis, we used an approximate equation of an exponential function to educe the characteristics of each material using coefficients c and b of the equation. Moreover, we calculated the percentage of American basic vocabulary to obtain the difficulty-level as well as the K -characteristic. As a result, it was clearly shown that the interviews have the same tendency as English journalism in character-appearance. Moreover, we could show quantitatively that the interviews are a little easier to listen than the CNN news.

The results of this study will be useful for identifying the genre of certain writing as transcription of an interview. In order to improve the reliability of identification, we need to accumulate the analysis results.

In the future, we plan to apply these results to education. For example, we would like to measure the effectiveness of teaching some characteristics of English materials before listening or reading them.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF CHINESE MARTIAL SKILLS AND ETHICS TO REDUCE REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE AGGRESSION IN SCHOOLCHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Chinese martial arts is not only a set of combat skills, but is also a code of ethics. The present study examined the effectiveness of Chinese martial arts training group in reducing aggressive behaviors among schoolchildren aged 6 – 13 years. A total of 3,511 schoolchildren from 12 primary schools in Hong Kong completed a screening questionnaire, in which Reactive-Proactive Aggression Questionnaire (RPQ; Raine et al., 2006) was used to assess individuals' aggressive behavior. 315 respondents who scored $z \geq 1$ in total score of the RPQ were shortlisted and randomly assigned into four types of intervention training group. Intervention included (i) Chinese martial skills only (Skills), (ii) Chinese martial ethics only (Ethics), (iii) both Chinese martial skills and ethics (Skills and Ethics), and (iv) Physical Fitness (placebo). Results suggested that 3 experimental groups were effective in reducing children's reactive and proactive aggression, and experience of anger. The Skills and Ethics group produced the greatest improvement, followed by the Ethics group, then the Skills group. The Physical Fitness group was found to be effective in reducing aggressive behaviors but not experience of anger. The distinct features of Chinese martial skills and ethics were examined. The implication of using Chinese martial arts as an aggression-reducing intervention was also discussed.

Keywords: *martial arts, aggressive behavior, effectiveness*

BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract—As brands perceived authentic are likely to be self-related, this article proposes that a link may be forged between the brands and the achievement of self-related goals. The purpose of this study is to investigate the linkage between brand authenticity, self-brand connection, and brand performances such as brand attitude or brand loyalty. Brand authenticity was operationalized as consisting of factors: originality, reliability, quality commitment, heritage and consistency. The results confirm that brand originality, reliability, heritage and quality commitment foster self-related feelings for the brand, which in turn drives favorable brand attitude and brand loyalty. Self-brand connection fully mediated the relationship between brand originality and brand attitude or loyalty and partially mediated the relationship between brand reliability or quality commitment and brand attitude or loyalty. Brand consistency did not significantly relate to self-brand connection but enhanced brand attitude. The present study contributes to the brand authenticity literature by providing self-brand connection as another route to understand the potential of brand authenticity and how it is perceived by consumers. This study also extends previous research by examining the effect of brand authenticity dimensions and symbolic benefit of brands and their interplay on brand evaluation.

Keywords—Brand authenticity, Self-brand connection, Brand attitude, Brand loyalty

THE BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR AZERI ETHNIC MINORITY LIVING IN GEORGIA

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ABSTRACT

Effective education policy should take into account needs and interests of the different target groups'. The aim of the given research was to study the perception of the largest Ethnic Minorities group (Azeri population) living in Georgia about the access to education as well as problems connected with receiving an education. The quantitative research was carried out in the region of Kvemo Kartli, the district where Azeris are compactly settled and covered 400 respondents. The study dealt with all levels of education: general, vocational and higher. As the results show the biggest part of the surveyed population has general education followed by Vocational (VET) and Higher (BA) Education; the rate of the participants with the MA and Ph.D. degrees is very small. These statistics is reflected in the perceptions of the community: respondents believe that they have equal access to general education and VET while higher education is more available for Georgians. Insufficient knowledge of Georgian language is named as the primary barrier to getting an education as well as employment. The participants pointed out other obstacles in education related to institutional factors such as less qualified teachers at schools, low quality of books etc.

Although the attitudes of the participants towards the Georgian language is positive (most of the respondents would like their children to get General and Higher Education in the Georgian language) the level of proficiency achieved in secondary schools is not sufficient for equal opportunities and competition on higher levels.

Despite the positive progress in this area (several measures are worked out by the government to reinforce the state language teaching), knowledge of Georgian language remains as the most problematic factor for integration of Azeri population.

Although the research is limited to one minority group in Georgia, it provides a basis for formulating some elements of evidence-based educational policy for the Ethnic Minorities.

Keywords: access to education, barriers to education.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL MODELS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural language teaching (ICLT) is becoming well established and has gained wider recognition in education systems in many parts of the world. As a result, the ultimate goal of foreign language (FL) education is being shifted from communicative competence (CC) to intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The newly launched English Teaching Guideline for Tertiary Education in China has established ICC as one of the three goals of English teaching. However, most of the existing models of ICC were built on western ideologies and thus have failed to function well in Chinese FL teaching contexts. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the need to explore and expand the dynamics of ICC according to Chinese perceptions. The present study aims to construct both a theoretical and a practical model of ICC development applicable to the language teaching and learning context in China. The theoretical model, categorized as both componential and dialogical, focuses on what to teach about ICC. It manifests three macro-dimensions, their specific subcomponents, and the interrelationships between the dimensions. It also highlights the role of the identities of interlocutors in the process of intercultural communication. The practical model, categorized as a process model, focuses on the procedures and methods of ICC development in FL classrooms. It contains three layers: the layer of ICC components, the layer of teaching process, and the layer of teaching methods. These two models function simultaneously to guide ICC development in FL education, aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice of ICLT. The former provides a theoretical foundation for the latter, while the latter is the transformation mechanism of the former. A preliminary study confirms that the two models are effective in developing students' ICC in FL classes in China.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence (ICC), communicative competence (CC), intercultural communicative language teaching

COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND INDEPENDENT SELF-CONSTRUAL

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, what is individualism, collectivism and self-construal will be discussed in the first part. Also, students' cultural backgrounds and meets, as well as how these factors shape the cultural learning will be explored. Then, the knowledge about self-concepts and communication behaviours will be demonstrated. On the whole, this essay mainly focuses on how the independent self-construal functions within individuals with a collectivistic background by means of field research. In addition, the process of language learning is also a process of culture learning, which imposes conscious and subconscious impact on the formation of individual's self-construal.

INVOLVEMENT, FLOW EXPERIENCE AND REVISIT INTENTION IN DAJIA MAZU PILGRIMAGE

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— This study identified the hypothesised relationships amongst involvement, flow experience, and revisit intention in religious tourism. A face-to-face questionnaire survey was administered during the annual Dajia Mazu Pilgrimage Festival, a 9-day, 8-night pilgrimage walk of up to 12 hr per day, with a parade route across 4 coastal cities in Central Taiwan. The results revealed significant positive relationships between involvement and flow experience, as well as between flow experience and revisit intention. Structural equation modelling verified that flow experience fully mediated the effects of involvement on revisit intention. Moreover, this study suggested that flow experience may be an accurate predictor of revisit intention, particularly regarding religious tourism.

Keywords— Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Religious Tourism, Structural Equation Modelling, UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

Religions impart hope to people, and play a crucial role in politics, the economy, and all aspects of life. People demonstrate their religious devotion through pilgrimages to religious sites, including temples and churches (Henderson, 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Jokela, 2014). Amongst the many religions in Taiwan, Mazu, the Taoist goddess, is one of the most popular deities, with more than 500 temples enshrining her throughout Taiwan (Bureau of Cultural Heritage ROC, 2014; Wikipedia, 2014).

The Dajia Mazu Pilgrimage Festival has become one of the most crucial religious festivals, having been held every lunar March since the Qing Dynasty. Hundreds of thousands of tourists attend the annual festival for 9 days and 8 nights. Participants trek over 300 km, carrying a statue of Mazu, representing the largest Chinese religious pilgrimage worldwide (Yao, 2010; Dajai Chen Lan Temple Website, 2014).

Many Taiwanese people attend temple worship and pray for peace and blessings, in both urban and rural areas (Chang & Chu, 2012). Few studies have indicated that a high level of involvement in leisure or tourism enhances people's flow experience (Cheng, Hung, & Chen, 2016). Questions remain as to whether tourist involvement is an accurate predictor of flow experience in pilgrimage festivals.

Favourable revisit intentions frequently represent customer conative loyalty. Some studies have indicated that involvement can influence revisit intention in tourism (Wang & Wu, 2011; Shen, Guo, & Wu, 2014). Besides, previous researchers have focused on flow experience and behavioural intention in on-line game, internet shopping or social network studies (Lee & Hong, 2006; Chen, Tsai, Laio, & Chen, 2012; Chang, 2013). Few researchers have examined that flow experience and revisit intention are

positively related in tourism. This study focused on the relationships amongst involvement, flow experience, and revisit intention in pilgrimage.

METHNOLOGY

I. Instrumentation

1.1. Involvement

The involvement measurement was based on Kyle, Graefe, Manning, and Bacon (2004). Fifteen items, including statements such as “Mazu pilgrimage is important to me”, “I enjoy discussing Mazu pilgrimage with my friends” and “Mazu pilgrimage says a lot about who I am”, were listed and visitors were asked to indicate their levels of agreement, from “strongly disagree (1)” to “strongly agree (5)”.

1.2. Flow Experience

The participants also completed a self-reported 21-item questionnaire developed by Jackson and Marsh (1996) and Csikszentmihalyi (2008), including statements such as “I could control what I am doing”, “I know what I want to achieve” and “I enjoy the experience of pilgrimage”, were listed and visitors were asked to indicate their levels of agreement, from “*strongly disagree* (1)” to “*strongly agree* (5)”.

1.3. Revisit Intention

Respondents were required to indicate whether they were willing to participate similar activities in Yingge in the future (Phillips, Wolfe, Hodur, & Leistriz, 2013). The respondents were asked to rate the level of their agreement to a range of statements, from “*strongly disagree* (1)” to “*strongly agree* (5)”.

1.4. Demographics and Travel Characteristics

The usual demographic variables, such as age, gender, and marital status, were included in the survey to identify explanatory variables and to compare the results with those of other studies. The variables of travel characteristics were selected with reference to other relevant studies of pilgrimage.

II. The Sample

This investigation was conducted during the Dajia Mazu Pilgrimage Festival in Taiwan. The Dajia Zhen Lan Temple’s Mazu pilgrimage in lunar March is recognised as the largest religious activity each year. The Mazu pilgrimage religious event was also recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a global cultural heritage of humanity in 2009 (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). The pilgrimage commences on 6 April at 23:00, and lasts 9 days and 8 nights, involving a walk of up to 12 hr per day, with a parade route across four coastal cities in Central Taiwan. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims join the tour from Dajia Zhen Lan Temple, passing through 21 towns and more than 80 temples, before returning to Dajia. The pilgrims travel more than 312.5 km on foot or by various types of transportation.

III. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The applied statistics included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and factor analysis. AMOS 20.0 was used to conduct a two-stage structural equation modelling (SEM) procedure suggested by

Anderson and Gerbing (1988). First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine psychometric properties of the measures. Subsequently, a general SEM technique was used to test the validity of the proposed model and the hypothesis.

RESULTS

I. Involvement of visitors

The involvement of visitors, most of the involvement assessed on the 5-point scale had a mean score higher than 3. To measure tourist involvement, a factor analysis was performed to reveal dimensions that can be indicative of responses, yielding two factors explaining 75.2% of the variance. All of the reliability alphas for the two domains and the overall scale were higher than .90. The CFA was applied to test the validity of the questionnaire. After four items were deleted due to high modification indices, indicating that the validity of involvement was good ($\chi^2 = 168.0$, $df = 46$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00$, $GFI = 0.91$, $CFI = 0.95$, $AGFI = 0.88$, and $RMSEA = 0.07$).

II. Flow experience of visitors

Regarding the spiritual experience of visitors, most of the spiritual experience assessed on the 5-point scale had a mean score higher than 3. A factor analysis was also performed to reveal the dimensions that might be indicative of the responses. The results showed three factors explaining 70.7% of the variance. The reliability alpha for the scale and two domains were higher than .91, indicating that the criteria were met (Nunnally, 1978). The CFA results indicated that the validity of the flow experience scale was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 270.1$, $df = 78$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $GFI = 0.90$, $CFI = 0.95$, $AGFI = 0.82$, and $RMSEA = 0.07$).

III. The relationships amongst involvement, flow experience and revisit intention

The resulting data were analysed using AMOS software to conduct the structural equation modeling analysis. The multiple indices of model fit, including the chi-square statistic, the comparative fit index (CFI), Bollen's incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), were examined as recommended by a number of researchers (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Doll, Xia, & Torkzadeh, 1994; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). According to the analysis of results, all the indices of overall fits were acceptable ($\chi^2 = 1028.6$, $df = 361$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00$, $CFI = .91$, $IFI = .91$, $TLI = .91$, $GFI = .85$, $AGFI = .80$, and $RMSEA = .07$).

The results reveal significant parameters for the path between involvement and flow experience ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$). However, there was no significant relationship between involvement and revisit intention ($\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$). This study also reveal significant parameters for the path between flow experience and revisit intention ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$).

CONCLUSION

The results indicated that involvement and flow experience have a significant positive relationship. This finding is similar to those of Cheng et al. (2016) and Csikszentmihalyi (1975). This study also found

positive correlations in the relationship between flow experience and behavioural intentions. The correlation result corresponds with those obtained by Lee and Hong (2006), Chen et al. (2012) and Chang (2013).

This study found no relationship between involvement and revisit intention in pilgrimage. This finding from respondent observations may explain the result. Each city and county has a regional Mazu temple and local religious activities in Taiwan, and many Mazu sects exist in Taoism. In this study, visitors wore clothes characteristic of their local Mazu temple. Although numerous visitors were highly involved in Mazu beliefs and the Mazu Pilgrimage Festival, they were attracted to the local Mazu temple that was nearest their residence. Therefore, self-expression may not affect tourist willingness to revisit.

This study surveyed the flow experience of tourists attending the Mazu Pilgrimage Festival shortly after they had completed their visits. Thus, whether the strong experience perceived during pilgrimage is lasting requires further research. Although various types of religion exist, the survey used in the present study was limited to the Mazu Pilgrimage in Taiwan. We suggest that future studies examine the role of flow experience in tourist involvement and construct a suitable experience and behaviour model for pilgrimage.

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SME BRANDING AND VALUE ADDED ACTIVITY, THE STUDY OF THAI FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Branding is a well-known concept widely implemented by large organization. As small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and large organizations have many differences, the branding theory is not totally adaptable for SMEs. In order to investigate how the branding process and strategies happened in SMEs, in-depth interviews and related documents were used to evaluate three Thai SMEs in the food and beverage industry that used to be OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) or used to produce product without brand. Result showed that entrepreneurship has significant effect on brand development. The use of secondary association including country-of-origin, and sale channel can support brand image. However, it may project different image in different market or different country. Moreover, having many brands or having variety of product is a brand strategy that can help reduce cost of production and make it easier to match products to customer needs. SMEs should stay abreast customer insight via the implementation of market research or evaluation. Information from networking can help SMEs better understand the current trends. The study found that there were more communication through middle person such as agent or distributor, and the minimal communication to end user took place in the department store or product exhibition. However, this study is not conclusive and further studies on more variety of SMEs are needed. Nonetheless, this study contributed insight of brand building process and strategy that were used in OEMs case study as a guideline for future SMEs who want to develop their existing products and build the brands.

Keywords: Small to medium-sized enterprise (SMEs), brand building, brand strategy

INTRODUCTION

Branding has become a well-known word and many corporations around the world are competing to build good image and good recognition for their brands. While large corporations know the importance of brands and do invest on building the value of their brands through activities such as advertising and marketing events, the situation is different for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Even though there are many branding strategies introduced, limitation of resources may make it difficult for SMEs to implement the same strategies.

The main objective of this paper is to develop SME branding understanding and explore insight of real brand building and brand strategy. Thai SMEs in food and beverage production section were used as case studies. In Thailand, many SMEs in production section are family-run business or OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers). However, Thai SMEs are losing price competitiveness due to raise in production costs. In order to increase their profit by adding value to their products, branding knowledge is important. As there are limited number of researches regarding SME branding, in-depth interviews were conducted in person in Thailand to explore insights and investigate brand building process and branding and value-added strategies that appropriate to SMEs.

1.1 Differences between large corporations and SMEs brand building and brand management

Other than size, there are many factors that effect to differences in branding concept and practices between SMEs and large corporations. Beginning from foundation of the business, SMEs normally it starts from a person or a few members while in larger corporations there are group of people, board of management or shareholders. These have effect on the way corporations make a decision (Koehn, 2001; Krake, 2005).

Moreover, due to limitation of business assets such as time, financial and knowledge, SMEs may consider that daily routine is more crucial than attempting to build the brand for long term vision. This becomes one of the brand barriers for SMEs (Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

In large corporations, especially multinational companies (MNCs), one corporation often manages more than one brand. They implement brand portfolio strategy (Aaker, 2004) by considering relationship between all of the brands that they have. On the other hand, it is suggested to SME that they should hold single or few brand (Krake, 2005).

In order to understand customer need, large corporations find customer needs by doing market research. On the other hand, SMEs is not based on consumers but based on the entrepreneur's vision (Morgan, 1999; Rode and Vallaster, 2005).

After implementing branding or marketing strategy, it is also recommended that the firms should do monitoring activity to evaluate branding performance. However, SMEs do not use clear and well systematic financial evaluation. This may cause difficulty for SME to evaluate brand performance.

1.2 SMEs in Thailand

In Thailand, SMEs were approximately 96.7 percent of all enterprises and play an important role in labor market. However, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) from SMEs in Thailand was only 37 percent (Asia SME Finance Monitor 2014), less than to Indonesia and Korea. Thai manufacturers used to be well-known for competitive OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer). But the recent situation is different as a raise in cost of production including minimum wage affected Thai's cost competitiveness.

Focusing only on production sector, it contributed to 32.9 percent of Thai GDP in 2013, which 66.3 percent came from large Enterprise's GDP and 33.7 percent came from SME's GDP (SMEs White Paper, 2014). The most important production sector business was food and beverage. It accounted for 17.2 of total GDP in production section. It is considered important business for SMEs as it counted for 17 percent of total GDP generated by SME in production section (SMEs White Paper, 2014). However, according to Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP), growth rate of SMEs in production is decreasing (year 2010 to 2013) as most of SMEs in this sector are producing middle level product- not high value-added- therefore the price is sensitive to cost of production. Support in cost and production management, including value-added knowledge is necessary to Thai SMEs.

Government and government organization arranged programs, competitions, and award supporting SMEs. One of the well-known program run by government is the OTOP (One Tambon¹ One Product) Program. OVOP (One Village One Product), a successful project is a model of this program. However, OTOP faced problems as there was few number of innovative products, and a lot of imitation problems. Many studies mentioned that the packaging design, marketing, and limited sales channels had significant issues that caused problems as well. In food and beverage OTOP, lack of technology or new techniques was found as problems for development (Chlarakul, 2014)

¹ Thai local governmental unit.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Many researches about SME branding have touched upon the concept of branding orientation (eg. Vidic and Vadjal, 2013; Krake, 2005; Wong and Merrilees, 2005), brand identity (Krake, 2005; Wong and Merrilees, 2005) and brand management (Spence and Essoussi, 2010). However, the clear process of how SME developing their brand has not been mentioned in many researches. In addition, even though some studies did put interest on branding as a way to help OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer) add value to their products (eg. Anarnkaporn, 2007), there are no studies that has chosen only the companies that developed from OEMs to OBM (Original Brand Manufacturers) as candidates. The process of branding between OEM and start-up should be different due to the difference in background of the businesses. Therefore, any insight or knowledge regarding process of brand building and strategies to build their brand should be useful to SMEs in OEM stage that want to develop their own brand.

1.1 Brand Building Process

In brand building theory for Large Organizations, many models have been introduced. One of the well-known models is Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE Model) introduced by Keller (2001) using the concept of brand equity. Together with brand building blogs, this model also provides brand building step guideline, starting from brand identity (Who are you?) to brand meaning (What are you?), brand responses (What about you?), and brand relation (what about you and me?). However, these models only provide the concept of building brand by developing brand equity. In SME, it is difficult to evaluate brand equity as there are informal systems and no clear criteria (Berthon *et al.*, 2008). Additional sequence of brand building guideline for B2B Brand Management (Kotler and Pfoertsch, 2006) will be used as it provides broader ideas and not focusing only on brand equity building stage. The sequence divided into five stages, Brand Planning, Brand Analysis, Brand Strategy, Brand Building, and Brand Audit. Any modification to this guideline will be made after the analysis.

Figure 1. Sequence of the brand building processes adopted from Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006)



Brand Planning is the stage that the firm sets their framework or vision. Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) mentioned that most of companies ignored this stage and could not build their brand effectively.

Brand Analysis is the stage that the firm considers external and internal factors. It is recommended to conduct the market research to understand customer needs. The 3C model from Ohmae (1989) - analyzing Company, Competitors, and Consumers - can be used for analysis.

Brand Strategy is including company decision and strategy regarding brand elements, brand marketing programs, and development including brand portfolio and brand extension. More details about brand strategy will be discussed in next section.

Brand Building is the stage of brand building by implementing brand strategy. From the brand strategy implementation, how the company has built the brand can be tracked using the guideline from CBBE-Model (Keller, 2001).

Brand Audit is the stage of monitoring and controlling the brand and brand activity. This stage involves the evaluation of brand in portfolio, to see the relation and correlation of each other. It is recommended

that company should implement external investigation such as questionnaires or other customer research (Kotler and Pfoertsch, 2006).

1.2 Brand Strategy

For a broader understanding, this paper will categorize brand strategy into three dimensions using by Tanaka (2012) to analyze brand strategy. Tanaka (2012) argues that company can add value to their brand through three strategies; management strategy, marketing strategy, and communication strategy.

Management strategy is about how company can use their management system- including quality and production management- or create innovation to add value to the brand (Tanaka, 2012). Regarding system or structure of a brand, brand portfolio or brand architecture, including brand extension and sub branding, were discussed in several studies (eg. Aaker, 2004; Aaker and Keller, 1990).

Marketing strategy is the marketing activity that adds value to brand (Tanaka, 2012). There are studies found that SMEs have difficulty in marketing (eg. Huang and Brown, 1999). Rather than relying on specialists, SMEs are likely to rely on entrepreneurship. Under limited resources, marketing in SMEs is adapted to their situation and owner's judgment (Carson and Gilmore, 2000).

Communication strategy is also an important part of branding. Even if a company has implemented good management and good marketing strategies to build brand value, brand will not be built effectively unless the company can communicate their brand identity- for example communicate 'The Ultimate Driving Machine' concept in BMW- to customers (Tanaka, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

Since there are limited number of the study regarding SME branding, qualitative method was chosen. In-depth interview method was chosen in order to get the first hand information. Interviews were conducted in Thailand. Food and Beverage industry was selected as the study field since this sector plays an important role in all SME sectors in Thailand and has competitive advantage in domestic and overseas (OSMEP, 2014)

SMEs were interviewed as case studies under four conditions. First, they must be small or medium sized Enterprise according to Ministry of industry (Thailand)'s definition. Second, they must be in production section. Third, they had transfer or during the transition from OEM to OBM. If their business could not fit the OEM or OBM definition, they must improve or develop their brands from the family-owned or traditional business that have no brands or no value-added activities. Fourth, they must be in food or beverage industry.

Three SMEs were interviewed via the recommendation of Foundation for Thai Entrepreneurship (FED). The interviews were semi-constructed, open-ended, in-depth interviews and conducted in person in Thailand. The main research question was to investigate branding and value-added strategies that are appropriate to SMEs. The set of questions included are; background of the business, brand development process, resources allocation, internal management, external cooperation, branding strategy, brand building evaluation, challenges and barriers, and company's objectives for the future.

Besides interview in person, company's websites, social network channels and related documents such as magazine and newspaper's articles were accessed to understand big picture of company and to set company's specific questions. All of the interviews were conducted at candidate's factories and one company allowed for a production line observation. After the interview, past financial statements provided

by governmental website, department store observation and other document such as company's brochures were used to validate the data.

After collected, data was analyzed and divided into brand building process and brand strategy. The sequence of brand building introduced by Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006, p.160) for B2B Brand management was used as a framework to understand the process of brand building. Moreover, brand strategies were categorized into management strategy, marketing strategy and communication strategy following the framework introduced by Tanaka (2012) to analyze case studies.

ANALYSIS

4.1 SME Branding Process

Brand Planning or Brand essences had developed during the OEM period. Even they could not successfully build their own brand from the starting point, being OEM helped them in developing knowledge and raising their ability as Bangkok Pattana winery manager stated that they developed their standard during the OEM period.

Table 2. Profile of companies

(Currency: THB)

Company	Product	Number of employees	Brands	Registered date/ capital	Size	Revenues (average per month)	Net Profit (%)
Bangkok Pattana Winery	Wine and carbonated drinks	20 (10 officers)	Fizzy, Zpark, Zearch, etc.	1997/ 3,000,000	Small	2,000,000 to 2,500,000	N/A
Kanommaeying	Cashew nuts cookies	10 (no officer)	Kanommaeying	2008/ 1,000,000	Small	500,000	25%
Thai Rich Food Group	Thai Frozen dessert	50 (8 officers)	Thai Rich	2005/ 5,000,000	Small	N/A	N/A

Table 3. Details of interviews and interviewees

Company	Candidate position	Working period (year)	Interviewed date	Interview condition	Duration (minutes)
Bangkok Pattana Winery	Production manager/ marketing (2 persons)	13/3	Mar 16, 2016	Office visit	131
Kanommaeying	Owner	8	Mar 21, 2016	Office and Production visit	133
Thai Rich Food Group	Owner	11	Mar 18, 2016	Office and	86

During *Brand Analysis* stage, the firms did not implement any market research. All of the case studies considered about their product strength and comparing themselves to competitors by observing at sales channel such as department store. There were little information mentioned about customer demand site. In

addition, market insight was gained through real implementation as mentioned by Thai winery and Kanommaeying.

“At that time we did not think so much. We got a chance to attend event (in overseas ASEAN countries supported by government organizations) so we attended and tried to sell our products. We tried (new market) to see if they like our products or not. We had with us 100-200 boxes and it turned out that our products were so well sold that we could not have a sit.” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016)

In *Brand Building* process, brand building model or CBBE model is also applicable to SMEs. Even though it was difficult to fulfil all of the brand building block as the customers' data was not collected in this research, CBBE model showed the difference between successful branding and unsuccessful branding. The successful branding were able to fulfil all of the brand equity building step introduced by this CBBE model. Unsuccessful branding was not able to fulfil or achieve all of the steps.

There is no *Brand Audit* in case studies. All of the case studies did not use any tools to evaluate their brand. Only some feedback were received and the companies used it to improve their products.

“Mostly we receive feedback from distributors. They received feedback from supply chain such as small retailers who directly received comments from consumers” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

4.2 SME Brand Strategy

▪ *Management strategy*

Brand portfolio is a useful strategy in SMEs. Keller (2003) argues in his guideline to SMEs that it is important to “concentrate on building one or two strong brands.” However, Bangkok Pattana Winery argues that having different kinds of product helped them to meet customer's demands. This also supports Berthon et al. (2008) argues that “Brand portfolio and hierarchy make sense.” In addition, the concept of branded house (Aaker, 1984) was not applicable to their firm.

“Mostly customer do not know that all of these products are ours. We did not have a famous brand and then tried to expand from it. We have many brands. Our corporate name also ‘winery’. So we think that maybe it is better for us that customers do not know so customers will think that there is product variety” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

Concept of brand extension also existed in Thai Rich as they have developed many variety of tastes for their product. This supports Glimore et al's (1999) finding that “small firms add value by offering a wider range of products.” While in Kanommaeying, the firm knows their limitation as they have only one product with few flavor. Therefore, they have developed a variety of packaging including packaging for special occasions. They also included other products when they had product exhibition.

“When we go to an event, we will buy these products (other Thai snacks). We cannot produce all of these because it over capacity. These are small pack for events, 3 packs for 100 baht. When we have different products sometimes people want other products besides cookies too.” (Kanommaeying, 21 March 2016)

Differentiation has both advantage and disadvantage in SMEs. Differentiation in Kanommaeying and Thai Winery had positive effect. For example, besides the unique recipe and quality Kanommaeying was using different sales channel such as product testing at big modern trade which boosted their sales (personal communication, 21 March 2016). Based on market observation the author did during the interview period, no other competitors implemented the same strategy. While in Bangkok Pattana Winery, they mentioned

that adding forty percent of real juice in their product, Fizzy, created a healthy image when being compared to competitors including big corporation in the market (personal communication, 16 March 2016). However, Thai Winery also mentioned about their difficulty of differentiation as their products were too different and too new that customer hesitated to buy.

“It was too new, sometimes it is not good. There was no research, no information. We were very excited when we launched Zpark. This product had wine based and mixed to be cocktail. It became one choice for customer who do not drink alcohol but still want to taste or feel the same. But we faced difficulty when we went to overseas as customers do not know the product. At that time there was also no non-alcohol beer. [...] For domestic, we also got question like why we are selling the product without alcohol.”
(Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016)

Table 4. Comparison of management strategy in three companies

Strategy	Thai Winery	Thai Rich	Kanommaeying
Business Model	OEM/OBM	OEM/OBM	OEM/OBM
Business Practices	Wholesales/ retails	Wholesales/ retails	Wholesales/ retails
Market	Domestic (30%)/ Exporting (70%)	Domestic (90%)/ Exporting (10%)	Domestic
Main customer	Foreigners	Thais	Foreigners/ Working people
Quality-standard	GMP,HACCP	GMP, HACCP	-
Awards	OTOP/Bangkok Brand	N/A	OTOP/NEC/Others
System	Machine-based	Machine-based	Manpower-based
Variety	Multi-brand/product	Frozen sweets/ Dried fruits	Cookies only
Product Development			
- Cooperation with outside organization	With university (Through training)	With university (Through GOs support)	With GOs (Training)
- Frequency	-1-2 products /year	Continuing increase product variety/ or made- to-order (specific frequency not mentioned	During development process (did not have a specific frequency)
- Develop budget	Set development budget	Set development budget	-
Production management- main stock	Bottle	Seasonal fruit	Plastic box

▪ Marketing strategy

Leveraging secondary associations is a useful strategy for SMEs. In all three firms there was a positive image of secondary associations which is country-of-origin to customer response. It led to positive associations in consumers' minds (Aaker, 2009; Keller, 2003). As mentioned by Bangkok Pattana Winery that there was a significant improvement in image of Thai product in ASEAN Market. While in Kanammaeying and Thai Rich also mentioned that their products were well sold to overseas market or foreign customers. This supports Keller (2003) guideline that SME should “Leverage as many secondary associations as possible” and Abimbola's (2001) finding about using halo effect of their country of origin.

However, Thai Winery faced difficulty leveraging the same associations to domestic market.

"When we set the price, we considered about positioning, appearance of packaging. We also considered products in the market. But product in the same category also divided in different classes. Actually for Zearch we intended to position the product at the same level with Bacardi. But customers compared that it is Thai product, and how can we set the same pricing with imported products. It made me felt upset because we let customers tasted our products without seeing our packaging, no one mentioned that we could not compete about the taste. But when we labeled and attached Thai tax label. There was comparison between ours and import products. We could not sell at the same price. We had to decrease the price." (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

Product exhibition or event is a low cost and useful methods for promoting SME products. All of the firms interviewed have extensively used event supported by government organization as the channel to sale, promote their products and communicate to business customer or end customer. It helped Thai winery and Thai Rich met potential distributors and understood overseas market. It also helped Kanommaeying to receive order from department stores.

Table 5. Comparison of marketing strategy in three companies

Strategy	Thai Winery	Thai Rich	Kanommaeying
Product			
- Specialty/ differentiation	Carbonated with more juice portion	Extend sweets storage period	-Cashew nut -aroma scent -oil recipe
- Special product	Up to request	Up to request	-Special package and taste for New year -special size and promotion for exhibition
Price (to market)	Cheaper	More expensive	More expensive
Place			
- Domestic	Modern trade/ tourist spots/ event	Modern trade/ restaurant/ convenience store	Modern trade/ direct order
- Overseas	Agent	Agent	-
Promotion	Depends on countries/ Promotion in exhibition	N/A	10 baht discount (5 times/ year)
Product image (Country-of-origin)			
- Overseas market/ foreign customers	Positive image	Positive image	Positive image
- Domestic Market /Thai customers	No positive image	Neutral	No positive image (to Bangkok people)

■ Communication strategy

When all of the firms were interviewed about customers, all of them mentioned about business customers (B2B or agents) except in Kanommaeying that not intensively had business customers. When they were asked about communication to customers, the communication was rather a single way communication to the end consumers while in business customers it was a two way conversation. Thai Winery stated that they received feedback and information from distributors who received feedback from supply chains. While for end consumers, direct communication was hold during the product exhibitions. Thai Rich also mentioned that they know all of the business customers. While in Kanommaeying, the owner

also received order directly via phone call but they were mostly focusing on selling through department store.

All of the firms mentioned Modern Trade or department store as a way to communicate and raise brand awareness to individual customers. Bangkok Pattana Winery and trying to expand their sales channels and department store channels as many as possible. While Thai Rich was using convenience store chain as one of the sale channels.

“When we start branding it is important to sell in department stores or else people will not know about our product. [...] It is hard to sell through coffee shops, they do not want our product. [...] Department stores for example near Sukhumvit Road, a tourist spot, are selling well. Other Thai department stores cannot sell much, but we are trying to sell as many department stores as possible so that customers will not forget us.” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

Moreover, none of the firms interviewed were actively using Social media as a way to directly communicate to end customers as they had not enough potential or enough people to take care of it. For Thai Rich, they have a plan to focus more on social network and e-commerce in the near future.

“We do not have a person who in charge of admin. When we communicate to customers we do not talk to end user. For overseas, we will hear from distributors. [...] For Social network if we do not focus or creating some trends, it is normal that we will have a small number of Liked. We have this channel just in case the in the future there will be some customers want to find us. But it is a bit difficult because there should be someone talking care of it all the time.” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

Table 6. Comparison of communication strategy in three companies

Strategy	Thai Winery	Thai Rich	Kanommaeying
Brand communication tools			
Via sale channels	Department Store	Department Store	Department Store/ Airport/Product testing at department store
Via other channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-mail - Website - Vinyl Signage - School event - Small portion delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website - School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website (available in Thai only)
How to collect feedback			
From middle person	Regular meeting with agent	Personal connection	-
From end customer	exhibition	exhibition	exhibition
CRM (Customer Relationship Management)			
With middle person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protect market -free booth exhibition 	Personal connection	-
With end customer	-Individual customer response (eg. Response to message via social media, and occasionally providing special product for comments)	Informal communication and informal gathering	-

DISCUSSION

1.3 What is the factor of success in SME Branding

- *Matching between brand meaning and customer demand or customer segmentation*

According to the interviews, Thai Winery mentioned that it was difficult to implement market research before they launched any product. However, the failure case in Kanommaeying attempt to enter seven-eleven and Zpark (from Bangkok Pattana Winery) from the launching period have shown that delivering benefits that customer desire is important. (Berthon et al., 2008). In Kanommaeying case, they've resized the products for seven-eleven but other product attributes remained the same with original products. Attributes such as using high quality cashew nuts and different taste and scent provided a good quality image that customers accepted the higher price and bought the products as gifts for seasonal greeting. However, the position of convenience store and modern trade are different. While customers of original product bought the product from big modern trade or by direct order as a gifts, convenience store do not provide the premium image to the product as same as modern trade. Also Kanommaeying mentioned that their customers are working people who can afford the product, therefore convenience store might not be the channel that match to their product customer segmentation. This supports Lassen et al. (2008) that it is important for SMEs which have a limited resource to focus the right target group. In order to be able to sell in seven-eleven again, Kanommaeying may need to do more than just resized the product to change brand image or brand meaning.

In Thai Winery case, products such as Zpark did not received good response at the beginning even though they surveyed the market to build the new product innovation. In their case, they did not have a huge advantage of pre entry move (Aaker, 2008). While the product was innovative, customer did not have demands to the product. The firm also did not have a budget to educate customers or to create needs in the market. The product received a better response later when customer know more about the product and there were demand caused by a present of non-alcohol beer and 'the drunk not drive' campaign run by government that was extensively implemented in Thailand.

- *Entrepreneurship effect in brand leadership*

In all of the firms interviewed, there were only few number of employees. When they were asked regarding decision making, all of the firms' decision depends heavily on owners. In Thai Winery, there was a management team. They gathered information and made a decision after discussion. In Thai Rich, the decision depended on two owners but there were officers helping with sales and manufacturing. While in Kanommaeying, all of the decision including other work such as sales were depended on the owner only.

Their willingness to improve their sales or their products contributed to SME success. In Thai Winery, it was the management team's vision that they want to find something different to the market. Even though they realized the risk, they had the motivation to develop new product to launch to the market. They were also willing to take a cost for machinery from the starting period as they considered that it is important for their production even it is not a requirement in alcohol beverage industry.

Thai Rich also showed passion to expand their market share. They had a plan to develop e-commerce channel and new product to enter Chinese market. In addition, both Thai Winery and Thai Rich have set annual budgets for product development.

In Kanommaeying, they continued their brand promise (Philip Kotlker and Waldemar Pfoertsch, 2006) The owner continued to serve the customers with the recipe and the quality that the owner believed in regardless that the product had a higher price comparing to the competitors.

The motivation to develop their products and their belief in serving the quality products are relevant to brand leadership by fulfilling customer expectation. This also supports Krake (2005) guidelines regarding consistent in the entrepreneurs policy.

1.4 Limitation and how to overcome

- *Market research*

None of the firm interviewed conducted well-structured market research. However, Bangkok Pattana Winery stated that they used research and information from suppliers to understand the trend. They also communicated to their distributors in order to receive feedback from end users.

“Suppliers helped us a lot. They imported ingredients so they will know new ingredients for supplying to factories. Mostly, they will recommend us. Around New Year they will come and we will discuss about what is new trend in next year, what is possible to do, how the cost is. If we think the price is acceptable, we may try to do. Actually we already have ideas in our minds but we try to see how the trend is, what should be popular” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

- *Marketing activity*

In all firms interviewed, they did not invest a large amount of budget in marketing or advertising activities. Thai Rich mentioned that they did not do any marketing activity except product exhibition. In Thai Winery, they also attended the product exhibition which provides some budget support from government. They stated that it was too expensive if they want to join any exhibition without government support. Kanommaeying also only attended free product exhibition, mainly OTOP product exhibition that is held four times a year. However, the owner mentioned about her concern because there was no guarantee if they could join every time as it based on lucky draw result.

“There are a lot of product exhibitions. But we need to pay and it not worth our money because we do not have other products. If we want to attend those product exhibitions we may need to sell something else such as coffee. But it is exhausted, no one helping.” (Kanommaeying, 21 March 2016).

Besides product exhibitions, all the firms interviewed intensively use department store as their sales channel. All of them mentioned that it was an important channel to make customer see their products. Bangkok Pattana Winery argues that the department store they selected is also related to product image. In addition, they were using shops in resort or vineyard as a sale channel too. It helped building image of richness of real ingredient and freshness. This supports Keller (2003) that company can leverage channel as a secondary brand knowledge.

“We think that department store is a shelf showing our products. No one coming to our factory to see our products. We did not consider entering seven-eleven, Big C, Lotus (Hypermarket) because of our capacity. We considered ourselves, our targeting customers. Our target is to export, so we find shelves that our target customers will see. The mall, Paragon and department store in Sukhumvit area (Bangkok business area) have businessman who fly from country to country. They will definitely walk through those area so we go for those department store” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

In Bangkok Pattana Winery and Thai Rich, distributors are one of their sales channels. Bangkok Pattana Winery sold their products to overseas customers through distributors while in Thai Rich, their sales overseas was not as much as in Bangkok Pattana Winery. In addition, Thai Rich used restaurants as another main sales channels. The owner mentioned that she considered restaurants as the channels that can reach a lot of customers.

- *Purchasing power*

Because they are comparatively small production quantity company compared to large companies, Bangkok Pattana Winery and Kanommaeying mentioned that they faced difficulty buying some material or ingredients. This is correlation to Krake (2005) study which found that purchasing is important problems in SME.

“Energy drink should be in can. We did not have enough budget to buy. Bottle is not cheap but we normally use it for others products. For can, in our country has few quality suppliers. Therefore, everyone want to buy. We are small enterprise. Five hundred thousand can as a minimum order considered too much amount for us. While large companies order millions a day, so it is normal that supplier will choose to supply large companies first.” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

As SME also faced minimum order quantity. Using economic of scope strategy is one of the way to reduce SMEs cost.

“We try to produce many products, it also help us decrease the cost. Decrease raw material that we are having in our stocks. And considering marketing aspect, it increase customer interest because we launched new products again. There are two kind of products, totally new brand or just add new type, for example adding new flavor.” (Bangkok Pattana Winery, 16 March 2016).

- *Imitation problem*

All firms mentioned that it was easy to imitate their products. Bangkok Pattana Winery faced difficulty in keeping their market share due to increasing number of competitors so they needed to keep on developing new products and finding new opportunity. Kanommaeying was the first cookies in the same categories that had heart-shape (personal communication, 21 March 2016). Yet, recently many cookies from different companies were made in heart-shape. While Thai Rich also mentioned that technology was the same in other company. It can be implied that the extent of imitation problem also depends on innovation, technology, or specific knowledge they are using. Bangkok Pattana Winery stated that there was few number of SME that has carbonate plants. Kanommaeying mentioned that the recipe they were using was hard and had a unique scent. While in Thai Rich, owner mentioned that only different in their products to competitors was the taste.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing brand building process in this study, it was found that OEM period effected brand essence and brand identity but the most important factor to SMEs development is entrepreneurship. In SMEs not all of the members are involving in branding decision. Therefore, motivation to develop new product, create something new, decision on brand mission or brand promise came from owner or manager. It is not difficult for SME to assess and analyze self and competitors. However, they have difficulty to analyze their customers. While SME is implementing branding, CBBE model is applicable and suggested to be used. SME should understand end customer more, by trying to fill in ‘brand response’ and ‘brand relationship’ blank in brand building step of CBBE model. SMEs should consider more about how to create brand relationship. In food and beverage industry, imitation is a severe problem. However, by focusing more on brand relationship, creating loyalty, customer should be less sensitive to price and repeatedly purchase the product. It is difficult for SMEs to conduct market research or to get advice from specialists. Networking is very important as SMEs can receive insight or knowledge from suppliers, department store staff, or other business in the same cluster and these information can help SMEs to understand the real trend in market. Also, networking with agent, distributor or middle person is also critical to SMEs performance, as they hardly have direct communication to end customer. Most of the messages are sent via

agent, as a result, there is a risk to company and product image. Even though some scholars argue that SME should target niche market, profit from small number of customers may not enough for business sustainability. This study found that, different from prior advices, brand extension and brand portfolio are useful strategy for SMEs. By producing a variety of products based on economic of scope, it can help reduce the cost (material cost and storage cost) and increase the chance to provide products that match to customer need. Unlike large organizations that can mass produce, SMEs need to be adaptable to customer needs and find any possible sale opportunity. Finding secondary association for their product is one of the low cost but effective strategy. In correlation to prior study, secondary association such as country-of-origin can provide positive affect to brand image. However, company may need to consider different association among different market, as it does not always provide the same positive image in every country. Sale channels can be used as secondary association too. Putting the products as high-end, foreigner oriented modern trade can help positioning the brand as a premium product while putting products at souvenir shop in the vineyard or resort provides freshness image to the product that made of fruit. Even awards and standard can be associated to quality image, in this study awards were not mentioned as an important association. Therefore how effective using awards as an association also depends on awards' reputation. In addition, it is suggested that government should continue promoting Thai products by supporting SMEs to attend product exhibition. Moreover, government should focus more on building awards' reputation, not only national level but also international level, so that it will be easy for SMEs to leverage and create positive image in global market.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research was conducted by using the case study from previous OEM companies only. Communication strategy, such as heavily rely on passing information through agent, may be OEMs characteristic. However, it could not be concluded in this research as this paper did not compare between OEM and start-up (which owns the brand). The data from customer side was also not collected in this research. It is suggested for future research to collect such a data as the way to validate information and for further understanding. It was obvious in this research that SMEs are lacking of ability to deeply understand their customer. Therefore, data from customer side may provide more customer insight that SMEs should take into consideration.

There was also little information about SMEs that transitioned from OEM to OBM. It was difficult to gain access to SME that match all of criteria in this study. As a result, there was no variety of size of the companies in this study. This can be considered as Thai SME characteristic, as there is very few number of medium enterprises existing in Thailand. The findings that SME using internal marketing (communicate with business or agent) rather than directly contact to customer might be the effect of the size of the firms. Therefore, comparison between medium sized and small sized enterprise should provide better understanding to this issue.

Some difficulties caused by lack of knowledge, such as difficulty in developing packaging, were mentioned during the interview. However, further investigation was not conducted in this research. Therefore, it is suggested to investigate through quantitative or qualitative study focusing on these topics.

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