DESTINATION BRAND AND TOURISM BUSINESS BRANDS

IN BINH THUAN PROVINCE, VIETNAM

By

VIEN TRAN TRUC PHAM

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Abstract

The consistency between a destination brand (DB) and tourism business brands (TBBs) has been acknowledged as pivotal in destination brand management (DBM). Recent research suggests that consistency should be a synergy of a DB and TBBs and that consistency could be guaranteed if stakeholders are fully involved through the whole process of the DB creation and development. However, research which goes beyond theoretical suggestions is lacking. To fill the research gap, this thesis seeks to address two related research aims:

(1) To assess the consistency between the DB and TBBs in Binh Thuan province;

(2) To examine the process of DB creation and development in Binh Thuan province, the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this, and the influence of this process on consistency.

In doing so, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the consistency in relation to the nature of DB, the DBM, and the involvement/buy-in of tourism stakeholders.

This thesis, drawing on the literature of DBs and the recent developments in DBM and stakeholders' buy-in, develops a conceptual framework and applies it in Binh Thuan (BT), Vietnam.

The first phase examines the brand-related information projected in marketing materials of BT's DB and 87 TBBs. The consistency between the DB and the TBBs is assessed through the use of content analysis. To seek an explanation for the resulting patterns of consistency, 29 in-depth interviews of business managers who managed the TBBs, and two interviews with destination marketing organisations' (DMOs) representatives were coded into prominent themes using an analytical framework developed by the researcher.

The study found that the consistency between the DB and TBBs varied according to businesses. Among the brand elements, selling points and target markets were the most consistent. However, the most competitive values reflected through slogans varied among TBBs. This study found that the DB is the outcome of a long-term process in which the destination core values play an important role for building the DB identity, underpinning all of the following components of the DB, influencing the integration of TBBs into the DB architecture, and TBBs' consistency with the DB. The study found that if stakeholders are fully involved in the whole process of DB creation and development, their brands are likely to be very consistent with the DB.

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Chapter One: Introducing the study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to address a research gap in destination brand management (DBM): the consistency between a destination brand (DB) and tourism business brands (TBBs). Several aspects related to consistency have attracted research attention (Bregoli, 2012; Cox, Gyrd-Jones & Gardiner, 2014; Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Tasci, 2011). However, there is no study that directly addresses this topic, especially one that goes beyond suggesting theoretical factors that may influence consistency and provide findings resulting from an empirical context and a comprehensive understanding of the consistency through the whole process of a DB's creation and development. By examining the consistency between DB and TBBs through the whole process of a DB's creation and development, this study seeks to address the issue of the consistency based on the idea that it is a synergy, with "the whole being greater than the sum of its [DB] parts" (Tasci, 2011, p. 116).

In order to add new knowledge to this research gap, the two research aims, the conceptual framework, the methodology approaches, the two associated research methods, and the two phases of the research have been designed and addressed. This research is based on a case study of the DB and 87 TBBs in Binh Thuan (BT), Vietnam. This thesis firstly assesses the consistency among brand elements and the integration of 87 TBBs with BT's DB. Second, this thesis examines the process of BT's DB creation and development and the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this. As a result, the findings of the process of the DB creation and development and the involvement of internal stakeholders in this provide a comprehensive explanation and understanding of the consistency between the DB and TBBs. As this study is a first attempt to address issues of consistency, it also outlines some practical implications for future research.

This chapter outlines the research background and explains the importance of the issue of consistency between DB and TBBs. Then the two research aims are presented. A brief overview of BT tourism and its administration is provided, followed by a description of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Research background

Destinations need to deliver a consistently high quality brand. First, a consistent DB allows a destination to draw its stakeholders' support and to gain internal strength, resulting in a strong differentiated proposition within a competitive market (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014). Many leading researchers state that a destination is influenced by its highly fragmented characteristics: multiple stakeholders, each stakeholder managing different resources, and often having overlapping responsibilities, and operating at several administrative levels and geographical areas (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Sartori, Mottironi & Corigliano, 2012). In light of this fragmentation, achieving a unity of purpose and commitment by all stakeholders to a common brand and branding strategy (Bregoli, 2012; Cox et al., 2014; Hankinson, 2004) enforces positive links among local resources and products that can increase destinations' appeal for tourists (Sartoni et al., 2012).

Second, DB allows destinations to differentiate themselves and to influence destination tourists' choice and their satisfaction. In particular, a DB allows tourists to organise their knowledge about destination values. The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2009, p. 9) suggested "a destination brand is largely a result of the values the destination projects and the ways this makes visitors feel about the place. Fundamental to a destination are the stories it tells about itself to its main audiences. These bring the destination alive. They must be based on fact, not invented". Moreover, choice of holiday destination is a significant lifestyle and status indicator for today's destination tourists because a DB is not only providing positive destination values and the destination's uniqueness, but also creating emotional appeal (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2002; UNWTO, 2009). In particular, Morgan et al. (2002) stated that the choice of holiday destination helps define the identity of the traveller and, in an increasingly homogenous world, sets the traveller apart from other tourists. Similarly, in the introduction of the UNWTO's (2009) handbook on tourism destination branding, Anholt (2009) stated that countries' brands go before them like calling cards that open doors, create trust and respect, and raise the expectation of quality, competence, and integrity.

For these reasons, delivering consistent messages about a destination through a DB and TBBs is acknowledged as playing "pivotal", "crucial" roles in a DB's success, but this is "by no means [an] easy" task for DBM (Cox et al., 2014; Morgan et al., 2002; Tasci, 2011). This is because the existing literature of DB and branding has focused mostly on how brand images and messages are formulated and perceived by tourists (Sartori et al., 2012; Tasci, 2011) while other aspects such as values, benefits, and other elements that characterise the

personality of a brand "are only the small tip of the iceberg" (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014) and have received little attention from researchers. Moreover, the involvement of stakeholders working within the destination to provide tourists with a seamless experience has so far received little research attention (Bregoli, 2012) while delivering a consistent brand experience for visitors involves a number of stakeholders (Bregoli, 2012; Cox et al., 2014; Hankinson, 2007; Sartori et al., 2012).

In practice, delivering consistent messages about a destination across multiple brand-touch points is also challenging (Cox et al., 2014). Many authors stated that the issues of the consistency depend on the destination and require empirical research because "the ways in which each destination seeks to tackle such issues will depend on local circumstances, finances and resources; there will always be local solutions to global challenges" (Morgan et al., 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, "a tourism destination can be defined in multiple layers of geographical entities, and these range from small-scale, public or private, operational tourism businesses such as hotels, restaurants, resorts" (Tasci, 2011, p. 115). Last but not least, a tourism DB also depends on how it is managed and how internal stakeholders are involved in the consistency (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Sartori et al., 2012).

In sum, the issue of the consistency has been acknowledged as challenging but rewarding in the existing literature. A number of studies address the call for more research in relation to several aspects of the consistency: the nature of DB building-elements (Lee, Cai, & O'Leary, 2006; Nelson, 2014), internal brand management and stakeholders' coordination (Cox et al., 2014; Mazurek, 2014; Sartori et al., 2012; UNWTO, 2009). However, a comprehensive understanding of the consistency throughout the process of DB creation and development is still unknown, in part because a DB is already a complex matter to apply and manage but also because a DB and several aspects of DBM remain in the dark and are in need of attention by researchers.

1.3 Research aims

This thesis seeks to fill a research gap on DBM by providing a greater understanding of the issues related to the consistency between DB and TBBs. The literature review in Chapter Two examines in depth the existing literature related to consistency. In the literature, several issues related to consistency have been identified; however, these studies are limited to examining selected aspects of the internal brand management or stakeholders' involvement with the DB and to outlining factors that may influence consistency. What is lacking is a comprehensive

understanding of consistency through the whole process of a DB creation and development including the nature of the DB, how a DB is managed, and how internal stakeholders are involved in the consistency.

Therefore, this thesis seeks to address two related research aims:

(1) To assess the consistency between the DB and TBBs in Binh Thuan province;

(2) To examine the process of DB creation and development in Binh Thuan province, the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this, and the influence of this process on consistency.

1.4 Research context

To address the research gap, a conceptual framework of the DB creation and development, as presented in Chapter Two – drawn from the literature on DBs, internal DBM, and the involvement of tourism stakeholders – is proposed and applied to the case of BT, Vietnam. The researcher chose Vietnam because it is her home country and doing the research related to the home country is her interest and encouraged by her scholarship holders – New Zealand-ASEAN scholarship awards. Moreover, this research addresses calls for more marketing-related research about Vietnam, and regions and provinces in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2014). Thirdly, this research examines the process of a DB creation and development in the context of Vietnam, a transitional economy. As a result, this research enriches DB literature, which is mostly conducted in and about DBs of developed countries, by providing the creation and development of a DB in a transitional economy context.

BT was chosen because it has achieved much in terms of tourism development and tourist destination management. BT tourism has been developed recently since 1995 so it allows the process of DB creation and development to be traced. As one of the six largest coastal destinations in Vietnam, the BT context provides practical implications for other destinations in Vietnam in terms of DB development and management.

Moreover, the findings of this study, as discussed in sections 6.2.2 and 6.3.2, were influenced by the research context. In particular, the BT's DB creation and development is influenced by the original situation of the BT tourism industry and the bottom-up brand management. It is thus necessary to introduce the BT tourism industry and administration.

1.4.1 The BT tourism industry.

BT is a famous coastal destination, located in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam, 200km away from Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City – the biggest economic zone of Vietnam (Binh Thuan Provincial Department of Statistic, 2010). BT has Phan Thiet as the capital city, (Figure 1.1). BT province had been recognised as a potential tourist destination since 1995. BT was the place where the solar eclipse of 24 October, 1995 could be most clearly watched. Thanks to this phenomenon, many visitors, including a number of tourism investors, visited the province, discovered the potential of the coastal province, and developed it into the famous destination it is today, with 227 hotels and resorts (Binh Thuan Provincial Department of Statistic, 2010). As published on the BT tourism promotion centre website, BT gained 6 billion VND (approximately 285 million USD from tourism) in 2014. In addition, the number of tourists who visited BT increased around 10.4% annually in the period of 2011-2014.

1.4.2 The BT tourism administration.

The BT tourism industry is managed by the provincial department of BT culture, sports, and tourism (www.svhttdl.binhthuan.gov.vn). In terms of BT destination marketing and promotion, the BT Tourism Promotion Centre (BTPC) is mainly responsible for the provincial tourism promotion activities (www.dulichbinhthuan.com.vn in Vietnamese and www.muinetourism.vn English versions). BT province is also among a few provinces which has its own tourism association. The BT Tourism Association (BTA) is a legal organisation, a voluntary group of tourism businesses within the province, operating for tourism businesses' profits. Its purpose is to foster corporation among businesses, and improve the quality of the BT tourism products and services (BTA, 2005). The BTA operates under the management of the provincial department of culture, sports and tourism and the provincial authorities.

In terms of BT tourism DB, DB building was determined as one of the four most important tasks for the BTA, according to the BTA's operation programmes in the periods 2005-2009 and 2009-2013. In 2010, the provincial authorities also recommended that BT's DB building and improvement was one of their nine most important tasks, according to the provincial policies 06-TU/NQ for the period 2011-2015 (Binh Thuan Provincial Department of Statistic, 2010).

Figure 1.1. BT province, Vietnam

Source: https://www.google.com/map
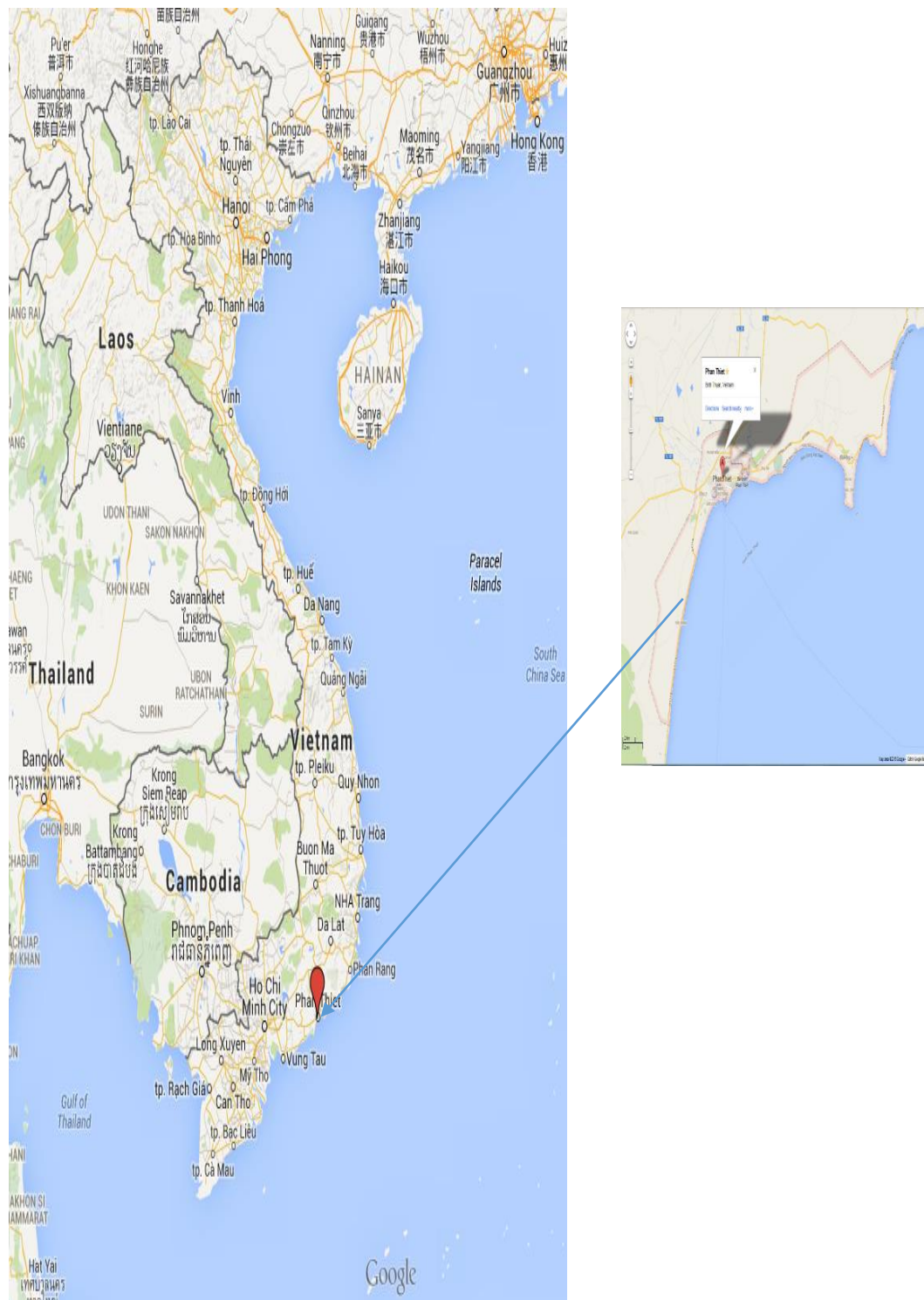
1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter One has presented an introduction to the thesis, a brief overview of the research background, and identified the research gap by outlining the relevance of the topic. It has established two research aims which need to be addressed and to contribute to a better understanding of the DB and DBM literature. It has also provided a brief introduction of the research context, BT tourism industry and tourism administration. Finally, the chapter presents the overall structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents the literature review. To start, existing definitions of DB are reviewed and a critique of common features of DBs is then provided. The chapter then reviews relevant literature examining DB in its building and/or developing stages, considers what components form a DB, and arranges the components' occurrence according to the brand creation and development process. To consider the consistency of DB regarding DB internal management and stakeholders' involvement, the chapter reviews the literature of DBM and internal brand strength and then provides an explanation of why internal stakeholders (DMOs and tourism businesses) should be responsible for the consistency. The literature reviewed is then brought together, integrated into a conceptual framework which functions as a guideline for, and foundation of, the research methodology.

Chapter Three presents the methodology used to address the two research aims. First, the research methodology approach for the two phases of the study is outlined. A flow diagram of the methodology arranges the methodological approaches used in each phase and shows how the two specific phases are linked to each other. Each phase has its own set of steps for data collection and analysis. The first phase – employing content analysis – assesses the consistency between the DB and TBBs. The second phase – employing in-depth interviews of those business managers who manage TBBs analysed in the first phase – seeks an explanation for the consistency in the process of the DB creation and development and the involvement of internal stakeholders in this. The second phase sample is of those business managers who manage TBBs analysed in the first phase. Finally, a discussion about strengths and limitations of this study is provided.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the consistency between DB and TBBs. The findings are presented based on the analytical framework of consistency. The findings of the DB content analysis are presented first, followed by the findings of groups of TBBs in comparison with the findings about the DB. A conclusion summarising how TBBs within the destination are consistent with the DB is presented.

Chapter Five presents the findings about the process of the DB creation and development. The findings are presented according to the analytical framework proposed for the process presented in Chapter Three. The chapter first describes the process of the DB creation and development based on the data emerging from the DMOs' representative interviews. The chapter then presents the findings of how each group of TBBs shares understanding of the destination and DB, how each TBB is created, and what their involvement in the DB. The findings of each group's involvement in the DB are based on the data from the business managers' interviews.

Chapter Six presents a discussion, conclusion, and implications for future research. First, the chapter presents an explanation for the patterns of consistency presented in Chapter Four regarding the DB, the DMOs' brand management, and the involvement of tourism businesses in the process. Chapter Six then presents a reflection on the findings from the BT's DB case study and the existing literature of the nature of a DB, DBM, and the involvement of internal stakeholders. Finally, a conclusion and practical implications for future research in the relevant topics are provided.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One outlined the research gap in DBM: the consistency between DB and TBBs within the destination. Chapter One also identified the pivotal role of a consistent DB in the success of a DB and DBM. However, what is lacking is a comprehensive understanding of consistency throughout the process of DB creation and development, the involvement of internal stakeholders in the process, and the influence of the process on consistency. This thesis draws on existing literature on DBs and recent theory development on the internal DBM and stakeholders' buy-in to study the consistency of DBs. The literature review's purposes are to bring together the varied, but relevant, information to provide the basis for a conceptual framework which functions as a guideline for, and foundation of, the research methodology that addresses the research aims.

Thus, this chapter is structured as follows: examination of the existing definitions of DBs and a critique of common features of DBs (section 2.2), and presentation and discussion of research on DB creation and/or development processes (section 2.3), the internal brand management of the brand coordinators and the stakeholders' buy-in (section 2.4), and a conceptual framework (section 2.5).

2.2 Definitions of DB

In this section, commonly accepted DB features are discussed in chronological order to show how the understanding of a DB has advanced.

Over more than two decades, destination branding has received much research attention while the DB itself has received little attention (Gnoth, 2007; Sartori et al., 2012). Thus, a commonly accepted definition of a DB has still not been achieved. An early definition, cited in many DB studies, is that by Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, p. 103):

> a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both *identifies* and *differentiates* the destination; furthermore, it conveys the *promise* of a memorable travel *experience* that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to *consolidate* and *reinforce* the recollection of pleasurable *memories* of the destination experience. (cited and italics added in Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005, p. 329)

Saraniemi (2011, pp. 248-249) argued "this definition [by Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998] limits a brand as being only a symbol of the place, it clearly infers a brand to be related to differentiation and, in relation to competitors, not an isolated perception as an image might be". Blain et al.'s study (2005) supported Ritchie and Ritchie's (1998) DB concept. The authors also attempted to incorporate the importance of the DB's symbolic content. A DB has the same functions as any product and service brand: to identify and differentiate the destination. More focused on the DB nature, Blain et al. (2005) strongly supported the idea of DB promise being "as important, if not more so, for destinations than it is for other service organizations" (p. 329). The DB promise "extends a degree of comfort to visitors, as they can more fully and accurately anticipate their imminent or upcoming vacation experience" and "as with other service organizations, if the promise cannot be delivered, the visitors [are] dissatisfied" (Blain et al., 2005, p. 329). Commonly, this definition and its citations indicate that a DB should describe the DMOs and tourism services' attempts to together deliver pleasurable memories of the destination experience uniquely associated with the destination. Importantly, the destination experience should be presented clearly in the DB's symbolic contents, functions, and promise.

More focused on the nature and structure of the DB, Gnoth (2007) defined it as:

> a name, sign or symbol representing the core values of the place offered for tourism consumption and operating as a system at a functional, experiential, and symbolic level. It comprehensively captures the place's essential and living values on the cultural, social, natural, and economic dimensions and utilizes it as the destination's capital to create a surplus. (p. 348)

Supporting the symbolic "representationality" and "functionality" (Caldwell & Freire, 2004) of a DB, Gnoth's definition also expressed the nature of DB as the place's core values and the DB architecture with three levels: functional, experiential, and symbolic. These two components help differentiate a DB from other product and service brands. Interestingly, Gnoth's definition indicates that the destination's core values are important to build the DB's nature and incorporate the associations between a DB and service brands at the destination.

To guide DB and branding practices, the UNWTO (2009) defined a DB as a set of efforts: as "**competitive identity**", which represents "the **core essence and enduring characteristics** of a destination", representing "a **dynamic interaction** between the destination's core assets and the way in which potential visitors perceived them" and "a DB generally cannot be manufactured like a consumer product brand, it exists in the way in which core assets

(destination landscape, people, culture and history) are perceived by potential visitors and the **emotional value** they attach to experiencing them" (2009, p. xvii).

In line with the two former definitions, the UNWTO's definition indicates that a DB is what makes a destination distinctive and memorable and differentiates it from all others. Importantly, a destination can change its moods and the way in which it presents itself to different market segments. But its core brand characteristics rooted in destination core assets are essentially always the same. The UNWTO's definition also indicates that a DB exists in the eyes of visitors and depends on how the visitors perceive destination core assets.

In summary, there are four commonly accepted features of a DB. First, a DB is more than a set of symbolic contents; it is described through tangible aspects such as brand name, logo, slogan, word mark, and other graphics. Second, the DB's key function is to identify and differentiate the destination from others. Third, a DB should consist of, and be based on, the destination's core values – a set of core assets and enduring characteristics of the destination. From the supply-side perspective, a competitive destination identity, selected from the mutual core values of the destination, is the DB's most important part. Finally, the DB's goal is to convey the promise of a memorable destination experience.

2.3 Research on DB creation and/or development process

To start, the components that form a DB are reviewed, beginning with the dimensions of a DB in Caldwell and Freire's study (2004). Caldwell and Freire's model is adapted from de Chernatony and McWilliam's (1990) study. De Chernatony and McWilliam argued that there are two dimensions that clarify the strength of a brand: representationality and functionality. The authors argued that the brands are characterised by a combination of the two dimensions. However, de Chernatony and McWilliam developed the idea for physical good brands. In destination contexts, Caldwell and Freire's study (2004) confirmed the usefulness of analysing destination brands along two different dimensions – representationality and functionality (Table 2.1). They stated "the first dimension is characterized as having 'value-expressive' aspects whereby people choose to visit a place to display their own self-concept. The second dimension, functionality, captures the consumer's concern for the performance of the place (for example, weather, beaches, mountains and sky, museums, shops, and so on)" (p. 59).

In Table 2.1, the DB's representationality should be a sign that clearly presents what tourists the destination wants to attract. In addition, the DB's representationality should deliver a DB

promise that the destination tourists feel about going to the destination and then results in their buying decision. The DB's functionality focuses on the reality of destination core values, indicates clearly its target market, and promises to deliver a pleasant destination experience to them. It is to remind tourists of the destination's competitive advantages so that tourists can associate some destination elements with the brand.

Table 2.1. Adaptation of attitude statements for DBs

De Chernatony and McWilliam (1990) physical study attitude statements[48]	Adapted attitude statements for destination brand study
Representationality	**Representationality**
This brand says something about its owner.	[Destination] somehow defines the people who travel there.
You've got to feel right among your friends owning this brand.	People feel right amongst their friends because they can say that they went to [destination].
People would buy this brand because they feel it associates them with a certain group of people.	People would go to [destination] because they feel it associates them with a certain group of people.
Functionality	**Functionality**
You buy this brand more for its product characteristics than for its advertising.	People travel to [destination] not for its publicised image but more for its actual characteristics.
People buy this product because the company puts more effort into the product, rather than saying who'd be using it.	People go to [destination] not because the place emphasises the sort of people who travel there but because the place puts more effort into creating a pleasant experience.
This product says more about the product's characteristics than the type of buyer.	When you think about [destination] you think more about the region's characteristics than the type of visitor.

Source: Caldwell & Freire, 2004, p. 55

The representationality and functionality of a DB are also found in the works of Lee et al. (2006) and Nelson (2014). Lee et al. (2006) analysed brand-building elements through symbolic content examination of the official tourism websites of the 50 states of the U.S. They stated "what gives a brand strength is cohesiveness among the brand elements; i.e. they must consistently support a clear and distinctive theme" and "a successful branding strategy blends all the branding elements in a unique way to give the customer a strong and positive perception (*image)* of the product/service" (2006, p. 817). Brand-building elements are "the slogans and the visual, verbal, and graphic images projected on the states' websites" (p. 820). Lee et al. said, "what a brand represents on the website preconditions the consumers' expectation for the quality they desire" (p. 819). However, the authors argued that the DB's strength is not only its cohesiveness among the brand elements but also positive customer perceptions and experience. Thus, Lee et al.'s study (2006) discovered that coherent, and cohesive representations of these brand-building elements that are closely associated with its unique selling points are crucial in strengthening the DB and branding strategy.

Nelson (2014) studied Slovenia's DB information on websites. The study examined parts of the DB and branding through the use of content analysis. In Nelson's study, Slovenia brand's

representations are based on the examination of texts, including the frequency as well as the meanings and significance of the words, pictures, symbols, etc., that are communicated. The study found that the functionality of these representational components is to attract tourists by their competitive destination values and products.

More focused on the DB's functions, Blain et al. (2005) reviewed a model developed by Berthon, Hulbert, and Pitt (1999) as shown in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1 shows the functions of a brand from the buyer's perspective are reduction of search cost, assurance of quality, and establishing destination uniqueness-destination differentiation. However, there are two common functions of a brand that link the buyers and sellers. The brand should function as "coherent message [that] facilitates market segmentation" and "identification facilitates loyalty in purchasing categories". The functions of a brand are reflected through its "symbol around which a relationship is built". This means that it is essential to consider the symbolic representation and functions of a brand within the brand relationship within which it is built.

Figure 2.1. Functions of a brand for the buyer and seller
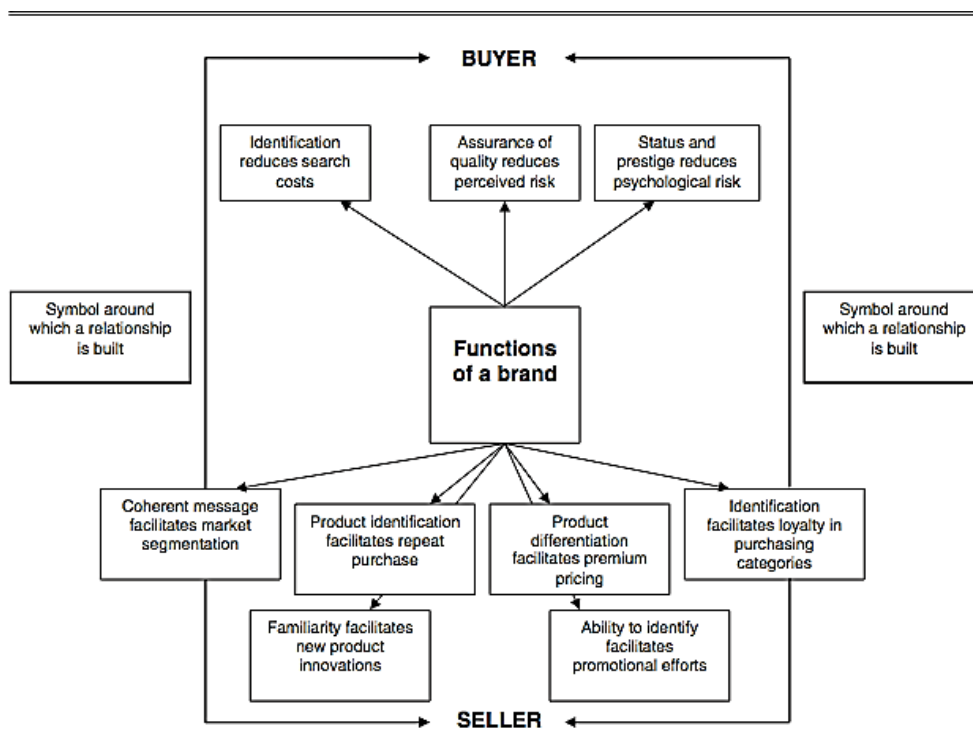
Source: Berthon, Hulbert, & Pitt, 1999, p. 54 cited in Blain et al., 2005, p. 331

Hankinson (2004) considered brand relationships. He conceptualised a model of a place brand as relational brand networks (Figure 2.2), and then discussed the implications for destination marketing.

Figure 2.2. The relational network brand
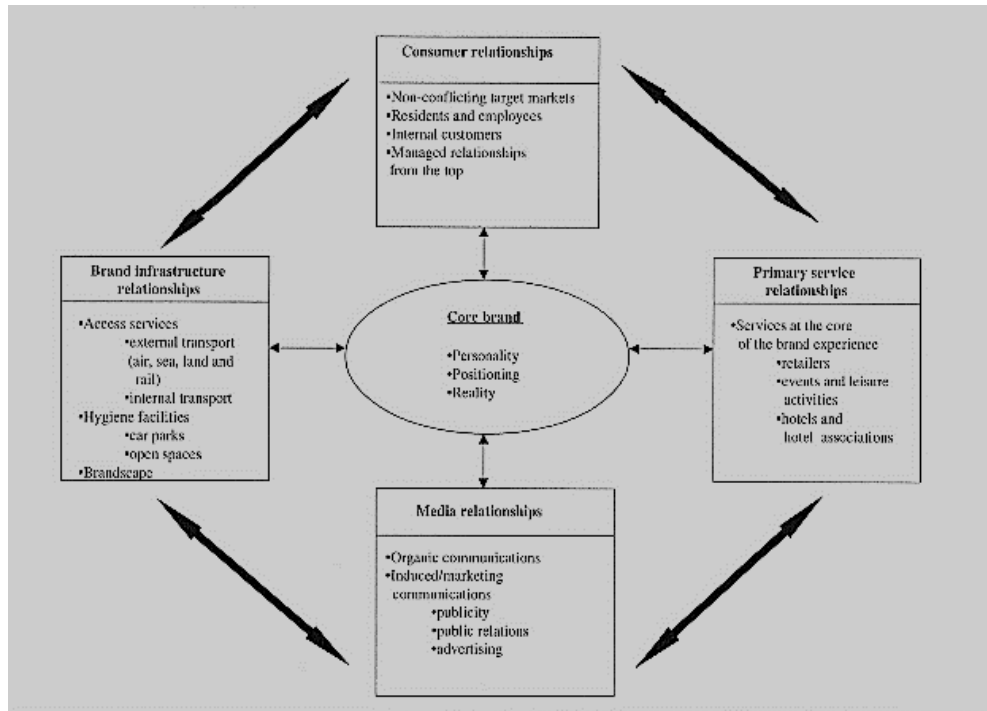
Source: Hankinson, 2004, p. 115

Hankinson (2004) discovered that place brand and DB have much in common. Therefore, he used the model (Figure 2.2) to identify several implications for a DB. The core of the DB should consist of three main elements: brand personality, positioning, and reality. The first element is a statement of the brand personality, which is characterised by potential functional elements, potential symbolic elements, and, most importantly in the context of service products, potential experiential elements. The second element is a clear statement of the brand's positioning. This defines the brand's point of reference with respect to the competitive set by identifying the elements which make it similar to other places and then identifying the elements which make it unique within that set. The third element is brand reality. Both the personality and the positioning need to be firmly rooted in reality if the promised experience is to be fulfilled.

According to Hankinson (2004), the DB should be developed in "a strong network of stakeholder relationships which all share a common vision of the core brand" and "the selection of target markets which are consistent both [with] each other and with the character

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of the local community" as well as "a service-oriented approach to the delivery of quality."
(p. 118). Moreover, Figure 2.2 indicates that primary service relationships contribute to DB
success. These relationships extend the brand reality or brand experience. Hankinson (2004)
also argued DBM is less controllable than other service or product brands. Therefore, the
ultimate success of the brand relies on its development and extension of the core brand
through a process of progressive interaction between stakeholders.

Compared to Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2 indicates that the representation and
functions of a DB should be considered in regard to the relationships with which it is built. A
DB is built and extended by a network of stakeholder relationships which all share a common
vision of the core brand, the selection of target markets, a DB orientation, and the delivery of
quality (Hankinson, 2004). In addition, the core brand, as the central part of a DB, provides
the potential functional, symbolic, and experiential elements, the brand's positioning, and the
brand reality which the functions and representations of the brand should reflect and uniquely
be associated with.

However, what underpins the core brand of destination and brand-building elements needs to
be explored further. Gnoth (2007) discussed how place branding can assist in utilising and
managing a destination's attractions to its advantage (Figure 2.3). Then, the destination's
advantage makes the value system that constitutes the place central and transparent to a
branding approach, and by systematically seeking to reflect that system in the DB.

Figure 2.3. DB value resources, selection, and experience
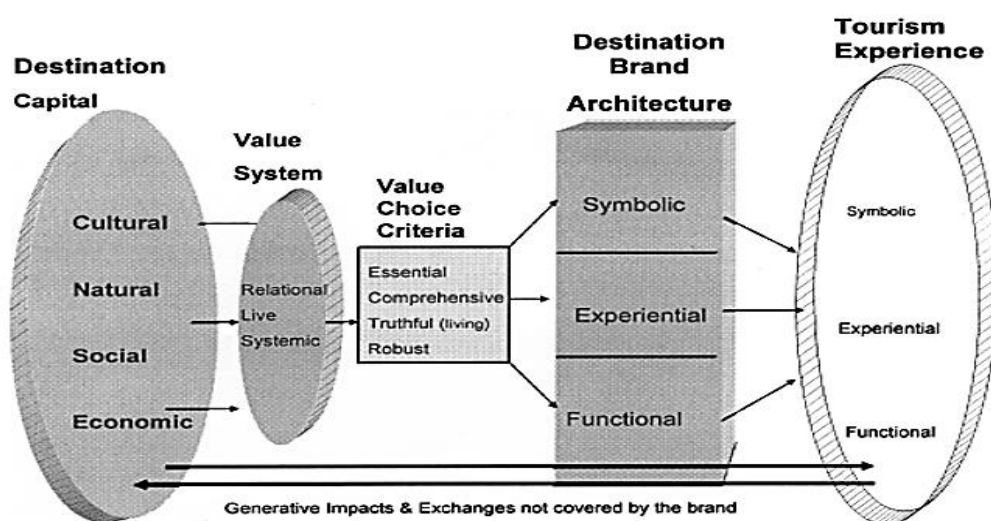
Source: Gnoth, 2007, p. 347

Compared to the three former models (Table 2.1, Figures 2.1, & 2.2), Gnoth's model (Figure 2.3) indicates more in-depth what actually underpins the core brand and brand-building elements. Gnoth's study confirmed the role of destination core value in the process of DB building and strengthening. In addition, Gnoth also argued that DB architecture is an important component of DB creation and development.

Supporting the idea of Gnoth that core values underpin a DB building process, Saraniemi (2010) developed a conceptual framework about destination identity and value system (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. Destination identity and value system
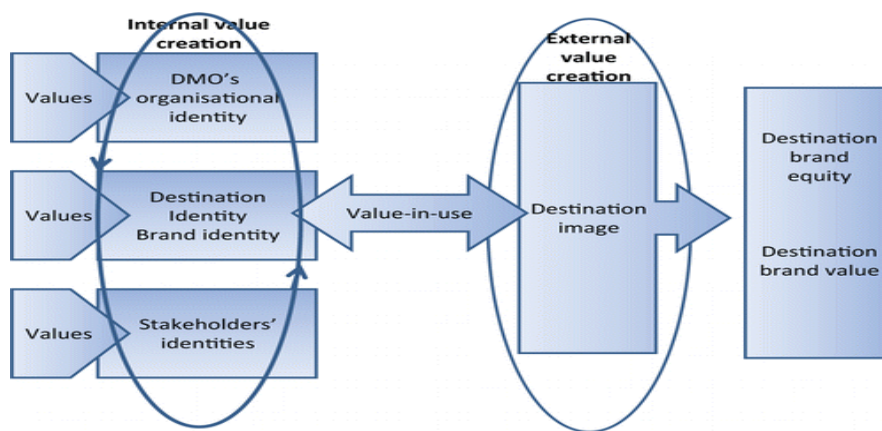
Source: Saraniemi, 2010, p. 55

Figure 2.4 shows that Saraniemi divided the process into internal and external value creation, and then clarified how brand identity and values are created. In terms of internal value creation, values and identities interact at three levels: stakeholders' values-identities, destination values-identity, and DMO's organisational values-identity. According to Urde (2001, p. 1019), "the most important task of the core value is to be the guiding light of the brand building process". These internal values are an important point of departure for the core values, which summarise the brand's identity and then guide the brand building process.

Recently, the co-creation view of brands and branding has been also clarified and contributes to our understanding about the DB building process. Saraniemi (2011) aimed to identify and describe DB building activities during the branding processes. DB building activities from a demand-side perspective were identified through the process of image building or product-bound branding. DB building activities from the supply-side perspective were identified through the process of identity-based branding. Saraniemi (2011) discovered that DB and branding co-creation from both supply-side and demand-side perspectives have a series of different activities. However, the first two steps of both processes (Figure 2.5) – self-analysis

of destination image, markets, and competitors; and incorporating destination values based on NTO, stakeholder, and brand values, history, and culture – emerged as similar and should be simultaneously done at the beginning of each process.

Figure 2.5. A grounded model of destination image building and identity-based branding
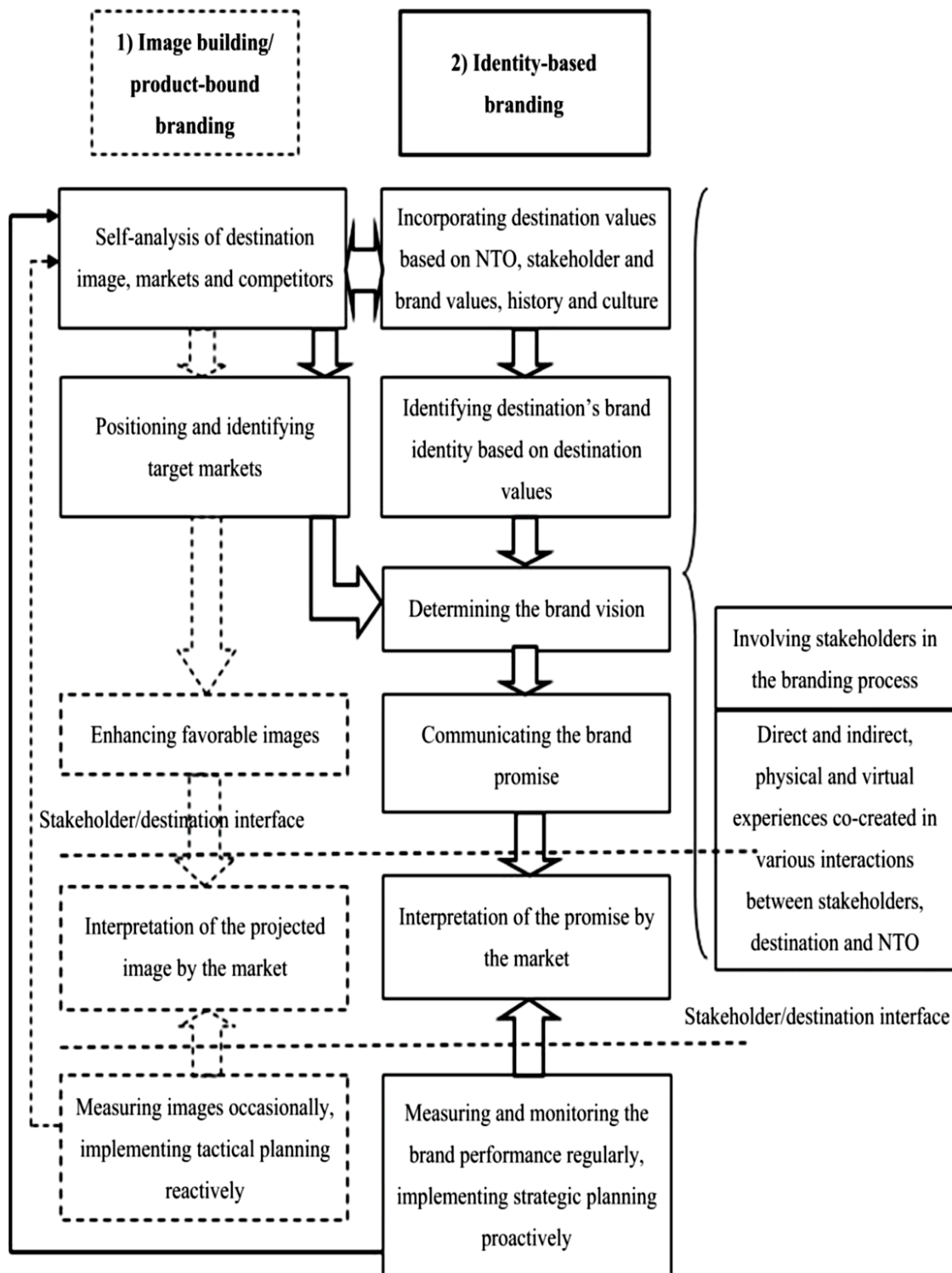
Source: Saraniemi, 2011, p. 251

Saraniemi (2011, pp. 252-253) also stated:

> a DB is defined in a number of hierarchically connected ways. First, it is a subjective impression that conveys the core values, commitment and promise uniquely associated with a particular place emerging from the identities of the destination and its supply-side and demand-side stakeholders…Second, a DB is a holistic co-created identity based on a destination's core values interpreted by both supply and demand-sides… Third, destination identity emerges from interactions between all stakeholders and is not controlled by anyone. Fourth, destinations [brand] should be viewed as an evolving brand process and not a fixed and completed identity.

As shown in Figure 2.5, Saraniemi also expressed the role of brand identity. Brand identity becomes an integral part of the destination branding process and is also the link between destination image building and branding. Studying the DB building activities during its branding process, the author also identified the phases of brand vision determination, brand promise communication, and interpretation in relation to planning of brand strategy and managing of stakeholder relationships. In terms of DB identity, the role of internal stakeholders is highlighted resulting in the DB building activities.

Saraniemi's conceptual framework (Figure 2.4) and grounded model (Figure 2.5) have contributed much to our understanding of DB and branding. On one hand, Saraniemi confirmed a number of hierarchically connected ways in the DB building process, although it should be viewed as an evolving and open system that welcomes emerging values and is not a fixed identity. On the other hand, Saraniemi's models are in line with former models about DB; that is, a DB is a subjective impression that conveys the destination core values, identities both from supply-side and demand-side stakeholders, destination promise, and unique destination experience.

In summary, many scholars have tried to integrate both demand-side and supply-side perspectives into comprehensive models of a DB. They have considered the process of DB building through its nature and also during destination branding activities. The reviewed literature, above, indicates that a DB building process should be considered from both the demand and supply-side. However, the DB building process is built internally through its network of stakeholder relationships and externally by added values contributed by the destination tourists. From the internal process, there are three common concepts of DB building process. First, DB identity has been taken into account as far as the supply-side is concerned. Bregoli (2012, p. 215) summarised DB identity as representing "the core values

that a business wants to communicate and, on the basis of which, all the other elements of the offer are established". Second, to deliver a consistent experience to tourists through the DB, the brand identity should be consistent with the values of the destination, the local community, and a sense of place such as history or culture. Within a destination context, there is a continuous interaction among the value-identity components of the destination, DMOs, and stakeholders. In the process, these internal values are important points of departure for the core values that summarise the brand's identity. As a result, the brand identity can later guide destination stakeholders' behaviour if the stakeholders believe in those brand values. Third, a DB is defined in a number of hierarchically connected ways. Thus, DB building is a process in which destination core values, identity, other planning of brand strategy, and managing of internal stakeholders are linked together resulting in a unique and coherent destination experience that is presented clearly in DB representation and functions.

2.4 The internal brand management of the DB coordinators and the stakeholders' buy-in

DBM is also a complex issue and needs to be studied more by scholars (Cox et al., 2014). In this section, relevant literature is reviewed to explore who should be responsible for DB creation and development. As Saraniemi (2011) argued, the DB is created by the destination identity that emerges from interactions between all stakeholders and is not controlled by anyone. However, a clear understanding of who should take responsibility for brand management, and how to promote interaction between all stakeholders in brand development is needed. While the DB's external strength is dependent on tourists' perceptions, understanding about what kinds of stakeholders are important to DB's internal strength should be discussed.

2.4.1 DBM and its internal strength.

In DBM research, the role of the brand's internal stakeholders has received some attention from researchers. Hankinson's study (2007) observed that the DB is the co-production of services by providers and customers in the destination. In Hankinson's (2007) model, a DB is a holistic co-created identity based on a destination's core values interpreted by both supply and demand side stakeholders. Hankinson (2007) modelled DBM using the concepts of internal and external identities. With Figure 2.6, Hankinson (2007) stated that his study "focuses on the branding of places as tourism destinations-places targeted at leisure and business visitors rather than residents, employees or investors" (p. 241).

Figure 2.6. A framework for the management of place brand
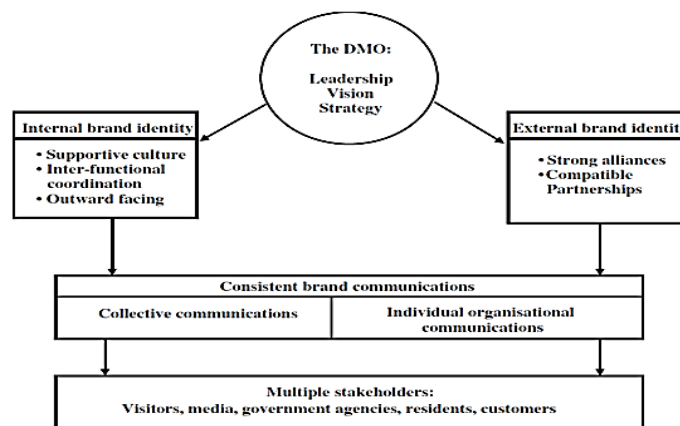
Source: Hankinson, 2007, p. 247

Although Hankinson confirmed the role of internal stakeholders, the question of who internal stakeholders are in the DB creation is understood differently in the existing literature. Hankinson's (2007) model (Figure 2.6) conceptualised DB identity as the core of the DB which is developed by the DMO but will be extended consistently by stakeholders (employees of the DMO).

However, recent studies suggest that the internal brand strength for a destination refers to the destination stakeholders rather than to the organisation's employees. Bregoli (2012) reviewed stakeholders' roles in DB development, and specially highlighted this role in the DB identity. He cited the politics of destination branding which were defined by Ooi (2004) and Konecnick and Go (2008) as that process through which a DMO gains support from stakeholders so that they accept the brand and communicate it through their communication activities and products. Bregoli argued "not only it is important to gain support from stakeholders, but it is also fundamental for stakeholders to be committed to the brand" (p. 215). Similarly, Datzira-Masip and Poluzzi (2014) summarised the literature and argued that it is important to make the brand features explicit to all the destination stakeholders. The authors said that the creation of value for the demand is the final aim of the brand, while for the local entrepreneurs it is an intermediate goal and a necessary condition for the success of the destination branding strategy. In particular, the strategic process of the personality of the DB should involve all the tourism stakeholders, to make them support the initiative, to share common views, and to agree upon the branding strategy. These points were also reflected through brand commitment (Table 2.2) and citizenship behavior (Table 2.3) of internal stakeholders towards DB in Bregoli's study.

2.4.1.1 The role of stakeholders in DB.

- *Brand commitment*

Table 2.2. Dimensions of brand commitment

Dimensions	Definitions[a]	Definitions[b]
Brand compliance	"Employee's willingness to adjust his or her views and behaviours in accordance with the requirements of the brand and/or company"	"The adoption of certain behaviours that are consistent with the aspired brand identity in order to gain extrinsic rewards or to avoid penalties"
Brand identification	"The extent to which the employee believes to be a constituent of the brand and the firm"	"Acceptance of social influence due to a sense of belonging to the group determining the brand experience, and a perception of being intertwined with the group's fate"
Brand internalization	"The degree to which the employee has incorporated the brand into his or her thinking and behaviour"	It "delineates the appropriation of core brand values into one's self-concept as guiding principles for one's actions"

Source: Bregoli, 2012, p. 215

- *Brand citizenship*

Table 2.3. Dimensions of brand citizenship behaviour

Dimensions	Definitions
Helping behavior	"Positive attitude, friendliness, helpfulness, and empathy toward internal and external customers, taking responsibility for tasks outside of own area if necessary"
Brand consideration	"Adherence to brand-related behaviour guidelines and reflection of brand impact before communicating or taking action in any situation"
Brand enthusiasm	"Showing extra initiative while engaging in brand-related behaviours"
Sportsmanship	"No complaining, even if engagement for the brand causes inconvenience; willingness to engage for the brand even at high opportunity costs"
Brand endorsement	"Recommendation of the brand to others also in non-job-related situations, for example, to friends; passing on the brand identity to newcomers in the organisations"
Self-development	"Willingness to continuously enhance brand-related skills"
Brand advancement	"Contribution to the adaptation of the brand identity concept to changing market needs or new organisational competencies, for example, through passing on customer feedback or generating innovative ideas"

Source: Bregoli, 2012, p. 216

Cox et al. (2014) said that internal brand management helps identify the role network stakeholders play in the provision of a DB experience in alignment with the DB values (Cox et al., 2014; Hankinson, 2004). Cox et al. argued that positive stakeholder cognitive and behavioral attitudes towards the brand values can create a willingness to contribute to brand success, thus resulting in a consistent brand experience. Similar to Bregoli's study (2012), Cox et al. also argued that there are two critical factors that contribute to a consistent brand experience. The first is that stakeholders must show physical brand commitment to the DB; that is, they must share understanding and buy-in to brand values. Furthermore, stakeholders

must show brand citizenship; that is, they must be willing to behave in a way that enhances brand identity.

Importantly, there is a consensus in DBM about the stakeholders' involvement in the process of DB creation, development, and delivery (Cox et al., 2014; Hankinson, 2007; UNWTO, 2009). Hankinson (2007) argued:

> among private sector organizations, the priority will always be to in still commitment to the organization's own brand; commitment to the DB will be secondary unless there is a synergy between the brand's values. This can only happen when partner organizations are involved in the specification of the destination's brand values at an early stage in the brand's development. (p. 248)

Similarly, Cox et al. (2014, p. 2) stated "it is important that stakeholders buy-in to the vision and values of the network brand in order to deliver a consistent brand experience".

Leitch and Richardson (2003) examined how marketing practitioners face challenges in creating and communicating a corporate brand for new economy ventures that results from alliances between organisations. In the context of a destination and its various tourism products and stakeholders, the idea of an interactive process between DMOs and its stakeholders from the beginning is important. A selection of DB alliances should be involved from the beginning of the brand development, then resulting in a shared vision and values for the DB. Common starting points (CSP) and common end points (CEP), as displayed in Figure 2.7, which DMOs and stakeholders shared and incorporated their values, vision, and strategies to deliver a high quality consistent brand are important. The CSP in Leitch and Richardson (2003) are similar to the two first steps of Saraniemi's (2011) model. In addition, Cox et al. (2014) argued that the consistent and shared understanding of destination values and promise later helps to deliver a consistent DB among stakeholders. Therefore, a CEP achieved among all brand stakeholders is also important task for DBM (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7. Framework for identity and brand creation through alliance
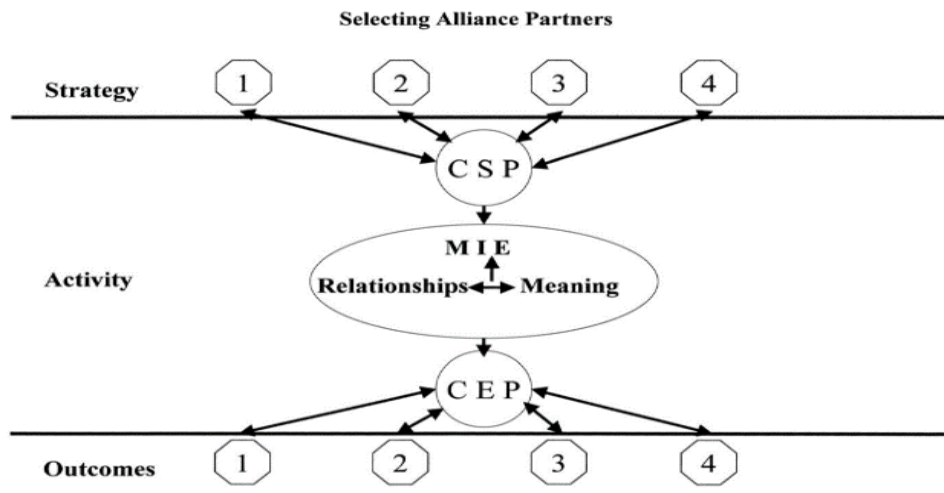
Source: Leitch & Richardson, 2003, p. 1075

2.4.1.2 The roles of DMOs in relation to the DB and stakeholders at the destination.

Cox et al.'s study (2014) also discussed the integral tools of internal DB managers: communication and leadership style. These authors stated "internal brand building is often not successful due to a lack of convincing communication. Effectively communicating the brand identity – that is, how the company wants the brand to be perceived – to all stakeholders is a precursor for the achievement of brand consistency" (p. 4). They said that internal brand communication stimulates trust in the brand and brand execution consistency across all employees. "Brand communication should help to develop the employee's awareness and understanding of the brand identity, values, promise and on-going brand developments… through the consistent delivery of brand values across employees at all levels, external communication are more consistent and accurate in the portraying the brand" (p. 4).

In terms of leadership style of internal DBM, these authors summarised the existing literature and argued that an informal leadership style allows employees to feel empowered and increased brand engagement and consistency. This means DB managers should empower stakeholders. However, it is very difficult to spread a firm leadership style over a wider geographical region and to various kinds of stakeholder. A flexible leadership approach is needed for DBs. Cox et al. argued that "it is considered important that one or more members of the DMO take responsibility for the marketing direction of the destination, ensuring that a clear vision of the desired brand identity is established" (p. 88). The authors also said that DMOs should build an internal brand culture that helps create stakeholder behaviour that is consistent with the desired brand. As a result, the authors suggested that DB creation and

development should involve stakeholders' buy-in, and DMO leaders should promote the buy-in, provide flexible leadership, and empower the stakeholders to deliver the brand promise.

In summary, internal DB strength contributes much to a consistent DB. Internal brand strength refers to the destination tourism business stakeholders rather than to the organisation's employees. Although a DB generally cannot be manufactured like a consumer product brand and is less controllable than product and service brand management, DMOs and tourism stakeholders should take responsibility for its creation and development. DMOs with their leadership and communication share a vision and strategy with tourism business stakeholders to build up and to manage the consistency of DB.

While the creation of a consistent DB should be mainly the responsibility of DMOs and tourism business stakeholders, the development and delivery of a consistent DB should involve both DMOs and stakeholders from the beginning and keep them engaged throughout the whole process. DMOs will control and manage consistency by communication, their leadership of the DB, and ownership sharing to increase stakeholders' buy-in in the process. In turn, stakeholders should share an understanding of destination values, vision, and promise; play provision of the DB experience in alignment with the DB values; show physical brand commitment and brand citizenship; and behave in a way that enhances brand identity.

2.5 A framework for a consistent DB creation and development

The literature has identified a wide variety of studies dealing with DB, DB components, consistency among DB components, its consistent extension, and the internal management of a consistent DB creation and development.

The conceptual framework (Figure 2.8) is developed based on the literature reviewed and the research aims. Its purpose is to provide a structured overview of the possible process of DB creation and development, and the involvement of tourism stakeholders in this process. The framework is read from the top down. The framework consists of three main parts, namely destination audit, the birth of DB, and DB extension.

In the first part, an alliance of DB partners is formed to undertake an audit of their destination. The alliance consists of DMOs and stakeholders who are selected by DMOs, or volunteer to participate. In this audit, a self-analysis and evaluation of the destination image, market, competitors and values, and an incorporation of DMOs' and stakeholders' values are

undertaken simultaneously. From the audit, CSPs are formed. These CSPs will underpin the latter two parts of the process.

These CSPs provide the basis for the whole second part because the DB identities are identified within the mutual core values of the destination. Forming a DB is the outcome of the DB birth. In this study, a completed DB birth should go through five steps: identifying destination identity, determining DB vision, setting DB objectives, forming a DB, and determining DB architecture.

The third part of the process is about the DB's extension. As Hankinson (2004) argued, "developing the core brand is not about creating an image which presents a highly selective identity as a means of selling the place… nor it is a sales pitch which sees the place through rose-tinted spectacles." (p. 116). So, the DB should be extended through effective relationships with stakeholders, such as DB's ownership sharing, stakeholders' empowerment by its internal communication or activities, and by internal stakeholders' adoption of the DB.

Through the whole framework, the involvement of tourism stakeholders is included from the beginning, keeping them engaged and informed on progress throughout. The details of each part are explained in the following section.

1. Destination audit

The first part of the framework draws on Leitch and Richardson's (2003) framework for identity and brand creation through alliance as displayed in Figure 2.7. This part starts with a selection of potential alliance partners. The requirements of each partner are to have "the necessary expertise, access to resources, access to markets and/or desired brand positioning" and bring at least one of these components to the alliance (Leitch & Richardson, 2003, p. 1075). Potential alliance partners might be selected by DMOs or volunteer to participate. So, the DB alliance partners consist of DMOs and steering stakeholders.

Figure 2.8. A conceptual framework for a consistent DB creation and development

Destination brand alliances: DMOs and steering group.

Incorporating destination values based on DMO, stakeholders' values, and destination history & culture

Undertaking self-analysis of destination image, markets & competitors

Destination Audit

Determining CSP Values

Identifying destination brand identity

Internal identity — External identity

Determining the destination brand vision

The birth of destination brand

Setting destination brand objectives

Long-term objective — Short-term objectives

Forming destination brand

Setting CEP – Core brand:
- Personality
- Positioning
- Reality

Functional aspects — Representational aspects

Destination brand extension

Determining brand architecture

Stakeholders within the destination

1   3   4   7

In the second stage of the first part, these alliance partners undertake an audit in two simultaneous steps. This stage draws on Saraniemi's study (2011) as displayed in Figure 2.5. The brand alliance partners undertake a self-analysis of destination image, markets, and competitors, and an incorporation of destination values based on a match of DMO and stakeholder values, and destination history and culture. To do the two steps simultaneously, while analysing the destination's core values, the alliance partners should prioritise these values in terms of those that appeal to the destination's main market segments (UNWTO, 2009). DB alliance partners have to consider these evaluations in the destination's competitive context. The destination's core values are those that should help give a competitive edge. Otherwise the "analysis will be no more than an un-prioritized and unhelpful 'catch-all' list of features" (UNWTO, 2009, p. 37).

The audit results in mutual CSPs. Ideally, "the CSP of the alliance are likely to be a subset of the CSP of the individual alliance members and must be compatible with them" (Leitch & Richardson, 2003, p. 1074). The CSP must be accepted, though not necessarily embodied by all alliances. If they do not all agree, the alliance partners are likely to come into conflict with one another, and with the next parts of the whole process of DB creation and development.

2. The birth of DB

Generally, this part employs and is linked to the models reviewed: Leitch and Richardson's (2003) framework for identity and brand creation through alliance (Figure 2.7); Gnoth's model (2007) of DB value resources, selection and experience (Figure 2.3); Saraniemi's grounded model (2011) of destination image building and identity-based branding (Figure 2.5); and Cox et al.'s (2014) models of brand commitment and citizenship behavior (Tables 2.2 & 2.3). In addition, this part also adopts DBM principles drawing on Hankinson's studies (2004; 2007) and Trembath, Romaniuk and Lockshin's study (2011). Specifically, a few small steps in this part are also inspired by Urde's core value-based corporate brand building model (2001), and de Chernatony's process for building and sustaining brands (2001).

The birth of the DB is the central part of the whole DB creation and development process. This part can be described as a number of connected stages. Based on a review of the past research above, five key stages are identified in Figure 2.8. Although the previous researchers did not describe the internal brand-building process in an exact number of stages, these five key stages are commonly included (Saraniemi, 2011).

The central part starts with identifying the DB's identity which is based on the CSP values achieved in the first part. This stage is drawn from Leitch and Richardson (2003) and

Saraniemi (2011), as displayed in Figure 2.7 and Figure 2.5. The DB's identity consists of an internal identity and an external identity (Hankinson, 2007; Wallstrom, Karlsson & Salehi-Sangari, 2008). While the former represents the timeless essence of the brand, the latter holds the associations' added values that add completeness originating from the representations of the brand and the organizations responsible for the brand management (Wallstrom et al., 2008).

The DB's identity analysis will then influence the next stage; that is, the DB vision's determination. This stage is mainly drawn from Saraniemi (2011), as displayed in Figure 2.5. According to Urde (2001), the brand vision functions as a projection into the future that gives a vivid description of what an organisation wishes to accomplish with the brand over time. The DB vision is recognised in a similar function in Hankinson's study (2007) and in Saraniemi's grounded model (2011). The three components of a DB vision, as adopted from de Chernatony's model (2001, p. 34), are displayed in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9. The three components of a brand's vision
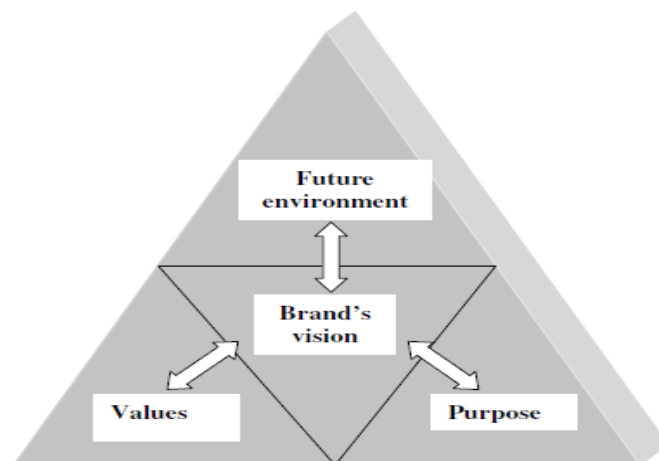
Source: de Chernatony, 2001, p. 34

In Figure 2.9, the first component, the envisioned future, encourages the alliance partners to think about the type of brand environment in which the brand will be assessed. The second component, the brand purpose, considers how the world is going to be a better place as a consequence of the brand. Importantly, the third component is that the DB values should be understood clearly by the alliance partners. While the DB identity, in the former stage, is based on core values of the destination, values in the brand vision are based on DB values. Destination values are an entry price to compete in the tourism market, and result in attracting and repeatedly serving customers. The DB must have unique brand values (de Chernatony,

2001). Therefore, the brand alliances should plan for the DB values which are combined and targeted at the DB vision's determination.

From the brand vision, a sense of direction for the brand emerges. The third stage is setting DB objectives. In this stage, DMOs and alliance partners should divide the DB objectives into long-term objectives and break these down into a series of shorter-term objectives (de Chernatony, 2001). The purpose of shorter-term objectives is to achieve the long-term objective.

Then, a brand is the outcome of the DB birth part. The brand consists of a core brand, with functional and representational aspects. The core brand is the CEP of the DMOs and other alliance partners' cooperation through the first two parts of the whole process of DB creation and development. The function and representation of the brand reflect, and are uniquely associated, with the core brand. The birth of the DB is a central part of the whole process which constitutes a valuable source of information about the fit between its CSP and its CEP (Leitch & Richardson, 2003).

In this study, Caldwell and Freire's model (Table 2.1), Lee et al., (2006) and Nelson's studies (2014), and the adaptation of Blain et al.'s model (Figure 2.1) and Hankinson's model (Figure 2.2) shed light on what aspects form a DB. The most important part of the brand is its core. According to Hankinson (2004), the destination core brand consists of three elements: personality, positioning, and reality. The core brand is reflected through its functions and its representations (Blain et al., 2005). However, the brand needs to be realised and enable a marketing strategy to be enacted (de Chernatony, 2001). Therefore, a DB is represented through symbolic contents on its marketing materials. What a DB represents is not only a blend of all its components in a unique way that reflects its core values, but also provides a coherent message that facilitates market segmentation and an identification that facilitates loyalty in purchasing categories (Blain et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2006; Gnoth, 2007). Lee et al.'s (2006) study attempted to delineate the unique selling propositions and positioning strategies of destination organisations through a content analysis of slogans, graphic projections, verbal expressions, and other explicit or implied messages of the 50 states of the United States tourism websites. This was one of the first studies which made the effort to examine the brand-building elements projected in marketing materials.

To complete the birth of the DB, appropriate brand architecture is necessary. The DB is the result of a negotiated interaction between DB alliances but relies internally on its effective extension through effective relationships with stakeholders. The structured and organised

portfolio of brands and the valuable relationship among them is brand architecture (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014). These authors stated that DB architecture has received little research attention although it is crucial for DB development because it helps to avoid internal competition. It also helps to harmonise the messages of various TBBs within the destination and subsume them in every product brand so that the TBBs should prompt a uniform character to the products/destination tourist. They also argued that it could be unproductive if local stakeholders are not "involved in the definition of their tourist DB strategy" and "there is a need to improve the collaboration and coordination among tourism organizations in order to implement strong brand structured in a systematic way" (p. 58). Therefore, the potential structure and relationships between a DB and a variety of TBBs within the destination should be planned internally before extending the completed DB architecture to all stakeholders within the destination.

Within the context of sustaining a brand, the role of internal brand implementation is to implement the brand essence (de Chernatony, 2001). To do this, a suitable value delivery system is needed. The author stated that an appropriate DB architecture creates a balance between the DB's branding activities and keeping TBBs in-house to strengthen the destination' core competencies. In sum, the DB architecture is a step in which the DB strategy should involve TBBs and TBBs should associate with the DB core competencies.

3. DB extension.

To implement a coherent and structured brand architecture management is not an easy task, especially in regard to a complex destination management context. A variety of public and private tourism marketing organisations operate at several levels, each one managing different resources, often with overlapping responsibilities (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; UNWTO, 2009). As a result, collaboration and coordination among tourism organisations are essential to implement a strong DB structured in a systematic way.

To extend the DB, DMOs will control and manage consistency by communication, leadership of the DB, and ownership sharing and communication to increase stakeholders' buy-in to the process. In turn, stakeholders should share an understanding of destination values, vision, and objectives. The stakeholders also should deliver the DB experience in alignment with the DB values, show physical brand commitment and brand citizenship, and should behave in a way that enhances brand identity.

This thesis shows that internal DBM tools are crucial in completing an internal DB building process. The brand should be transparent and easy for the internal audiences to understand so

that integration into operation is effortless. Moreover, good DB communication and leadership will minimise miscomprehensions about the brand and encourage brand commitment and brand citizenship (Cox et al., 2014). And, thirdly, internal brand communication and ownership sharing will stimulate trust in the brand and brand execution consistency across all internal stakeholders.

In contrast to the organisation culture stage in the second part, the DB needs to be delivered across all stakeholders within the destination. The stakeholders here are not only DMOs and an alliance of DB partners who join to create the DB, but also other stakeholders who want to adopt the DB partly or wholly through the DB extension.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed literature related to the consistency between a DB and TBBs, and developed the conceptual framework (Figure 2.8) that functions as a theoretical foundation for this study. The conceptual framework portrays the possible process of DB creation and development and the involvement of the internal stakeholders in this. The framework portrays a DB which is formed from the process in which many DB components are integrated in a hierarchical way.

This chapter discusses how the conceptual framework conceptualises the research approach (section 3.2), followed by a flow diagram which arranges the methodological approaches used in the two specific research phases (Figure 3.1) – phase one addresses the first research aim (section 3.3) and phase two the second research aim (section 3.4). Finally, the strengths and limitations of this study are discussed (section 3.5).

3.2 Determining the research approach

To address the first research aim – assessment of the consistency between the DB and TBBs – this study examines two components of the conceptual framework: the DB and the DB architecture. The DB is the outcome of the DB creation process and the core part of the later brand extension to tourism businesses. Furthermore, the DB architecture is the transitional step in which the DB core values are transferred to TBBs within the destination (Figure 2.8). Therefore, the elements that form the DB and the DB architecture influence the consistency between DB and TBBs within the destination.

As discussed in section 2.5, these elements form the DB and are transferred through the DB architecture to enable a destination marketing strategy to be enacted. Therefore, brand-related information in marketing materials were collected and analysed to address the first research aim. Content analysis was adopted because it has been widely used in collecting and analysing brand information in the existing tourism literature.

The second research aim seeks to explain issues of consistency regarding the process of DB creation and development and the involvement of tourism business stakeholders. As Datzira-Masip and Poluzzi (2014) stated:

the fact is that still many tourism professionals identify the brand with its name, logo and slogan while these elements are only the small tip of the iceberg, which could be remain visible only if it is adequately supported by a bulk of other less evident (but more significant) elements, values, benefits that characterise the personality of the brand. (p. 48)

Therefore, this study also examines the process of DB creation and development as well as the involvement of tourism stakeholders in this. In addition, how TBBs were created and involved in the development of the DB is also examined. From this, a comprehensive understanding of the consistency between DB and TBBs is provided.

The conceptual framework provided a structured overview of the possible process of a DB creation and development, and the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this process. Therefore, information about this process and involvement needed to be collected. Moreover, the second research problem is open and exploratory. Therefore, the data collection needed not only to gather enough related information but also to include emerging information that the reviewed literature and the conceptual framework had not yet determined. As a result, in-depth interviews were used to collect information to address the second research aim.

Thus, this thesis uses two associated research methods to address the two research aims. As an exploratory study about consistency, this research is conducted in a chosen destination; that is, BT in Vietnam. Mazurek (2014) stated that the use of case studies in a mixed-methods approach is common in branding research, because "the ability to see a holistic picture is just as important as the creation of brands" or "specific branding constructs"(p. 578). Wagner and Peters (2009) supported the role of multi-method designs in DB analyses. Their study "demonstrates the importance of employing different association methods in recognising stakeholders' knowledge and opinions of destinations" (p. 58) thus resulting in analysing DB identity and stakeholders' coordination.

As outlined in Chapter 1, BT is a famous destination in Vietnam and is one of the country's six biggest coastal tourism destinations. "With 19 years of establishment and development, BT tourism is in an increasing development stage" (Binh Thuan Official Tourism Online Magazine, 2013). No other Vietnamese tourism destination's growth rate has been as stable and strong as that of BT's. Moreover, BT has obtained many achievements, especially in developing a recognised reputation for coastal tourism in Mui Ne, and has won many awards

for tourism management and promotions. For all these reasons, BT was chosen as the case study for this research.

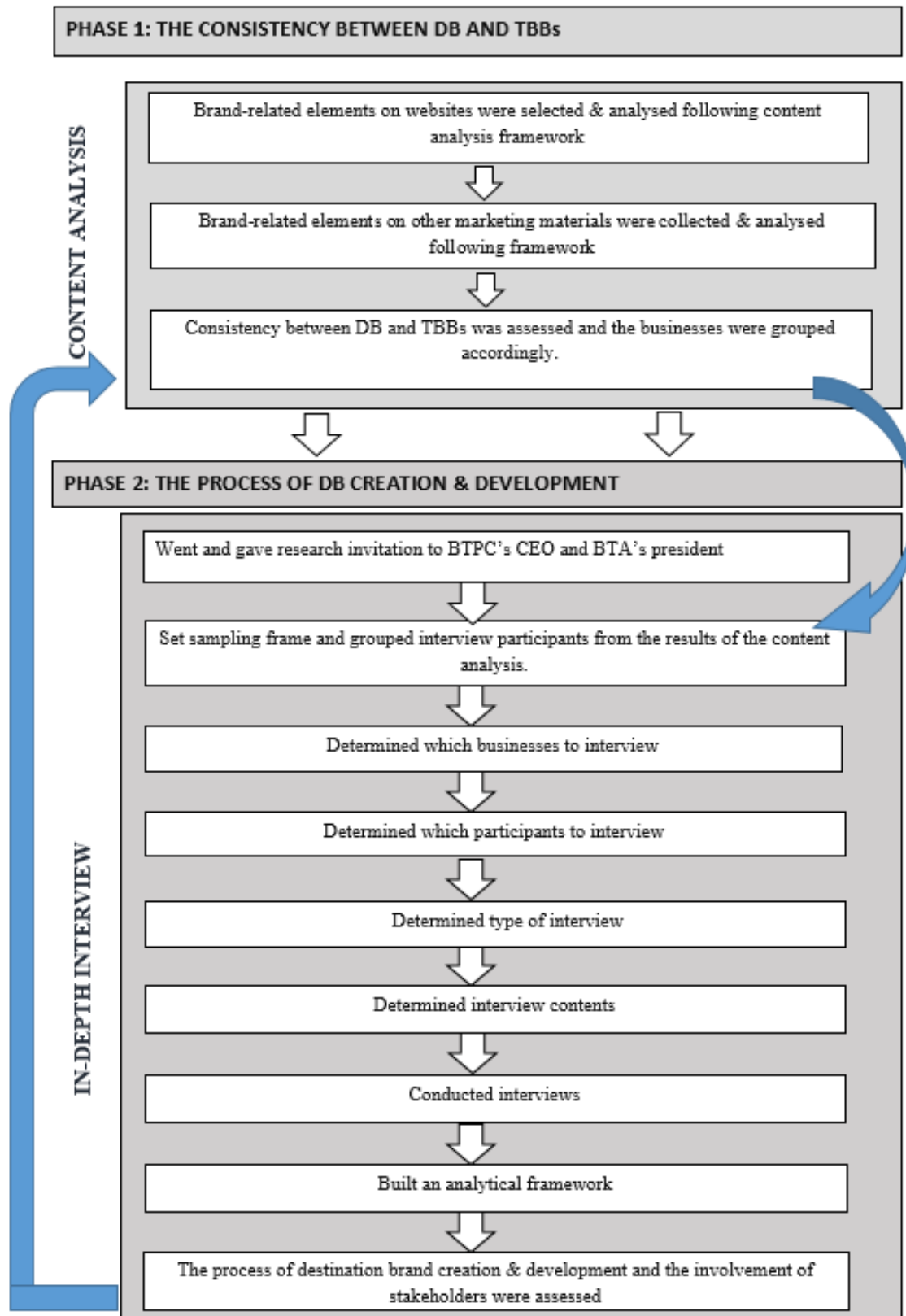**Figure 3.1. Methodology for the research**

Figure 3.1 is a flow diagram of the methodology which arranges the methodological approaches used in the two specific research phases. Each phase has a set of steps for data collection and analysis. The first phase is about the consistency between the DB and TBBs (section 3.3) and data was collected and analysed in three steps. First, brand-related elements on websites were selected and analysed following a content analysis framework. Second, brand-related elements in other marketing materials were selected and analysed in this way. Finally, the consistency between DB and TBBs was assessed and the businesses examined were grouped accordingly.

At the end of the first phase, a sampling frame emerged from the results of the data analysis for the DB and TBBs. In particular, the researcher set the sampling frame by sorting TBBs into common groups. Those businesses which had brands in the frame became the potential participants for the second phase. The second phase (section 3.4) was based on primary data gathered through in-depth structured interviews. The main purpose of the second phase was to seek to explain issues of consistency in terms of how the destination and tourism brands were involved. Except for the presentation of the sampling frame and sampling, the detail of the second phase is discussed in six main parts: determining which businesses to interview, interviewing participants, type of interview, interview contents, data collection, and development of an analytical framework.

3.3 Phase 1: The consistency between DB and TBBs

In this section, a methodological approach, data collection, and data analysis which used to address the consistency are presented. In term of data analysis, this study presents not only the ways in which the data collected are analysed but also examples of how the data are analysed. In the diverse information of the DB and 87 TBBs, the examples are to show efforts of how the data actually collected and analysed in the case study of BT.

3.3.1 Methodological approach.

To examine the consistency between DB and TBBs, content analysis was used. The method is widely used in tourism research, especially in evaluating the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications (Lee et al., 2006; Nelson, 2014). In the studies by Yoon and Kim (2013) and Nelson (2014), content analysis has also been recognised as an appropriate method in the examination of the words, pictures, symbols, graphic and verbal images, and colours presented in destination promotional materials and tour company branding activities. This

method is defined as "a technique that is applied to non-statistical material and allows to analyse such material in a systematic way" (Finn, Elliot-White, & Walton, 2000, p. 134).

Content analysis has also been widely used to examine symbolic brand content on websites. Lee et al. (2006) used the method to analyse and evaluate slogans and the visual, verbal, and graphic images projected on 50 U.S websites. Furthermore, in Nelson's (2014) study, content analysis was used to identify gaps or disconnects between intended and actual messages between Slovenia destination's brand and its externally produced sources. Nelson (2014) explained that "the Internet has become a key source of information...which has dramatically influenced the distribution of tourism information... This, in turn, has an impact on brand building...as well as on the communication of the brand to external audiences" (p. 45). In this thesis, content analysis, therefore, was adopted to investigate the symbolic contents of DB and TBBs presented on the websites and in other marketing materials.

3.3.2 Data collection.

Following existing DB content analyses, this study examined the slogans, visual, verbal, and graphic images, logos, and text messages on the BT Promotion Centre's (BTPC) website (www.dulichbinhthuan.com.vn in Vietnamese and its English version www.muinetourism.vn) and other marketing materials of the BTPC. This information was also collected from the BT Tourism Association's (BTA) website (www.bta.vn) and other marketing materials of the BTA. The BTA and BTPC are the DMOs of the BT tourism industry. As BT's DMOs, they should take responsibility for BT's DB creation and development. In reality, both the BTA and BTPC have the legal administration of the provincial tourism industry. Moreover, their major purpose is to market the destination with the purpose of attracting tourists, thus bringing economic benefits to the tourism businesses and local people within BT province. While the BTA is a voluntary group of tourism businesses within BT destination, the BTPC is the provincial tourism promotion centre. The BTA's main purpose is to attract tourists and to promote and market the provincial tourism industry, thus resulting in economic benefits directly for their members, tourism businesses. The BTPC's main purpose is also to attract tourists, promote and market the province's tourism industry, thus resulting in a balance between economic benefits for tourism businesses and the community (BTPC's role and regulation, n.d; BTA's charter, 2005; BTA's program activities, 2009).

The slogans, visual, verbal, and graphic images, logos, text messages and colours on websites, and marketing materials of TBBs within BT province were also collected. The study examined the BTA's members' brand names found on the home page of the BTA websites

and other tourism businesses' websites found on BT Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion Centre's website (www.xuctienbinhthuan.vn) under the category "Business contact". TBBs were identified on both websites because the study aimed to increase the number of TBBs, not only of BTA members but also non-members.

The DB information comes from the brand information on the BTPC and BTA websites and their marketing materials. In terms of TBBs, 87 businesses were identified but only 65 brands were activated on their websites. For the other twenty two businesses, there was little brand information or their websites could not even be found.

In the first part of the content analysis process, brand-related elements were collected from the websites. The websites are the key source of information by which the brand is communicated to potential visitors. Moreover, accessing brand-related information on the websites also provided the researcher with general background information of the DB and TBBs before the fieldwork.

In the second part of the content analysis process, other marketing materials such as tour company brochures, hotel name cards, and information letters about hotels and local tour operators were collected because the brand experience is also delivered to potential audiences via these marketing communications. These documents were collected when the researcher went and visited each of the DMOs and tourism businesses to give a research invitation. Therefore, the researcher designed the whole content analysis process to finish in the first two weeks of the interview process of the research.

3.3.3 Data analysis.

The brand-related elements on the DMOs' websites were analysed first, followed by the brand-related elements of the TBBs. Importantly, the data analysis for both the DB and TBBs was carried out in the same way so that the DB and TBBs could be assessed systematically.

Step 1. Elements that form the DB.

The DB-forming elements consist of the destination core brand, its function, and its representation. To enable a marketing strategy to be enacted and realised, the symbolic contents of a DB must reflect its brand-forming elements. Therefore, the symbolic contents of the DB – namely logo and symbols, slogan, brand name, tagline, other graphics and images, words, and the meanings of these symbolic contents used in their marketing materials – were compiled.

In particular, each element of the brand was considered with regard to each question displayed in Table 3.1. In Lee et al. (2006)'s study, graphic, verbal images, the text content are argued that they state about the target market whom the destination want to attract; and reinforce selling points that the destination has. Lee et al.'s study also summarised the literature and stated that a slogan is "a constant theme about touristic destinations" and "successful slogans must reflect the character or personality of the product" (2006, p. 818). According to Hankinson (2004), the personality of the destination should be reflected through its positioning statement and the positioning statement is about the core values of the DB. Moreover, Crockett & Wood, (2002) also stated that the positioning task consists of three steps: identifying a set of competitive advantages upon which to build a position, selecting the right competitive advantages, and effectively communicating and delivering the chosen position. As Lee et al. (2006), Hankinson (2004), and Crockett & Wood (2002) note, the positioning statement is a multi-step task which communicates the right competitive advantages that are often reflected via the slogans.

Therefore, this study argued that each elements of brand are reflected via each type of symbolic contents (Table 3.1). In Table 3.1, the selling points are reflected via logo, symbols in logo, graphics, images, and words (column 1), the positioning as the most competitive value of the destination reflected via slogans/name/tagline (column 2), and its target markets via words, images and captions of images (column 3). At this step, both the DB and the TBBs were examined in the same way.

Table 3.1. Data analysis following brand elements

Brands	Elements of brands		
	Logo, Symbols, Graphics, Images & Words: • Which things do those symbols stand for? • What things do those graphics/images/words want to indicate? >> **Selling Points**	Slogan/Name/Tagline: • Which things does the slogan/name/tagline want to express? >> **the positioning statement as the most competitive value**	Words, Images and Captions: • Which audiences do images/words/captions want to refer? >> **target audiences/markets**

In terms of how each brand's elements were determined from the symbolic content, this study determined each element as follow. The selling points were based on what information introduces the business, or what the business has to offer tourists. For example, Little Mui Ne Cottage Resort is "located in the sunniest place in Vietnam and the most beautiful part of Mui Ne beach, the resort has a private beautiful white sand beach" or "Little Mui Ne Cottage Resort with Vietnamese traditional urban style which make tourists feel comfortable and relaxing". As a result, beach resort, private beach with sunshine year around were the selling points of the resort, as displayed in Table 3.2. In terms of the slogan, the meanings of slogans help to determine the most competitive values that the business chooses. For example, Little Mui Ne cottage has its slogan as "Little Mui Ne, blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine", as displayed in Table 3.2. In terms of the target markets of the brands, words describe who the businesses aim to serve, or images and captions on the images show who the target market of brands are. For example, Little Mui Ne cottage showed a picture in which a person is water skiing and used the caption "Mui Ne is the mecca for water sports players", so water sports players were their target tourists.

Next, the researcher considered the patterns of the three elements above, and then divided the TBBs into three groups (Table 3.2).

- Group A: the TBBs which were very consistent with the DB, having three similar elements (e.g. Little Mui Ne Cottage Resort)
- Group B: the TBBs which were consistent with the DB, having two similar elements (e.g. Mui Ne De Century Resort)
- Group C: the TBBs which were not consistent at all, having no or one (but not significantly) similar point (e.g. Little Sai Gon restaurant)

In Table 3.2, some of the DB elements are presented. In addition, typical examples of TBBs belonging to each group are also presented. In particular, the destination's selling points – reflected via symbols, logos, graphics, images and words in the DMOs' marketing materials – were blue sea, white sand, sunshine, best venue for water sports, etcetera. The most competitive values which were chosen as the positioning statement are blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine. These values were reflected via the slogan that both the DMOs used. The target markets projected in the DB-related information were coastal tourists, leisure tourists, resort tourists, and water sports players.

As analysed, Little Mui Ne brand had all three elements (selling points, positioning statement, and target markets) that were "similar" to the three DB elements, as displayed in Table 3.2. Therefore, Little Mui Ne brand was put in Group A. In contrast, Mui Ne De Century brand had two elements (selling points and target markets) that were "similar" to the DB, while its choice of its most competitive values – its service and facilities "to make your joy is our happiness" – are different from the positioning statements of the DB (Table 3.2). Therefore, Mui Ne De Century was located in Group B. In Group C, Little Sai Gon restaurant was a typical example. The restaurant did not project any brand-related information on its website and its marketing materials even could not be found.

Table 3.2. Typical examples of TBBs analysed following brand elements

Brands	Elements of brands		
	Logo, Symbols, Graphics, Images & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What things do graphics, images, and words want to indicate? >> **Selling Points**	Slogan/Name/Tagline - Which things does the slogan want to express? >> **the positioning statement as the most competitive value**	Words, Images & Captions - Which audiences/markets do images/words want to refer? >> **target audiences/markets**
DB	** Selling points were depicted from the logos:* - Sea: 3/3; Sand: 2/3; Sun: 1/3, Coconut tree: 1/3, Water tower: 1/3. ** Selling points depicted from other symbolic contents:* (1) BT-blue sea, white sand, sunshine. (2) BT-best venue for water sports. Etc…	** The slogan of the DMOs:* BT-blue sea, white sand, sunshine. 	(1) Coastal tourists and leisure tourists. (2) Resort tourists. (3) Water sport players. …..
Group 1: Example: Little Mui Ne cottages resort	** Selling points were depicted from the logos:* Sea: 1/1; Coconut tree: 1/1; Sand: 1/1. ** Selling points depicted from other symbolic contents:* (1) Beach resort with rural style. (2) Private beach with sunshine year around.	"Little Mui Ne, blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine"	(1) coastal tourist and leisure tourists. (2) water sport players. (www.littlemuineresort.com)
Group 2: Example: Mui Ne De Century resort	** Selling points were depicted from the logos:* Sea: 1/1; Sand: 1/1. ** Selling points depicted from other symbolic contents:* (1) Coastal resort (2) Sun, Sea.	"To make your joy is our happiness"	(1) coastal and leisure tourist (www.muinedecentury.vn)
Group 3: Example: Little Sai Gon restaurant	N/A	Only name of the businesses. Others: N/A	N/A

Step 2. DB architecture principles.

Next, the collected brand-related information was analysed following DB architecture principles. As explained in the literature review, the role of DB architecture is to implement a suitable value delivery system internally (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; de Chernatony, 2001). As a result, the DB delivers its core values to the TBBs within the destination. In turn, the TBBs receive or incorporate the DB core values. Therefore, when collecting and analysing the DB information it was important to understand which core values BT's DB has. In turn, to examine how the TBBs reflect BT's DB architecture, this study examined whether or not the TBBs incorporate the core values of BT's DB.

The core values of BT's DB were collected and analysed first. Then, every business's marketing materials was considered in terms of what they said about the DB and/or about their own TBB. In particular, the categories such as "Destination, DB or About BT" in the business marketing materials were noted. Then, the TBB-related information in these categories was considered in association with the DB core values. Finally, all TBBs were arranged into three groups (Tables 3.3 and 3.4):

- Group i: includes tourism businesses which both referred to the DB core values and to their own TBB core values; (e.g. Vinh Suong Resort & Spa case in Table 3.4).
- Group ii: includes tourism businesses which only presented their own TBB core values and did not refer to the DB core values; (e.g. Cham Villas Boutique Luxury resort case in Table 3.4).
- Group iii: includes tourism businesses which did not have any information related to either the DB or to their own brand (e.g. Little Sai Gon restaurant in Table 3.4).

The purpose of this grouping was to consider which TBBs were associated with the DB, which TBBs were not associated with the DB, and those which did not have any brand-related information.

Table 3.3. Data analysis following brand architecture principles

GROUP	DB's CORE VALUES	TBBs' CORE VALUES
i		
ii	N/A	
iii	N/A	

Table 3.4. Examples of TBBs analysed following brand architecture principles

GROUP	DB CORE VALUES	TBBs CORE VALUES
Group i: Example: Vinh Suong resort & spa:	The homepage of the Vinh Suong website presented both the Binh Thuan destination brand core values and its own compatibly. Every content of the Binh Thuan destination and the Vinh Suong values also arranged compatibly. The Vinh Suong benefits from the Binh Thuan destination brand core values. Binh Thuan is a coastal province in the mid-southern region with the seaside length stretching over 192km, natural area of 7,849 km2, a population of over one million people of various ethnic groups. Located in an important location which is the gateway for economic - cultural - social exchanges with southeastern, mid-southern and highland regions, Binh Thuan is favored to develop its economy and tourist potential. Binh Thuan is known for its beautiful beaches, clean and wild environment like: Ca Na, Cau Island, Mui Ne ("Escape Cape"), Hoa Ba, Poplar Hill... as well as historical and cultural remains with unique architecture: Duc Thanh Tourist spot, Poshanu Cham Tower, Co Thach Pagoda... All these are important elements which help enhance the tourist position of Binh Thuan at present and in the future. 210 kilometres from the east of Ho Chi Minh City, Mui Ne ("Escape Cape") is the place where ships and rafts shelter themselves from storms. Nowadays, Nui Ne is also a spot for those who wish to come to seek for minutes of relaxation, entertainment, avoiding the noisy and hot cities. (http://www.vinhsuongseaside.com.vn)	Vinh Suong Seaside Resort is located in premium complex of resorts in Mui Ne. In addition to its separate beach with white sand and clean shore, Vinh Suong Seaside Resort also includes a forest of coconut-trees and poplars rustling by the wind and an orchid garden inviting the visit of butterflies and bees. Over 164 well-equipped rooms were designed in diversified styles, which were located in armony with the environment of green trees, blue sea, blue sky and whispering waves. This is definitely an ideal spot for you and your family. Just 3-hour drive to get to a green heaven, why should you hesitate! Vinh Suong Seaside Resort is always looking forward to your steps.
Group ii: Example: Cham Villas resort	N/A	On the website of the Cham villas resort, its brand-related information depicted only the resorts' brand values. The pictures, the logo and the slogan "bring Cham culture to the sea" all attempted to describe the brand core values of the resort. For example, they introduced the resort as below: Cham Villas was created by a German-Vietnamese couple and opened in September 2004. Set in one hectare of lush tropical gardens, Cham Villas is a place to get away from the hustle and bustle, to chill out and be pampered. Tranquility, friendly service and privacy are the attributes of a perfect holiday. By integrating artefacts representing Vietnam's historic Cham era into the design of the garden and villas, the resort creates a unique atmosphere of total detachment and relaxation. (http://www.chamvillas.com)
Group iii: Example: Little Sai Gon restaurant	N/A	

In Table 3.4, typical examples of each group are presented and explained. First, the Vinh Suong resort home web page had brand-related information referring both to its own core values and to BT's DB. For example, the Vinh Suong resort depicted the BT sea-based values with "coastal province, seaside length stretching over 192 km" and "BT is known for its beautiful beaches, clean and wild environment". After introducing the destination core values, Vinh Suong resort had a description of its own brand values that paralleled the destination values. The TBB information showed "Vinh Suong Seaside Resort is located in premium complex of resorts in Mui Ne" with "its separate beach with white sand and clean shore", "the environment of green trees, blue sea, blue sky and whispering waves" (Table 3.4).

In contrast, Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort's brand was arranged in Group ii because the brand information depicted only its own brand core values and did not refer to the DB

core values. Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort's brand-related information depicted itself as a boutique resort with Cham culture (Table 3.4). Little Sai Gon restaurant did not have any brand-related information that depicted the DB core values or its own and so, was put in Group iii.

Step 3. Grouping TBBs according to brand elements and brand architecture.

There was a need to mix groups analysed according to brand architecture and brand elements together. As discussed in the literature review and the conceptual framework, the elements which form the DB and are reflected via the DB-related information are: a blend of all its components that reflects its core values, provision of coherent messages that facilitate market segmentation, identification of its selling points, and the positioning statements of its core values. Moreover, the core values of the DB need to be transferred to TBBs through the DB architecture. This means that TBBs should not only have their own TBB elements consistent with the DB elements, but also should be associated with the DB architecture or associated with the destination value delivery system. By doing this, consistency between the DB and TBBs can be guaranteed. In short, to examine this consistency, this study needed to combine the two dimensions: brand elements and brand architecture.

A matrix (Table 3.5) was used to group the TBBs which were analysed by brand elements (Table 3.1) and brand architecture (Table 3.3). First, Groups A, B, and C of the TBBs, which were analysed according to the brand elements, were arranged in rows. Second, Groups i, ii, and iii of the TBBs, which were analysed according to the brand architecture principles, were arranged in columns.

Third, seven groups were identified by combining the DB architecture principles and DB elements:

- Group 1 – *very consistent brand elements and reference to the destination:* The TBBs had their own TBB elements which were very consistent with the DB elements (Group A) and also referred both to the DB and their TBBs' core values (Group i). In Table 3.5, Group 1 TBBs are symbolised as "1= A and i".
- Group 2 – *consistent brand elements and reference to the destination:* The TBBs that had their own brand elements consistent with the DB elements (Group B) and referred both to the DB and their TBB (Group i). In Table 3.5, Group 2 is symbolised as "2=B and i".

- Group 3 – *no consistent brand elements but reference to the destination:* The TBBs whose own brand elements were not consistent with the DB elements (Group C) but who refer both to the DB and their own TBB elements (group i). In Table 3.5, Group 3 is symbolised as "3= C and i". Although the TBBs in Group 3 did not have any brand elements consistent with the DB, they did spend their marketing materials on advertising, introducing the values of the destination. Interestingly, they showed that they were state-owned businesses and some of them today are under equitisation.

- Group 4 – *very consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination:* the TBBs own brand elements were very consistent with the DB elements (Group A) but they refer only to their TBB (Group ii). In Table 3.5, Group 4 is symbolized as "4= A and ii".

- Group 5 – *consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination:* the TBBs had their own brand elements which were consistent with the DB elements (Group B) but referred only to their TBB (Group ii). In Table 3.5, Group 5 is symbolised as "5= B and ii".

- Group 6 – *no consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination:* the TBBs had their own brand elements which were not consistent with the DB elements (Group C) and referred only to their own TBB (Group ii). In Table 3.5, Group 6 is symbolised as "6= C and ii".

- Group 7 – *no have brand-related information:* the businesses had no brand-related information (Group C), nor any information which supported the destination (Group iii). In Table 3.5, Group 7 is symbolised as "7= C and iii". Most of them are restaurants and mini-hotels. Their websites, could not be found. A few businesses have brochures but the information found is about price or menu only, their information did not supplement about the DB.
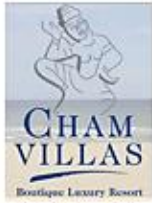
Table 3.5. Data analysis through brand elements and brand architecture

Brand architecture	Brand elements		
	Group A: Very consistent	Group B: Consistent	Group C: Not consistent
Group i: Destination brand (DB) + tourism business brand (TBB)	1 = A and i	2 = B and i	3 = C and i
Group ii: Tourism business brand (TBB)	4 = A and ii	5= B and ii	6= C and ii
Group iii: No have brand-related information			7 = C and iii

In Table 3.6, Little Mui Ne Cottage Resort's brand is a typical example of TBBs in Group 1. All three of Little Mui Ne brand's brand elements (selling points, positioning statement and target markets) were similar to the BT's DB. Moreover, Little Mui Ne brand association with BT values was shown by its reference to "Mui Ne-blue sea-white sand-golden sun" (see first column of Table 3.6). Similar to Little Mui Ne, Vinh Suong brand (in the second column of Table 3.6) showed its association by the two parallel sections about its own and BT's DB values. However, this association is not as strong as Little Mui Ne's, as the Vinh Suong brand had only two brand elements that were similar to BT's DB. As a result, Vinh Suong was located in Group 2. Interestingly, Hoang Long hotel brand (in the third column) showed its association with the BT-Phan Thiet values in its marketing materials but Hoang Long's own brand elements were not similar to any elements of the destination ones.

In contrast to Groups 1, 2 and 3, all brands in Groups 4, 5, and 6 showed their own business values but did not have any section which showed their association with the BT value delivery (Table 3.6). However, when examined for consistency among their brand elements, they were varied. TBBs in Group 4 had all three elements that were similar to BT' DB, those in Group 5 had only two similar elements, while TBBs in Group 6 did not have any similar elements. The restaurants, souvenir shops, and mini hotels in Group 7 did not have any brand-related information or the information could not be found.

Table 3.6. Examples of the content analysis of brand consistency through brand elements and brand architecture

Brand architecture	Brand elements		
	Group A: Very consistent	Group B: Consistent	Group C: Not consistent
Group i: DB + TBB	**GROUP 1:** Example: Little Mui Ne Cottages resort's brand *Slogan: Little Mui Ne Cottage resort-Blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine! *Associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture: 	**GROUP 2:** Vinh Suong resort's brand *Slogan: N/A * Associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture: 	**GROUP 3:** Hoang Long hotel's brand *Slogan: N/A *Associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture:
Group ii: TBB	**GROUP 4:** Dat Lanh resort's brand *Slogan: N/A * Not associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture: to its own brand only: "Dat Lanh Resort truly lives up to its name."	**GROUP 5:** Mui Ne De Century resort's brand *Slogan: To make your joy is our happiness! * Not associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture.	**GROUP 6:** Cham Villas resort's brand *Slogan: Boutique luxury resort *Not associated in the Binh Thuan destination brand architecture.
Group iii: No have brand-related information			**GROUP 7:** Nam Thanh Lau restaurant

The sequence of activities and timeline for the content analysis process are summarised in Table 3.7. After selecting, identifying, and analysing brand-related elements on the websites, brand-related elements in other marketing materials were selected and analysed. The data in other marketing materials was collected when the researcher came to the DMOs' office and the businesses. The brand-related information collected in the marketing materials was then analysed in the same ways as the brand-related information collected on the websites. The

marketing materials collected were name cards, brochures, one "on-brand" handbook, and brand explanation documents. Some businesses stated that their brochures and their e-brochures were the same. Some other businesses stated that their key marketing channels were on the websites because the audiences the marketing materials aimed to attract were tour operators in Ho Chi Minh City and overseas as well as foreign tourists. At the end of the content analysis phase, the results of brand-related information in the marketing materials' analysis did not result in any changes to the groupings based on the results of brand-related information on the websites' analysis.

Table 3.7. The timeline for the content analysis process

No	Activities	May 2014				June 2014			
		W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
1	Brand-related elements on the websites were elected	▓	▓					Interview processing: visit the samples sites and give research invitation	
2	These brand elements were analysed follow the content analysis framework			▓	▓				
3	Finished the DB analyses					▓			
4	Finished TBBs' analyses, then arranged these TBBs into common groups					▓	▓		
5	Brand-related elements in other marketing materials were collected & analysed followed the framework							▓	▓
6	Finalized the results of content analysis								▓

3.4 Phase 2: The process of DB creation and development

3.4.1 Sampling Frame and Sampling.

Once the contents of the DMOs and tourism businesses brands were analysed and their consistency was determined (Table 3.5), the businesses were grouped according to their brand characteristics. Table 3.8 then served as a sampling frame for the second phase of the study.

Table 3.8. The sampling frame for analysing the process of DB creation and development

GROUP 1:	GROUP 2:	GROUP 3:
- Biển Nam resort.	- Vinh Suong Seaside resort.	- Park Diamond hotel.
- Hòn Rơm resort.	- The Beach resort.	- Hoang Long hotel.
- Năm Châu beach Resort.	- Sea Lion Beach resort & spa 2.	- Doi Duong hotel.
- Mui Ne Bay resort	- Allezboo resort & spa.	- Tà Cú Tourism joint stock company.
- Sea Links city resort & golf		- Apricot resort.
- Romana Resort & Spa		
- Song Bien Xanh (Blue Sea) resort		
- Thai Hoa-Mui Ne resort		
- Hoang Lan resort		
- Palmira beach resort & Spa		
- Swiss village resort		
- SunSea resort		
- Ocean Star resort		
- Ngoc Bich bungalow		
- Blue Ocean (Bien Xanh) resort		
- Little Mui Ne cottages resort.		
- Seagull resort & spa.		
- Four Oceans resort		
- Doi Su resort.		
- Golden Coast resort & Spa.		
- Sai Gon-Suoi Nhum resort		
- Cay Bang –Phan Thiet restaurant.		
GROUP 4:	**GROUP 5:**	**GROUP 6:**
- Binh Minh hotel.	- Pandanus resort.	- Full Moon village resort.
- Anh Duong resort.	- Canary resort.	-Bamboo Village resort & Spa.
- Dat Lanh resort.	- Tien Dat resort.	- Sea Horse resort.
	- Hoang Ngoc (Oriental Pearl) resort & spa.	- Sai Gon-Mui Ne resort.
	- Mui Ne De Century- Beach resort & spa.	- Dynasty (Hoang Trieu) resort.
	- Coco beach resort.	- Anantara Muine resort & Spa.
	- Phu Hai resort.	- Terracotta resort & spa.
	- Dawn star (Sao Mai) beach resort.	- Cham villas resort.
	- Rock Water Bay resort & Spa.	- Unique Mui Ne resort.
	- Nang Hon Rom resort.	- Lam Kieu hotel.
		- Victoria resort.
		- BT Tourism Company.
		- Novotel Ocean Dunes hotel
		- Poshanu resort.
		- Ham Tan-21 Century resort.
		- Champa resort
		- Fiore resort.
		GROUP 7:
		- Little Sai Gon restaurant.
		- Nam Thanh Lau restaurant.
		- Nelly Natural restaurant.
		- Seahorse restaurant.
		- Song Bien restaurant.
		- Xuan Vang restaurant.
		- Soc Nau restaurant.
		- Con Chuon Chuon restaurant.
		- Gau Truc restaurant.
		- Trang Thanh restaurant.
		- Khoi restaurant.
		- Good Morning restaurant.
		- Thuy Tien shop
		- Hai Thang fishsauce.
		- Phan Thiet Fisaco.
		- Truc Lam Handicraft
		- Phi Long Sand Painting Enterprise.
		- The Cham Folk Gift Shop at Poshanu Tower.
		- Butterfly Collection of Mr Nguyen Viet Vui.
		- S & T Furniture and Handicraft Production Enterprise.
		- Nga's Embroidery Gallery.
		- Rồng Đất Phan travel service company.
		- Sao Mai travel Co.,
		- Anh Duong Travel Co., Ltd.
		- Nguyen Khang mini hotel.
		- HCM museum.

3.4.2. Determining which businesses to interview.

From the sampling frame (Table 3.8) of 87 TBBs, every second business was selected and contacted. If any participants in the first list refused the research invitation, it was replaced by an odd numbered participant.

3.4.3 Determining which participants to interview.

Many brand researchers have argued that marketing managers, experienced senior managers, CEOs, and directors of tourism are identified as the most knowledgeable people with respect to the internal brand building process (Wallstrom et al., 2008; Hankinson, 2010). In a recent study, Cox et al. (2014) pointed out that opportunities to meet and interview these busy senior executives are limited but their knowledge and experience are crucial in DBM.

In the context of BT destination, the participants of this study fell into two Groups: (i) representatives of the BTPC and BTA; (ii) senior managers or marketing managers of hotels and resorts, restaurants, museums, tourism companies, and souvenir shops in the sampling frame (Table 3.8). It was not clear beforehand whether there were brand managers or deputy heads responsible for branding in each business. The researcher decided to contact the general manager, marketing manager, or CEO of each business first, and to respect their decision about who was the most responsible for the brand in their own businesses.

3.4.4 Determining type of interview.

To address the process of BT's DB creation and the involvement of tourism stakeholders in this process, in-depth interviews were carried out. With this method the "participants are encouraged and prompted to talk in-depth about the topic under investigation", providing "the researcher with in-depth information on the topic of interest without predetermining the results" (Given, 2008, p. 422-423). In existing DB analyses, in-depth interviews have been adopted as a research method that is "designed to capture 'truth' in terms of how sample groups [DMO chair, DMO executive operational executive, hotel, event and attraction managers, and politicians] perceive tourism success for the DMO and for the destination" and permit "respondents to convey thoughts about the concepts and constructs, with few limitations" (Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010, p. 582). In-depth interviews were also adopted because they suit a qualitative approach when seeking to understand actions and problems from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, in-depth interviews provide researchers with a flexible approach that enables them to unpack themes, and to probe with insightful comments allowing participants to elaborate on core themes and concepts in a way that is not possible in quantitative research due to its descriptive nature (Cox et al., 2014). The

nature of the process of DB creation and development is a series of concepts and actions that both DMOs and stakeholders are involved in through various stages of development over a long period of time. Therefore, in-depth interviews were adopted to explore the process of BT's DB creation and development. The structure of interviews was guided by the conceptual framework. Although the details of the questions for the DMOs' representatives and tourism business managers have slight differences, the structure of both question lists was the same.

3.4.5 Determining interview contents.

The process of brand creation and its development is a series of steps and actions taken over a period of time. Therefore, the sequence of questions had to be ordered in a careful and thoughtful way to not only help the participants recall the birth of the DB and their own brands, but also to recall how they were involved in the DB development through its different development phases.

Based on the framework, the contents of DMOs' question checklist included four themes:

1. Background of the participants and their organisations.
2. DB awareness/understanding

   2.1 Understanding about the destination

   + Destination values

   + Destination segmentation

   + Destination competitors

   2.2 Understanding/awareness about DB

3. Brand creation

   3.1 Recalling the birth of BT's DB

   3.2 The big idea

4. Brand involvement

   4.1 DB extension

   4.2 DB shared ownership with businesses or levering the DB.

The checklist for the tourism business managers' interviews was a little different, especially with regards to their involvement in the DB development. This checklist also had four themes. The first two were the same as on the DMOs' question checklist. The third theme was "3. TBBs' creation: recalling the birth of their business brand and where the big idea come from". The third theme was focused on the businesses' brands and how these brand elements are

linked to the DB. The fourth theme focused on the businesses' interest in the DB and their adoption of it. In total, there were 25 questions for DMOs' representatives (see Appendix 1) and 26 questions for tourism business managers.

3.4.6 Data collection.

The researcher began by contacting and inviting representatives of BT provincial tourism authorities to participate in the research (Table 3.11). The first meeting was with the CEO of BTPC, who was responsible for the highest level of the provincial tourism promotion. The BTPC's CEO indicated that the BTA was the organisation which was mainly responsible for the provincial destination branding. He suggested that the researcher should conduct the interview with the president of BTA first and then go back to his organisation if more information was needed, especially in regards to other provincial promotion strategies or destination marketing. So, the researcher contacted the BTA's president and invited him to participate in the research. The interview was conducted in person at the president's office and lasted for more than 40 minutes, with all questions answered.

The second meeting with the CEO of the BTPC was arranged after that. In the second meeting, the CEO appointed the BTPC's deputy head of expert division to answer questions and provide additional documents about DBM. While the BTA interview was able to be recorded, notes were taken with the BTPC interview. The notes were then sent back to the interviewee who contributed additional information as requested.

The researcher also went to every sampled business and gave letters of invitation. Because of the geographic location of businesses, the researcher decided to arrange interviews in different parts of the province, beginning with Ham Tien, and then Phan Thiet, Tuy Phong, Bac Binh, Tien Thanh, Ham Thuan Bac, Ham Thuan Nam parts, and in Mui Ne.

Grouping interviews in different parts of the province helped save time. The interview period was from 20th June to 11th September, 2014. After visiting and contacting 78 of the 87 businesses, nine others in Group 3 could not be contacted because the researcher could not find their physical addresses. In some cases, the researcher asked the locals and discovered some businesses had moved or were under reconstruction. Moreover, the researcher also took notes for those who refused the research invitation. The researcher took notes of why they refused and whether they intended to build their TBB in near future. In total, 29 interviews were completed with tourism business representatives (Table 3.9). While Group 1 had the largest number of managers agreeing to be interviewed, those businesses in Groups 2, 3, 4,

and 7 mostly refused. The response rate was 37.2%. The duration of interviews ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. All of the recordings were also transcribed during this period (20th June to 11th September, 2014).

Table 3.9. The number of businesses which replied positively to the research invitation

Group1: 22 businesses 11 businesses accepted positively	Group 2: 4 businesses 1 business accepted positively	Group 3: 5 businesses 1 business accepted positively
Group 4: 3 businesses 1 business accepted positively	Group 5: 10 businesses 5 businesses accepted positively	Group 6: 17 businesses 8 businesses accepted positively
No business	No business	Group 7: 26 businesses 2 businesses accepted positively

Twenty seven of the 29 interviews were done with managers from the accommodation sector (Table 3.10). The two other interviews were done with managers from local tourism companies. In terms of the characteristics of the interviewees, 24 of the 29 interviewees were managers or directors of their businesses. Three of the interviewees were the owners of their businesses and two were general managers. The interviewees had worked in their positions for varying lengths of time. If consent to contribute was not given, then the information will only be provided in aggregate form or reference will be made to organisation X, Y, or Z.

Table 3.10. Description of businesses to interview and interviewees

Businesses to interview	
Types of tourism products	*Number of brands*
Accommodation	27
Tourism Company	2
Interviewees	
Position	*Number of people*
General Manager	2
Owner	3
Board of managers/ directors	24
Years in this position	*Number of years*
Less than 2 years	2
From 2 to 5 years	11
From 6 to 9 years	7
From 10 to 15 years	7
Over 15 years	2

Table 3.11. The timeline for the interview process is summarised

No	Activities	June W3	June W4	July W1	July W2	July W3	July W4	Aug W1	Aug W2	Aug W3	Aug W4	Sept W1	Sept W2
With DMOS													
1	Went and gave research invitation to BTPC's CEO	■											
2	Through the BTPC's CEO introduction, contacted and conducted interview with BTA's president	■											
3	Back to the BTPC, conducted interview with the BTPC's representative-the BTPC deputy head of expert division	■											
With Tourism Stakeholders within the province													
1	• Set sampling frame and grouped interview participants from the results of the content analysis. • Selected businesses which are in odd order in every group lists of the sampling frame. This activity results in the first business contact list of the research.	■											
2	• Went and gave research invitations to each business in the first business contact list	■											
3	• Received replies from the businesses: + Arranged interviews with businesses which agreed to interview + Took notes about reasons gave by businesses which refused to interview			■	■	■	■	■					
4	• Replaced the businesses who refused the invitation by their closest business which are in even order of its group in the sampling frame			■									
5	• Conducted interviews				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

3.4.7 Data analysis.

There are several reasons why this research needs an analytical framework. This research has been structured following the conceptual framework (Figure 2.8) and the flow diagram that conceptualises the direction for the whole research, especially the methodology. However, this study faces many challenges in the analysis of qualitative data. The research problem addresses the general view about the process of a DB creation and development. Therefore, the research problem addressed is open and exploratory. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were adopted. The results of data collection are rich and to some extent are very dense. So, "without a clear analytical framework, the analysis of such material can be very daunting and the communication of findings rather problematic as the reader becomes lost in an often lengthy and opaque discussion" (Pearce, 2012, p. 50).

The purpose of the analytical framework (Figure 3.2) is to guide both data analysis and presentation for the process of BT's DB creation and development and the involvement of tourism stakeholders in this. The analytical framework is important because it sets out a multi-step analytical procedure of the DB development stages by providing a structure to outline and justify the steps taken, and to make the sequences of the analysis clearer. The analytical framework is useful not only for organising the structure of the analysis but also for communicating the way and the order in which the results will be analysed and presented (Pearce, 2012).

The analytical framework was developed based on the results of the data collection (section 3.4.6). The conceptual framework guided the ways in which the data were approached (sections 3.2, 3.4.4), guided for the methodology used to address the second research aim (section 3.4), and then the structure of question checklists (section 3.4.5). The structure of question checklists now has an implication for the structure of the analysis. More details of the analytical framework are presented in Figure 3.2.

Basically, the analytical framework organises the structure of the analysis into two main parts. The first part analyses the process of BT's DB creation and development. It is based on coding the BTA and BTPC interviews. The second part explores the tourism business stakeholders' involvement in the process. It is based on analysing material from the coding of the 29 business interviews. Importantly, this research considers the involvement of the stakeholders by comparing how each group of TBBs is involved in the DB. The stakeholders were grouped as presented in the sampling frame (Table 3.8).

Figure 3.2. Framework for analysing the process of BT's DB creation and development and the involvement of the tourism stakeholders in this

THE PROCESS OF BT's DB CREATION & DEVELPMENT		THE STAKEHOLDERS' BUY-IN / INVOLVEMENT
Identify & coding themes based on the BTA and BTPC interviews' transcripts		*Identify & coding themes in each business interviews, arrange coding themes follows groups. compare themes of each group with the DMOs coding*
I. BT DB awareness/ understanding		**I. BT DB awareness/ understanding**
↓ Understanding about the destination: • Destination values • Destination segmentation • Destination competitors ↓ Understanding about the DB.	⬅	↓ Understanding about the destination: • Destination values • Destination segmentation • Destination competitors ↓ Understanding about the DB.
II. BT's DB creation		**II. TBBs' creation**
↓ The birth of BT's DB: • Time of creation and period of creation program. • BT tourism industry's situation at the time of the creation program (its internal and external business environment's analysis). • Opportunity and challenges the DMO and destination competing brand faced when creating the brand. • Who are the brand creators (DMOs, steering business group (if have)…). • The need for a BT's DB. • The requirements of BT's DB creation (skills, attitude, talents from the DMOs, DMO's employees, and/ or steering groups) ↓ Emerging concepts and actions (if any) in the birth of BT's DB.	⬅	↓ The birth of TBBs: ↓ The incorporation of (1) business values and destination values, (2) help/ guide/ corporation between DMO and the business, (3) adopted/ complemented DB elements/ activities or program when the TBBs created & developed… ↓ Emerging concepts and actions (if have) in the birth of TBB and how it corporate to the DB. ↓ Emerging concepts and actions (if any)
↓ The big idea of BT's DB: • Where did the big idea come from/ how were these features of the brand decided • Does this process/ action include tourism stakeholders • How does BT's DB get across the diversity of the variety of BT destination values, markets, many parties in DB's benefits…. ↓ Emerging concepts and actions (if any)	⬅	↓ The big idea of TBB: • Where did the big idea come from/ how were these feature of the brand decided • What supplies and suppliers tap into the TBB (DMOs, DB contents as reference, their own employees): do DMOs and DB play any role in the TBB creation, development… ↓ Emerging concepts and actions (if any)
III. Brand involvement		**III. Their involvement in DB extension**
↓ Brand extension • Leadership • Communication ↓ Share ownership • Share whole or partly elements of DB ownership • Share ownership via brand's activities or programmes	⬅	↓ Their interest in DB ↓ Their adoption of DB

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The analysis of the process of BT's DB creation and development consists of three main steps (Figure 3.2); namely awareness/understanding of BT's DB, brand creation, and brand extension. At the first step, this research seeks to explore of DMO representatives' understanding of BT as a destination and of BT's DB. At the second step, the DB's creation is recalled. At the third step, materials related to the ways in which the DB extended and shared ownership are analysed.

The analysis of the involvement of tourism business stakeholders within BT destination consists of three steps: namely, BT's DB awareness/understanding, TBB creation, and their involvement in DB. The arrows, as displayed in Figure 3.2, symbolise the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in the DB development process. The purpose of the first step is to discover whether or not the stakeholders share a "similar" understanding of destination values, segmentation, competitors, and DB contents. The purposes of the second step are to explore whether or not the TBBs' contents adopted, complemented, or differed from the contents of the DB; whether or not the creation of TBBs received support from the DMOs; and whether or not the business values complemented/adopted destination values when the TBBs were created. The purpose of the third step is to explore whether or not the stakeholders are interested in and adopt DB contents, activities, or programmes and the ways in which they adopt or commit to the DB.

3.5 Strengths and limitations

The methodological approach used in this study has both strengths and limitations which are discussed following the research aims, the research design, and the research samples.

This research aims are to contribute to the existing DB and DBM literature by exploring the consistency between DB and TBBs. To obtain a comprehensive view about the consistency, the process of BT's DB creation and development, and the stakeholders' involvement in this process were examined. As a result, this exploratory research provides not only an empirical view about the consistency of DB but also a basis for future research that can be explored further.

The research design also has its own strengths and limitations. It is developed based on a very comprehensive and up-to-date literature review in which relevant studies are brought together to build a solid foundation to address the research aims. The conceptual framework, the selection of the multi-method approach, the division of each research phase and the links between the two research phases, the analytical frameworks for the consistency between the

brands and for the analysis of the process of BT's DB creation and development are connected. Each step of the research methodology is developed based on its prior step and embodied in its later step. Importantly, these steps together address the research aims.

There are, however, several limitations to this comprehensive research design. Although the conceptual framework was mostly developed based on the DB literature, two small steps – brand vision and brand architecture – drew on the reviewed service brand and corporate brand literature because of the lack of specific work on these topics in the DB literature. Many studies have discussed the similar nature between DB and corporate brand and service brand (Hankinson, 2004; 2007), but, it cannot be said that DBs are absolutely similar to the nature of corporate brands. This might affect the validity of the conceptual framework.

The research approach combines two research methods, content analysis and in-depth interviews. These two methods together guided the collection of targeted data. The different types of data collected also provide enough information to address the research aims. The content analysis was designed to collect data through the examination of brand information on the websites and other marketing materials of BT's DB and its 87 TBBs. The in-depth interviews were designed to convey the reality of BT's DB creation and development as well as how tourism businesses are involved in this process. As an exploratory study, in-depth interviews also were designed to accommodate emerging concepts and actions that had not been addressed in the reviewed literature and the conceptual framework. So, both types of data complemented each other so that the research aims could be addressed. Last but not least, this study is an exploratory one and a single case study. As a result, this study is similar to many existing researches that "the adaptation of scales from the DB to a broader context of tourist destinations is sensitive and should be driven by case-specific consideration" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). Further research in different destinations, destination development stages, and DBM are needed.

Third, the samples also have both strengths and limitations. In the first phase, the research examined the brand-related marketing materials of two DMOs and 87 tourism business. The first phase examined the symbolic contents. Except for the works of Lee et al., (2006) and Nelson (2014), the specific investigation of how these symbolic contents influence the DB has not attracted much attention. Although this study examined clearly projected words, captions of images, images, and graphics, this study calls for more research on these symbolic contents and its validity to the brand building. In the second phase, the researcher interviewed the two DMO representatives and 29 senior managers of resorts, hotels, and tourism companies. The researcher also took notes of those who refused the research invitation by asking the reasons

for refusing. As can be seen, the research collected a rich and diverse set of data. However, the research sample has several limitations. The opportunities to meet busy senior managers were limited, the response rate was only around 37.2%. Most of the positive responses were from the BT accommodation sector (27/29), particularly from resorts' managers. So, a balanced number of business interviews among tourism product sectors was not achieved.

Moreover, the data represented for TBBs in Groups 2, 3, 4, and 7 was limited because only 1 or 2 managers in each of these groups agreed to be interviewed. As a result, the findings of how the businesses in these groups were involved in the process of BT's DB were limited, and cannot be generalised although they allow clarification of the topic. In the case of BT, the businesses in Groups 3 and 4 interviewed were provincially-owned businesses while most of the businesses in Group 7 were small businesses. This study suggests that involvement of provincially-owned businesses and small businesses in the DB development deserves further research.

Chapter Four: The consistency between the DB and TBBs

4.1 Introduction

To address the first research aim, the data collection and analyses addressed the consistency between BT's DB and the TBBs (section 3.3). Following the analysis of DB elements and architecture (Table 3.5), an assessment of the patterns of consistency was made. As shown in Table 3.5, the TBBs in Group 1, which had very consistent brand elements and referred to BT destination, were most consistent with BT's DB. Compared to the Group 1, the TBBs in Group 2 were less consistent but still referred to the destination. While the TBBs in Groups 3 to 5 satisfied only one of the two steps of the consistency analysis, the TBBs in Groups 6 had no consistent brand elements and also did not refer to the destination. Those businesses in Group 7 had no brand-related information. As a result, the research aim of examining the consistency between the BT's DB and TBBs was addressed.

In this chapter, the findings of the first phase of this study are presented in detail. In particular, the findings from the analysis of BT's DB are presented in section 4.2. Those from the analysis of the TBBs are presented in section 4.3 going from Group 1 to Group 7. The findings for each group are also compared with the findings about the DB. Finally, a conclusion for the first phase of this study is presented in section 4.4.

4.2 The findings of the BT DB's content analysis

In this section, the findings of BT's DB elements and architecture are presented. BT's DB elements including DB's selling points, positioning statement, and target markets are presented in order. Furthermore, BT's DB architecture are presented by presenting its core values which literally are received by TBBs within BT.

4.2.1 BT's DB elements.

Overall, BT's DB information depicted the destination with many selling points and ready to serve a number of different target markets. However, the sea-based assets were depicted frequently by both DMOs as the selling points of BT. The most competitive values that the DMOs chose to position were "blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine" (Table 4.1). These values were reflected via the slogan used by both of the DMOs. In terms of the target market, leisure tourists who want to go to the beach for holidays were depicted frequently as the destination's tourists.

Table 4.1. Elements of BT's DB
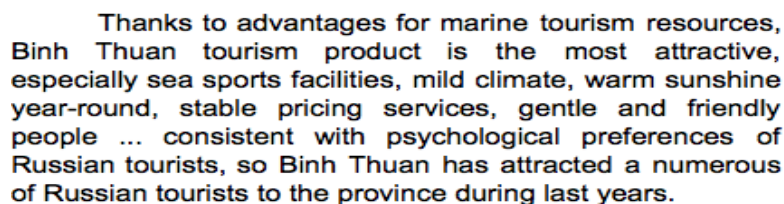
Logo, Symbols, Graphics, Images & Words	Slogan /Name/ Tagline	Words, Images & Captions
- Which selling points do those symbols stand for? - What selling points do business's graphics and words indicate? >> *Selling Points* * *Selling points were depicted on the three logos:* - Sea/beach: in 3/3 logos - Sand: in 2/3 logos - Others: Coconut tree, Sun, BT water tower in 1/3 logos. 1. The logos used on the BTPC's website: 2. The logo used in the BTA's marketing materials: * *Selling points were depicted in the two DMOs' marketing materials:* (1) BT-blue sea, white sand, yellow sunshine. (2) BT province with Mui Ne - Ham Tien are famous international tourist destinations. (3) BT-best venue for water sports. (4) BT has many delicious dishes. (5) BT-paradise of beach resorts. (6) BT- vibrant community full of cultural festivals. (7) BT- tourism promotion's activities, meetings and tourism businesses.	- Which things does the slogan want to express? >> *Positioning* 1. BT – an attractive destination: in 1/2 slogan. 2. BT – blue sea, white sand, yellow sunshine: in 2/2 slogans. 	- What audiences do the images/words want to refer? >> *Positioning* *Target tourists* *Tourists by holiday's purposes:* (1) Coastal tourists and leisure tourists. (2) Resort tourists. (3) Water sport players. (4) Golf players. (5) Sightseeing tourists. (6) Culture tourists. (7) Out of office, escaped, weekend holiday tourists that they originating from HCM city. (8) Local community and local businesses.

4.2.1.1 Destination selling points.

In the three logos used on the DMOs' websites, sea and sand were two selling points that were depicted clearly. While the sea was depicted in all three logos, sand in two out of three logos, other symbols such as sun, coconut trees, and the BT water tower were depicted in one logo, as displayed in the first column of Table 4.1.

As seen in the first column of the Table 4.1, the destination had 7 key selling points that were depicted through its DB-related information. They were arranged as follows: BT – blue sea, white sand beach, yellow sun; two famous international tourist destinations; best venue for water sports; paradise/capital of resorts; delicious dishes; vibrant local culture; and promotional activities. For example, words such as "thanks to advantages for marine tourism resources", "besides the strength of tourism beach resort, BT is 'bestowed' annual warm and sunny weather and pure natural environment" were displayed in many marketing materials of both DMOs. These sea, sand, sun selling points were described by the DMOs as having "contributed significantly in brand building, enhance the image of BT destination" and "create a brilliant local tourism brand name" (www.muinetourism.vn). Below is a screen shot from the BTPC's website in which some of the selling points were depicted clearly:

Figure 4.1. Screen shot for BT's selling points

Thanks to advantages for marine tourism resources, Binh Thuan tourism product is the most attractive, especially sea sports facilities, mild climate, warm sunshine year-round, stable pricing services, gentle and friendly people ... consistent with psychological preferences of Russian tourists, so Binh Thuan has attracted a numerous of Russian tourists to the province during last years.

Source: www.muinetourism.vn

Other selling points such as vibrant community full of local culture and traditional cuisine were also depicted clearly in the DMOs' marketing materials. For example, the BTPC spent many information sections introducing "traditional festival" and "Cuisine – Specials" on its website. Other selling points presented in the DMOs' marketing materials, but of less significance, were MICE (meetings and business trips), shopping, competitive prices, religious tourist attractions, and adventure tours.

Finally, tourism promotion activities and meetings among tourism businesses also were depicted on both the BTPC and BTA's websites. While the BTPC spent many marketing sections on the destination tourism promotion activities, the BTA had many information sections for tourism businesses agreement in brand-related activities.

4.2.1.2 DB's positioning statement.
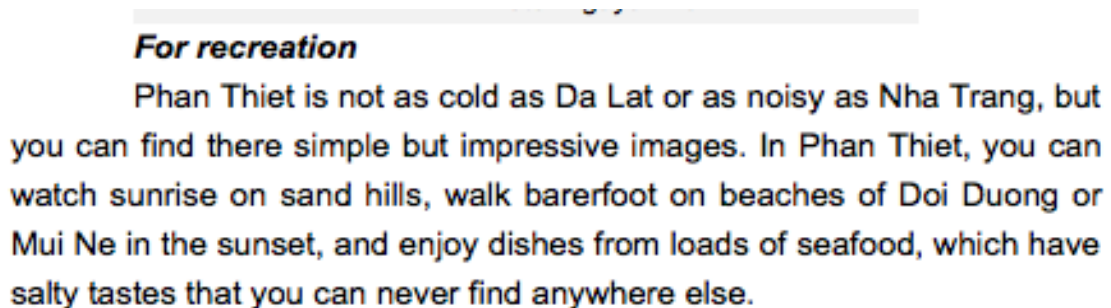
Among the many core values of the destination, the values of blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine were chosen as the most competitive by the DMOs. The most competitive values were reflected through the slogan of BT's DB. The slogan published in both the DMOs' marketing materials was "BT – blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine", (Table 4.1, column 2). The slogans: "BT tourism – an attractive destination" and "BT – Blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine" were used compatibly on the BTPC website while the slogan "BT – blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine" was used all in the BTPC's marketing materials.

4.2.1.3 DB target markets.

According to tourist holiday purposes, the DMOs' brand-related information showed that coastal tourists – leisure tourists, resort tourists, water sport players, golf players, sightseeing tourists, culture tourists, and weekend holiday tourists – on out-of-office short vacations were targeted for BT (Table 4.1, column 3). The eighth target tourist group was local community and businessmen. For example, information displayed on both the BTPC and BTA's websites introduced the destination for tourists who would like to play water sports, beach bathe, and enjoy sea food.

Phan Thiet city [the capital of BT province] also was described as a place that tourists should visit for recreation.

Figure 4.2. Screen shot for tourists targeted for BT

Source: www.muinetourism.vn

4.2.2 BT's DB architecture.

How TBBs integrate the DB architecture, the destination core values which were depicted by the DB, are analysed first. The DB-related information showed that the provincial tourism industry was developed based on nine key destination core values (Table 4.2). However, the

value of BT as a coastal destination with a 192km long white sand coastline was most frequently depicted.

Table 4.2. BT's DB core values

The core values of the BT DB
- Coastal destination for tourists-192 km long white sand beach.
- Mui Ne-Ham Tien named "capital of resorts" with the largest number of high-class resorts in Vietnam.
- Mui Ne-best place for international water skiing competitions every year, best for water sports in Asian.
-18 holes golf course with international standard. The 9th hole is one of the 500 most beautiful in the world.
- Mui Ne sand dunes, the largest number of natural changing shapes and forms in Vietnam.
- Cham culture, maritime culture as local culture.
- Geographical location is very close to the biggest economic zone of Vietnam, HCM city.
- Green, wild and fresh environments for tourism sustainable development
-Specialties of BT: BT with many famous dishes.

First, various brand-related information described the destination as a coastal destination with a nearly 192km long white sand beach. For example, many words on the websites of the BTPC and BTA depicted this value, such as: "Mui Ne was named as one of the most beautiful beach in Asia by Canadian traveller, Skyscanner, and Lonely Plannet", "BT is one of the six biggest coastal tourist attractions in Vietnam" or "with the characteristic of a marine resort destination's leading in Vietnam" (www.dulichbinhthuan.com.vn, www.muinetourism.vn, www.bta.vn).

The pictures used on the BTPC websites also described this value very clearly. One seascape was presented on the header of the BTPC website and the seascape was unchanged. On the picture slideshow bar, 4 out of 6 pictures described BT's sea values. On the map (Figure 4.3), the 192 km white sand beach of BT was presented clearly.

Figure 4.3. Screen shot from BTPC's website header

Source: www.dulichbinhthuan.com.vn

Similarly, eight other key core values of the destination were presented clearly through the pictures, words, and logo used on the BTA website. These core values were stated clearly via three videos presented on the right corner of the website (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4. Screen shot from the BTA website
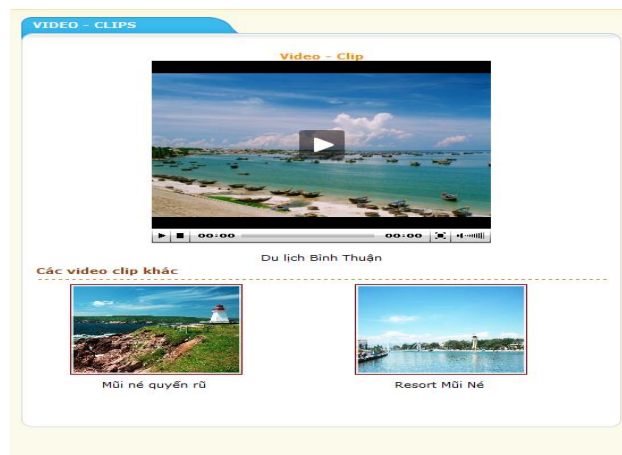
Source: www.bta.vn

All of the three videos' contents (pictures and statements) showed the destination as a famous and attractive coastal destination. Interestingly, the three videos all showed sea values and leisure tourism were the most attractive values of the destination (Figure 4.4). On the top, a video introduced information about "Binh Thuan tourism". On the left hand side, another video was about "the charm of Mui Ne" and another on the right hand side was about "Resort in Mui Ne".

As seen in Table 4.2, the second core value of the DB that the DMOs' marketing materials depicted was BT with Mui Ne and Ham Tien as two internationally famous destinations. Mui

Ne was described as the most beautiful part of the destination and was recognised widely as "the greatest attractive beach in South Asia, affirmed by website www.Skyscanner.com". In addition, both Ham Tien and Mui Ne were also described as the home of many high-class resorts and famous international hotel brands – having "Vietnam's largest number of resorts and hotels along the beach" (www.dulichbinhthuan.vn). For example, the gallery pictures used on the left corner of the BTA website were divided into four main parts, one was for the Ham Tien beach, one for Mui Ne resort-bungalow, while two others were about the whole BT beach and water sports facilities.

Third, various pictures and words in the DMOs' marketing materials showed that the destination is the best venue for water sports in Asia, using such words as "the best place for international water skiing" or "Mui Ne is the mecca for water sports players" (www.dulichbinhthuan.vn). Moreover, the destination had an international water skiing competition every year (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5. Screen shot for sports' values

▸ Quan Que – champion of Binh Thuan Tourism Association Tennis Cup 2014
▸ Activity to celebrate Binh Thuan Tourism Day: Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball Competition 2014
▸ Binh Thuan Three Cushion Carom Billiards Tournament 2014 opens
▸ Binh Thuan Sports Festival 2014 opened
▸ New Face Funcup International Windsurf Race 2014
▸ Opening Fun Cup International Windsurf Race 2014, times15th
▸ Ta Cu mountain climbing contest expand in 2014
▸ Sand Racing at Muine celebrates New Year
▸ Boat Racing welcoming Giap Ngo Spring in Phan Thiet
▸ The Fun Cup International Windsurfing Race 2014 in Muine

Source: www.muinetourism.vn

Fourth, the pictures, words, and graphics in the DMOs materials also described the province as having an 18-hole golf course built to international standards, with the ninth hole being one of the 500 most beautiful holes in the world. Three pictures out of 14 on the BTPC website's slideshow bar described the golf course.

Fifth, the province is widely known for its immense sand dunes that make tourists call the province "little Sahara desert". As explained in Vietnam's Guinness book of records, the sand dunes also vary in colors and forms. Some are red, some are orange, and some are white (Figure 4.6). The fourth and fifth values were clearly described through pictures and words presented on the slideshow bar of the DMOs websites as well as in other marketing materials of the province tourism such as brochures and leaflets.

Figure 4.6. Screen shots the BT's sand core values

Source: www.bta.vn, www.muinetourism.vn

Sixth, the DB-related information also indicated that the province's location is very close to the biggest economic zone of Vietnam – the largest source of domestic tourists, HCM City. Therefore, potential tourists who come from the HCM City can save travel time and have more time for their vacations in the destination. Many words like "200 km away from HCM city" or "4 hours drive" appear in the marketing materials of the DMOs.

Seventh, the brand-related information depicts the ethnic culture of Viet and Cham people, an interesting feature to those who want to explore the local culture. However, the local maritime culture with fishing village, fishing habits, and maritime life of fishermen was described more frequently (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. Screen shot for culture core values

Source: www.dulichbinhthuan.com.vn

Two other important values also were presented in the DMOs' marketing materials. However, they were less significant than the seven values above. First, the DB-related information also showed the province as a green, wild, and fresh environment (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8. Screen shot for "green" destination core value

A plan is to carry out the National Action Plan on tourism period 2013 - 2020 in Binh Thuan, striving 2020 Binh Thuan tourism development towards green and sustainable tourism, the position is equal to the national and Southeast Asia, tourism is really a key of economic sector, contributing positively to social economic development and nationwide.

Source: www.muinetourism.vn

Finally, the brand-related information collected also aimed to show that the destination is famous for its delicious dishes (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9. Screen shot for cuisine core values
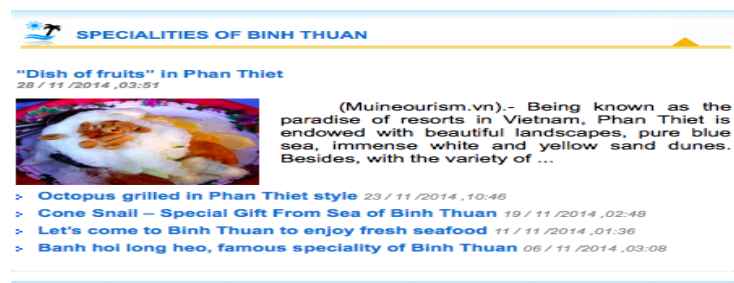
Source: www.muinetourism.vn

4.3 The findings of TBBs' content analysis

Overall, the consistency between BT's DB and its TBBs varied among groups. Only 22 of the 87 TBBs examined were classified as very consistent with BT's DB by their brand elements and their integration with the DB value system. Totally different from the TBBs in Group 1, 26 businesses in Group 7 did not have any brand information. For other TBBs, their consistency was less significant than those 22 TBBs in Group 1, but more significant than the 26 small TBBs in Group 7. In particular, the TBBs in Groups 3, 4, and 5 only satisfied one out of two steps of the consistency assessment. While the TBBs in Group 3 referred to the destination, their brand elements were not consistent with the DB's elements; the TBBs in Groups 4 and 5 did not have any marketing sections referring to the destination although their TBBs' elements were very consistent or consistent with the DB's elements. Interestingly, the TBBs in Groups 6 only expressed the businesses and did not show their integration or consistency with the DB at all.

4.3.1 Consistency between the DB and TBBs in Group 1.

Group 1: Very consistent brand elements and reference to the destination.

4.3.1.1 Very consistent brand elements.

The TBBs in Group 1 had all three elements of their brand very consistent with the three elements of the DB. In terms of selling points, all 22 TBBs show that sea-based assets were their selling points (Table 4.3). For example, Golden Coast resort's brand information claimed "Golden Coast resort and spa provides breathtaking vista of the ocean and the long, white sand beach" (www.goldencoastresort.com.vn) and the background of their website and many brochures was a blue sea picture (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10. Screen shot the header of the Golden Coast resort's website

Source: www.goldencoastresort.com.vn

Water sports, services and facilities, and golf courses were also depicted as the selling points of these TBBs (Table 4.3), but less significant than sea selling points. While eight of the TBBs depicted that they were venues for water sports, only one depicted the golf courses and four TBBs depicted sand skiing or football and tennis. As a result, all of the selling points depicted by the TBBs were very similar to those of the BT's DB.

Figure 4.11. Screen shot from the Swiss Village Resort's website

Source: www.svr-vn.com

In terms of the positioning statement, sea, sand, and sun were features that these businesses' slogans referred to (Table 4.3) so that the positioning statements of these TBBs were very similar to that of the DB. For example, Little Mui Ne cottage resort's slogan was "Little Mui Ne Cottage Resort – Blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine!" (www.littlemuineresort.com). Interestingly, most of business names of TBBs in this group had the word "sea" word both in Vietnamese and English language or their tagline as "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam" under their business names.

The third element of these TBBs was also very similar to that of the DB. Various brand-related information in these businesses' marketing materials depicted sea tourists as their targets. As seen in Table 4.3, all of the 22 TBBs indicated that sea tourists were those they want to attract. For example, Palmira Beach Resort and Spa's data source emphasised "when you start your journey to Palmira Beach Resort and Spa, you are on the way to beach paradise" (www.palmiraresort.com). Second, the DB-related information depicted that the destination wanted to attract water sports lovers. For example, images of windsurfing and water skiing were found easily in the marketing materials of the Blue Ocean, Little Mui Ne Cottage, and Swiss Village resorts. Importantly, a Windguru calendar for Vietnam-Mui Ne beach was also published in the marketing materials of many brands (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12. Screen shot of Windguru calendar

Source: http://www.blueoceanresort.com.vn
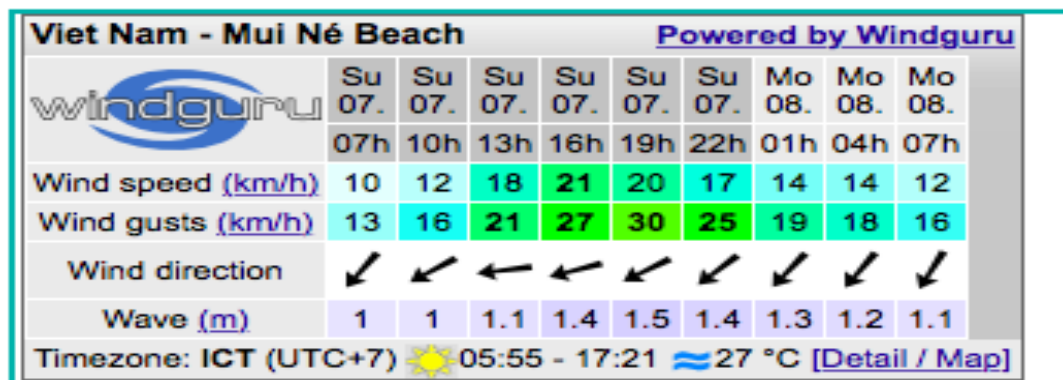
Similar to the aim of the DB, twelve TBBs in this group indicated that they wanted to attract tourists who take holidays for relaxation, enjoyment, and short escapes, especially a weekend holiday. In addition, they also indicated that they wanted to attract tourists originating from HCM city (Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13. Screen shot for targeted tourists

Phan Thiet is a tourist site indispensable for travelers who desire to get a true relaxing Vietnamese experience. It is fairly close to Ho Chi Minh City (approximately 200kms) where the temperature remains enjoyable all year. It is well-know as a stunning coastline stretching for more than 20 kilometers beneath thousands of great coconut palms.

Source: http://www.oceanstarresort.com

Table 4.3. Elements of the TBBs in Group 1

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - Which things do the graphics/words indicate? >> *Selling Points*	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> *Positioning*	Words, Images & Captions - What audiences do images want to refer? >> *Target markets*
* *Selling points were depicted from the logos:* - Sea/beach: 17/22 logos - Sand: 9/22 logos - Sailing/Sailing boats: 6/22 logos - Others: Coconut trees: 8/22 logos; Sky: 4/22 logos; Sun: 3/22 logos; Seagull: 2/22 logos, star 1/22 logo; resort gate 1/22 logo. Example 1: Example 2: Example 3: * *Selling points depicted from words, graphics:* 1. Sea or Sea-based assets: (22/22 TBBs referred) 2. Water sports: (8/22 TBBs referred) 3. Other selling points: Golf course at Sea Links city (1/11 TBB referred), tennis, football on the beach and sand skiing (4/22 TBBs referred)…	* *Some consistent slogans/ tagline/Name of the TBBs in this group:* -Little Mui Ne cottages resort: blue sea, white sand and yellow sunshine! -Palmira beach resort & spa: When you start your journey to Palmira Beach Resort & Spa, you are on the way to beach paradise! /Little Paradise. -Mui Ne Bay- Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam -Swiss Village resort-Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam. -Hoang Long-blue sea-white sand-sunshine -Sai Gon - Suoi Nhum-trees, white sand beach, gentle waves and sunlight all. -Cay Bang restaurant -Beautiful, wild and clean beach.	* *Tourists by holidays' purposes:* 1. Sea tourists are generally target audiences of this business group. (22/22 TBBs referred) 2. Water sports players/ lovers: (8/22 TBBs referred) 3. Relax or Enjoyable tourists, get away from hustle and bustle of big city, breathtaking vista of the bay. (12/22 TBBs referred) 4. Out of office, office team building. (5/22 TBBs referred) 5. Weekend holiday, HCM city originated tourists (8/22 TBBs referred)

4.3.1.2 Reference to the destination.

All 22 TBBs had one section named "Destination" or "the destination" or "BT" in their marketing materials. In this section, all these TBBs referred to BT's DB/destination values. Together with the DB-related section, they also mentioned their own TBBs. All of them mentioned that they benefited from the destination core values. While the beach and sunny weather were referred to by all the TBBs, other values were also referred to by some of them (Table 4.4)

Table 4.4. Core values that TBBs refer to the destination

Core values that TBBs refer to the destination.
1. BT – blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine (referred to by 22/22 brands)
2. BT – with Ham Tien and Mui Ne as famous international tourist attractions (referred to by 17/22 brands)
3. BT – best venue for water sports (referred to by 8/22 brands)
4. BT – with a variety of delicious dishes (referred to by 4/22 brands)
5. BT – capital of resorts (referred to by 1/22 brands)
6. BT – with many famous tourist attractions (referred to by 6/22 brands)

As seen in Table 4.4, all of the TBBs referred to the most competitive values of the destination: blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine. A typical example is Five Oceans (Năm Châu) resort. Various brand-related information in the Five Ocean resort's marketing materials depicted that "the destination has marvellous world with blue sea, white sand, windy, rattling wave sound, rustle of pinewood, the dawn with twitter" (http://www.namchauresort.com).

Second, seventeen out of the 22 TBBs had the tagline "Mui Ne beach", "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam", "Mui Ne-Vietnam" in their brand name (Figure 4.14)

Figure 4.14. Screen shot from the Romana Resort and Spa's website

Source: www.romanaresort.com.vn

The other 5 resorts did not attach Mui Ne as a tagline but attached "Phan Thiet-Vietnam" or referred to Phan Thiet in their marketing materials. Many of the businesses were located in Ham Tien. Their taglines were also "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam" or "Mui Ne-Vietnam".

Third, eight resorts had brand-related information directly showing the province as a venue for water sports (Table 4.4) such as windsurfing and kitesurfing.

Fourthly, four TBBs depicted the province as having a variety of delicious dishes (Table 4.4). The brand-related information of Romana resort showed "for a memorable dining experience with magnificent sunset views, Panorama restaurant [the restaurant at the resort] is a showcase oceanfront dinning venue. Panorama's à la carte menu features tantalizing appetizers, tropical salads, and a wide selection of fresh local seafood" (http://www.romanaresort.com.vn). In addition, Hon Rom 1, Song Bien Xanh, and Five Ocean resorts stated that they best serve special and traditional food.

Fifth, the value "capital of resorts" of the destination was depicted by only two TBBs: Sea link resort and Swiss village resort and spa (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15. Screen shot from the e-brochure of Swiss Village Resort

Source: www.svr-vn.com

Sixth, six resorts of Group 1 showed that the province has many famous tourist attractions (Table 4.4). Interestingly, some resorts integrated themselves with the destination values in other ways. For example, Hon Rom 1 resort's brand-related information presented it as being very closely associated with the early history of the BT tourism development stage. Blue Ocean resort's brand-related information showed "stay in the resort and enjoy Phan Thiet & Mui Ne – A journey of unique memories" (http://www.blueoceanresort.com.vn).

4.3.2 Consistency between the DB and TBBs in Group 2.

Group 2: Consistent brand elements and reference to the destination.

4.3.2.1 Consistent brand elements.

While the positioning statements of the TBBs in Group 2 were not similar to those of the DB, in general, the selling points and target markets depicted through their symbolic contents were consistent with those of the DB. First, all four brands depicted the destination as a beach attraction (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Elements of the TBBs in Group 2

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What things do the graphics and words indicate? >> *Selling Points*	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> *Positioning*	Words, Images & Captions - Whom audiences do images want to refer? >> *Target markets*
* *Selling points were depicted from the logos:* - Sea/beach: 4/4 logos - Sun, sea lion, horse: 1/4 logo. Example 1: Example 2 1. Sea or Sea-based assets: 4/4 TBBs referred. 2. Water sports, sand, delicious dishes, culture: 0/4 TBBs referred.	*Name:* The Beach resort Vinh Suong seaside resort Allezboo beach resort & spa Sea Lion beach resort and spa. *Slogan:* No slogan *Tagline:* No tagline	*Tourist holidays' purposes:* 1. Sea tourists (4/4 TBBs referred) 2. Relax or Enjoyable tourists, get away from hustle and bustle of big city, Out of office, office team building, Weekend holiday, HCM city-originating tourists (4/4 TBBs referred)

For example, The Beach Resort described itself as follows: "The Beach Resort is a world of indulgent relaxation waiting for you on the shores of beautiful Mui Ne Beach." (www.thebeachresort.com.vn). However, all four TBBs did not have information that depicted the DB's other selling points.

As seen in Table 4.5, it could not be said that the positioning statements of these brands were consistent or not with the DB's positioning statement because these TBBs did not have a slogan or tagline in their marketing materials. In terms of business name, only one resort had "beach" while three other brand names did not have this value. However, the Beach Resort's brand did not have a tagline or slogan to make the positioning statement clear. Therefore, the most competitive values that these TBBs chosen were not clearly presented.

The target markets that these TBBs depicted were consistent with the DB's target markets. However, these brands' information showed that they were not as strongly consistent as those TBBs in Group 1. The target markets the TBBs Group 2 depicted were sea tourists, leisure tourists who go to the beach for a holiday, and tourists from HCM City who go to the beach for relaxation, escape purposes, or a short trip. For example, the Allezboo resort's brand-related information stated:

Figure 4.16. Screen shot from the Allezboo Beach Resort & Spa's website

Allezboo Beach Resort & Spa, which is located along a stretch of white sandy beach in Mui Ne, on the coast of the Eastern Sea, is a magnificent tropical paradise. Its location is an approximate 3-hour drive from Ho Chi Minh City, in sunny, southern Vietnam .

With natural and private landscapes surrounded by the breathtaking views of the ocean, Allezboo Beach Resort & Spa is an ideal place for relaxation, and is a perfect getaway from the chaos of modern life.

 Source: www.allezboo.com

Similarly, the pictures and words presented on the Beach resort's website described "our resort is the perfect venue for personal revitalization, a couples weekend hideaway, or a well-deserved family vacation from the hustle and bustle of city life" and "Each day you spend with us is a promise of a day of pure worry-free relaxation" (www.thebeachresort.com.vn). However, the TBBs in Group 2 just depicted these two types of tourists so that they were less significant in depicting the consistent target markets than the TBBs in Group 1.

4.3.2.2 Reference to the destination.

First, these four brands had a separate section in their marketing materials for the destination or the DB information. Second, all four TBBs referred to the destination core values. Their brands' information showed that the beach value of the destination was integrated in their brands while other values were not shown. For example, the Vinh Suong Seaside resort's

home page had brand-related information referring both to its own core values and to BT's DB (Figure 4.17)

Figure 4.17. Screen shot from the Vinh Suong resort's website

Binh Thuan is a coastal province in the mid-southern region with the seaside length stretching over 192km, natural area of 7,849 km2, a population of over one million people of various ethnic groups. Located in an important location which is the gateway for economic - cultural - social exchanges with southeastern, mid-southern and highland regions, Binh Thuan is favored to develop its economy and tourist potential.

Binh Thuan is known for its beautiful beaches, clean and wild environment like: Ca Na, Cau Island, Mui Ne ("Escape Cape"), Hoa Ba, Poplar Hill... as well as historical and cultural remains with unique architecture: Duc Thanh Tourist spot, Poshanu Cham Tower, Co Thach Pagoda... All these are important elements which help enhance the tourist position of Binh Thuan at present and in the future.

210 kilometres from the east of Ho Chi Minh City, Mui Ne ("Escape Cape") is the place where ships and rafts shelter themselves from storms. Nowadays, Nui Ne is also a spot for those who wish to come to seek for minutes of relaxation, entertainment, avoiding the noisy and hot cities.

Vinh Suong Seaside Resort is located in premium complex of resorts in Mui Ne. In addition to its separate beach with white sand and clean shore, Vinh Suong Seaside Resort also includes a forest of coconut-trees and poplars rustling by the wind and an orchid garden inviting the visit of butterflies and bees.

Over 164 well-equipped rooms were designed in diversified styles, which were located in armony with the environment of green trees, blue sea, blue sky and whispering waves. This is definitely an ideal spot for you and your family.

Just 3-hour drive to get to a green heaven, why should you hesitate! Vinh Suong Seaside Resort is always looking forward to your steps.

Source: www.vinhsuongseaside.com.vn

As seen in the screen shot above, the Vinh Suong brand values were presented compatibly with the DB values. First, the Vinh Suong resort depicted BT sea-based values with "coastal province, seaside length stretching over 192 km" and "BT is known for its beautiful beaches, clean and wild environment". Compatibly, the TBB information showed "Vinh Suong seaside resort is located in premium complex of resorts in Mui Ne" with "its separate beach with white sand and clean shore", "the environment of green trees, blue sea, blue sky and whispering waves" (www.vinhsuongseaside.com.vn). Likewise, other core values of the Vinh Suong resort were compatible with the destination core values. Interestingly, while the TBBs in this group clearly reflected sea-based values, the other DB values were not presented at all or were only mentioned briefly.

4.3.3 Consistency between the DB and TBBs in Group 3.

Group 3: no consistent brand elements but reference to the destination.

4.3.3.1 No consistent brand elements.

As seen in the first column of Table 4.6, the selling points of TBBs in Group 3 were varied and not consistent with the DB selling point. First, while coastal destination was the most competitive selling point of the DB, only one TBB in this group depicted this selling point slightly in this beach resort's brand information. Second, the TBBs in this group also did not describe the destination as a water sport venue nor mention other selling points.

The TBBs depicted eco-tourism, religious destination, and provincial accommodation as their selling points. For example, the Ta Cu joint stock company's brand information depicted that it had a "separate identity". Its brand-related information depicted that "guests will be surprised when they stand before the ancient pagoda with 130 years old... Pilgrims who visit to the Temple Mount… but also took the opportunity to immerse themselves in the natural landscape to see our superbly serene equanimity" (www.tacutourist.com). Therefore, the selling points of the Ta Cu brand were its natural landscape and pilgrimage destination. Some other brands such as the Hoang Long and Doi Duong hotels showed that "acceptable price" with good service and facilities or provincial hotels (www.doiduonghotel.com) were their selling points while Park Diamond (www.parkdiamondhotel.vn) and Apricot (www.apricotresort.com) brand information depicted their selling points as "gems hospitality" or "eco-resort".

In terms of positioning statement, except for the Park Diamond and Ta Cu brands, the TBBs in this group did not use slogans. Park Diamond used the slogan "gems hospitality" while Ta Cu brand used a tagline "hang cable" [cable car] (Table 4.6). In sum, the "sea-sand-sun", the most competitive values of the destination, were absent in these TBBs.

There was also a difference between their target markets and those of the DB. The sea tourists, leisure tourists, and water sport players were key tourist markets of the DB while budget tourists, MICE tourists, eco-tourists, and pilgrims were the target tourists of these TBBs. Only the sea tourists were included in its marketing materials; that is, Apricot resort. However, sea tourists were only depicted via the words "for those who want to have holiday in beach resort".

Table 4.6. Elements of the TBBs in Group 3

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What images do business use? >> *Selling Points*	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> *Positioning statement*	Words, Images & Captions: - Whom audiences do images want to refer? >> *Target market*
* *Selling points were depicted in the logos:* - Sea/beach: 1/5 logo - Sun, lion, lotus flower: 1/5 logo. Example 1: Example 2: Example 3: * *Selling points were depicted in other marketing materials:* 1. Sea or Sea-based assets: 1/5 TBB referred. 2. Water sports: 0/5 TBB referred. 3. Services and their own modern, differentiated facilities: 5/5 TBBs referred. 4. Eco-tourism products: 2/5 TBBs referred. 5. Provincial guests or businessmen: 3/5 TBBs referred. 6. Religious destination: 1/5 TBB referred.	Park Diamond hotel – experience gems hospitality. Hoang Long hotel Ta Cu joint stock tourism company – Hang cable tourists. Apricot resort	*Tourists holidays' purposes:* 1. Sea tourists: 1/5TBB referred 2. Relax or Enjoyable tourists: 2/5 TBBs referred 3. Budget tourists: 2/5 TBBs referred 4. MICE tourists: 3/5 TBBs referred 5. Religious tourists: 1/5 TBB| referred

4.3.3.2 Reference to the destination.

All five TBBs had brand-related information that depicted the destination core values. A typical example is Hoang Long hotel (Figure 4.18)

Figure 4.18. Screen shot from the Hoang Long hotel's website

Source: www.hoanglonghotelpt.com

The hotel's brand information depicted Phan Thiet city with "blue sea – white sand – sun" and "Hoang Long hotel is proud to be formed from pieces of land of this coast Phan Thiet" (www.hoanglonghotelpt.com). Although these TBBs indicated that they were proud to be a part of the destination, their pictures, words, and all other graphics did not refer to the destination core values. For example, Hoang Long hotel's brand-related information had only the piece of information displayed above and no other pictures or words that described the association. Similarly, four other brands stated that they were a part of the destination although their images, words, and graphics did not indicate this integration. Other values of the destination were absent in these businesses' marketing materials.

4.3.4 Consistency between the DB and TBBs in Group 4.

Group 4: very consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination.

4.3.4.1 Very consistent brand elements.

These TBBs depicted the same selling points as the DB; that is, that they had sea-based assets as their key selling points. For examples, Anh Duong resort had words and images showing that they had "beautiful beach, white sand and clear water" (www.anhduongresort.com). Moreover, their logos all included symbols of the sea, sun, and coconut tree (Table 4.7, column 1).

Table 4.7. Elements of the TBBs in Group 4

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What images do business use? >> *Selling Points*	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> *Positioning*	Words, Images & Caption: - Whom audiences do images want to refer? >> *Target market*
Selling points were depicted in the logos: - Sea/beach: 3/3 logos - Sun: 3/3 logos, Coconut tree: 2/3 logos. Example 1: Example 2: Example 3: *Selling points were depicted in the TBBs* 1. Sea or Sea-based assets: 3/3 TBBs referred. 2. Water sports: 2/3 TBBs referred. 3. Relax, weekend, leisure: 2/3 TBBs referred. 4. Cuisine: 2/3 TBBs referred. 5. Budget resorts: 2/3 TBBs referred. 6. Provincial guests or businessmen: 1/3 TBB referred.	*Name:* Anh Duong resort *Tagline:* sunny resort with relaxing atmosphere! Binh Minh hotel *Tagline:* ideally dawn place in BT Dat Lanh resort *Tagline:* peaceful land!	1. Sea tourists: 3/3 TBBs referred. 2. Relax or Enjoyable tourists: 2/3 TBBs referred. 3. Meeting tourists: 1/3 TBB referred.

Although these three TBBs did not have slogans, their brand names and taglines depicted BT as a sunny and peaceful destination. Because these TBBs did not have a slogan the positioning statements were not so clear as those in Group 1. However, their brand names and taglines depicted a positioning statement similar to the sea and sun of the DB. In the case of

Dat Lanh resort, the brand name was similar to the DB name in Vietnamese language. Therefore, the most competitive values of these TBBs were consistent with those of the DB.

The TBB information indicated the same target markets as the DB. The symbolic content of these three TBBs depicted that sea tourists with the purposes of relaxation and enjoyment were their main target market (Table 4.7) and all three businesses stated that sea tourists were their target. Two businesses clearly said that they were suited for tourists who want to have relaxing beach holidays. However, Group 4 TBBs used fewer pictures and clear statements to indicate their target markets than those businesses in Group 1. For example, the Anh Duong brand only mentioned target markets as follows: "you could choose for yourself a private relaxing atmosphere or partly with your family and friends with many out-door activities such as beach sport games, camping…" (www.anhduongresort.com).

4.3.4.2 No reference to the destination.

TBBs in Group 4 did not have any brand-related information that presented the DB's core values. The presentation of information in this group was different to that in Groups 1, 2, and 3. The TBBs in this group did not have any marketing material sections that presented the DB.

4.3.5 Consistency between the DB and TBBs in Group 5.

Group 5: Consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination.

Overall, the target markets and their selling points of Group 5 were consistent with the DB. However, their positioning statements were different to the DB positioning.

4.3.5.1 Consistent brand elements.

Group 5 TBBs depicted selling points that were consistent with the DB (Table 4.8). First, seven out of ten resorts described themselves as beach resorts and said they had sea-based assets to serve tourists. For example, Canary Resort described itself as "Canary Resort is located on one of the most amazing beaches in Vietnam, on a small piece of land in the middle of the Mui Ne bay" (www.canaryresort.vn).

Table 4.8. Elements of TBBs in Group 5

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What images do business use? >> *Selling Points*	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> *Positioning statement*	Words, Images & Captions - Whom audiences do images want to refer? >> *Target markets*
Selling points were depicted in the logos: 1. Sea: 7/10 logos 2. Sand: 3/10 logos 3. Coconut/Balm trees: 2/10 logos 4. Sun: 2/10 logos 5. Bird: 1/10 logo Example 1: Example 2 : Example 3: * Selling points were depicted in the marketing materials: 1. Sea or sea-based assets: 7/10 TBBs referred. 2. Others: Cham cultural tourists: 1/10 TBB referred.	Some slogans as examples: - Pandanus resort - "Imagine Yourself in the Paradise" - Tien Dat Mui Ne - Blue Wave Resort" - To make your joy is our happiness"- Mui Ne de Century - Phu Hai resort- "Everything you remember and more..." - Dawn star resort (Sao Mai resort) "A peaceful and poétique heaven"	- Sea tourists: 7/10 TBBs referred. - Relaxation, enjoyable tourists, Weekend holiday, Out-of-office, HCM city originating tourists: 9/10 TBBs referred. 5. Family, group of friends: 1/10 TBB referred. 6. Cham cultural lovers: 1/10 TBB referred. 7. Events, meeting venues: 1/10 TBB referred.

Similarly, the Phu Hai Resort brand also depicted the beauty of the beach as its important selling point. In particular, the Phu Hai brand described that it was located on "a private beach with pristine sand and unspoiled water" and its private beach "truly wins the hearts of even the most discerning sea-loving visitors" (www.phuhairesort.com). In terms of other selling points, only one resort depicted that they had culture values in their selling points. However, no other selling points of the destination were depicted in this TBB-related information.

In Group 5, the positioning statements were different from the DB's positioning statement (Table 4.8). For example, Pandanus Resort used the slogan "imagine yourself in the Paradise" (www.pandanusresort.com). Mui Ne de Century Resort had its brand slogan as "to make your joy is our happiness" (http://www.muinedecentury.vn). Dawn Star Resort stated that it is a peaceful and poétique heaven. In sum, these businesses aimed to position their own service to express their high class qualities.

In terms of target markets, seven of the ten brands depicted that they were good products for sea tourists who want to have a leisure holiday. For example, Mui Ne de Century resort described itself thus: "Mui Ne de Century Beach Resort & Spa – luxurious resort shapes wild hidden charming but modern. The beach with length of over 200 meters is too poetical with fine golden sand, blue sea and fresh ocean breeze". Tien Dat resort said "The lovely resort is sited in surrounding of privacy and quiet elegance. Blue sea, white sand, cool sea wind...are all waiting for you". Nine out of the ten TBBs described tourists who go on holiday for relaxation, enjoyment, weekends away, out-of-office, and short escapes as their targets. Some of them mentioned families, groups of friends, and cultural explorers as their tourists.

4.3.5.2 No reference to the destination.

Group 5 TBBs did not have any section for BT's DB-related information in their business marketing materials. Moreover, their brand-related information did not mention whether their TBBs benefited or not from BT's DB.

4.3.6 Consistency between DB and TBBs in Group 6.

Group 6: no consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination

4.3.6.1 No consistent brand elements.

All TBBs in Group 6 used their marketing materials to depict their own TBBs only. They did not have any marketing materials that showed integration with the DB. Moreover, their selling points, the most competitive values, and their target markets were not similar to those of the DB.

As seen in the first column of Table 4.9, the selling points of these TBBs were different to those of the DB. First, only three TBBs depicted that they were beach resorts while eight TBBs depicted themselves as modern resorts with luxurious facilities. Besides that, some TBBs described their main selling point as local culture, meaning that tourists who visit the destination could explore the vibrant local culture, especially Cham culture. For example, Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort, Champa Resort and Poshanu Resort stated that their

architecture styles and atmosphere were inspired by the Cham culture. Another selling point was green tourism. For example, Bamboo Village depicted their bamboo village, green coconut forests, and the use of all green tourism products as their selling points.

Table 4.9. Elements of TBBs in Group 6

Logo, Symbols, Graphics & Words - Which things do those symbols stand for? - What images do business use? >> **Selling Points**	Slogan /Name/ Tagline - Which things does slogan want to express? >> **Positioning**	Words, Images & Captions: - Whom audiences do images want to refer? >> **target market**
Selling points were depicted in the logos: 1. Sea, sea-based assets: sea, sea horse fish, sea wave: 3/17 logos 2. Cham cultural icons: 4/17 logos 3. Others: Full Moon, Cottages, Bamboo tree, birds: 4/17 logos 4. Sun: 1/17 logo 5. Letters & number such as Unique, L, K, Victoria, 21: 4/17 logos. Example 1: Example 2: Example 3: *Selling points were depicted in other marketing materials:* 1. Sea: 3/17 TBBs referred. 2. Facilities & Service: swimming pool, restaurants: 8/17 TBBs referred.	*Some slogans as examples:* -Sea Horse resort – "Experience the Vietnamese countryside in resort" -Sai Gon - Mui Ne resort -Dynasty resort: Cham kingdom -Anantara Mui Ne resort & spa. -Cham Villas-Boutique Luxury Resort – " Bring Cham culture to the sea" -Princess d'An Nam resort & spa -Novotel hotel. -Victoria resort	*Tourists by holidays' purposes:* 1. Sea tourists: 8/17 TBBs referred. 2. Water sports: 1/17 TBB referred. 3. Weekend holiday, family, group of friends: 4/17 TBBs referred. 4. Relaxation, fun, escape tourists: 6/17 TBBs referred. 5. Cham cultural lovers: 2/17 TBBs referred.

Similarly, the positioning statements of Group 6 TBBs were not consistent with the DB's positioning statement. In particular, there were four key ways that this group used to position their brands. The most popular way is using the name attached to their hotel group or franchise. Those that did this were: Anantara resort, Terracotta resort, Novotel hotel, Victoria hotel and resort, Fiore-Mom Da Chim resort, Sai Gon–Mui Ne resort, BT tourism company,

Lam Kieu hotel. As can be seen, there are two small groups of international resorts. First, Sai Gon–Mui Ne is typical example of a Vietnamese franchised hotel. Sai Gon–Mui Ne resort belongs to the Sai Gon tourist company which has hotels in most of Vietnam's 64 provinces. If they held a hotel in province A, they commonly named the hotel "Sai Gon–A". However, in BT, they named it Sai Gon–Mui Ne because Mui Ne represents BT. Second, Anantara is a typical example of foreign-owned franchised resorts. It belongs to the Anantara hotels-resorts-spa group which has hotels and resorts in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Maldives, Mozambique, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam.

Four resorts had positioning statements which referred to themselves as boutique beach resorts: Dynasty Resort, Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort, Unique Mui Ne Resort and Princess D'An Nam Resort & Spa. Their positioning statements were designed to refer to Cham Kingdom culture. For example, Cham Villas Boutique Luxury Resort had the slogan "bring Cham culture to the Sea" (Table 4.9), but their name, their slogan, and other their images and words used on the marketing materials together depicted their boutique Cham cultural style as the differentiated point and as the most competitive value of its brand.

In this group, the positioning statements of other TBBs were also very different. For example, Bamboo Village resort positioned itself with green tourism. Seahorse and Poshanu resorts are operate as partners who complement each other's values. Poshanu resort used Cham culture to position their brand while Seahorse is a luxury beach resort.

In terms of target market, eight resorts stated that sea tourists who go on leisure vacations are their target markets. For example, Anantara resort: "Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa is an oasis of elegance and comfort offering a unique and unforgettable way to experience the southern coast of Vietnam. Mornings spent by the sea. Afternoon hikes through nearby sand dunes. A soothing spa treatment before starlit evening drinks on the beach".

Six resorts mentioned tourists who want to escape the hustle and bustle of every day, relax, and have fun. For example, Sea Horse resort said "Escape to the paradise where peace meets tranquility at Seahorse Resort & Spa, the most elegant and stylish beachfront resort's along the coast of Mui Ne" (http://www.seahorseresortvn.com/). Cham Villas Boutique Luxury resort said "Cham Villas is a place to get away from the hustle and bustle, to chill out and be pampered" (http://www.chamvillas.com).

In Group 6, the TBBs also referred to water sport players, weekend holiday, or family holiday tourists as their target markets. Four brands referred to weekend holiday and family holiday tourists, with only one mentioning on its website that it was a good place to play water sport: "water is our element" (http://www.fullmoon-village.com).

This group has different kinds of tourists than Groups 1, 2, and 3. For example, Bamboo Village resort focused on green tourists or those who want to find an absolutely green environment with typical nature of Vietnam. Commonly, the TBBs in this group also aimed to attract their loyal tourists. For example, Victoria resort does not have marketing materials separate from their Victoria hotels group (http://www.victoriahotels.asia). So, tourists who already know the Victoria brand name might search for this hotel chain, depending on the destination tourists visit. Besides that, 4 TBBs mentioned Cham culture explorers as their target segmentations. Typically, Princess D'An Nam resort's logo used a portrait of the princess, and nearly the whole of the home page was used to refer to the princess thus: "Her hand in marriage was given in exchange for a bountiful piece of the Vietnamese kingdom. Centuries later, the Princess lives on in memories and legends, as do the charm and customs of her fascinating land" (http://www.princessannam.com).

4.3.6.2 No reference to the destination.

Businesses in Group 6 did not have any marketing materials that referred to the destination. Categories such as "Destination", "DB", or "BT", and other marketing sections that related to the DB were absent from their business marketing materials.

4.3.7 Consistency between DB and TBBs in Group 7.

Group 7: no have brand-related information.

This group includes those businesses which did not have information about the DB and which either did not have their own brand-related information, or the researcher could not find it. Group 7 had a range of businesses including twelve restaurants, two souvenir shops, one sand painting enterprise, two fish sauce companies, four art galleries – such as handicraft, embroidery gallery, and butterfly collection – three travel service companies, one mini hotel, and one museum.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings relating to the first research aim of this study: the consistency between the DB and TBBs. The consistency of TBBs and the DB varied between groups. However, some commonalities among groups emerged from the findings presented in section 4.3. First, all TBBs in Groups 1 to 6 showed the same target market for the destination, leisure tourists. Second, the brand element which most influenced the classification of TBBs into the seven different groups was the positioning statement. Variations in the positioning statements could be easily seen among Groups 1 to 3, and among Groups 4 to 6. The businesses in each group chose different values to position in their brand slogans. Therefore, the messages they delivered to tourists were different. Lastly, while sea-based values with beach leisure products were common among groups, other selling points such as culture tourism, MICE tourism, cuisine, water sports, and tourists loyal to TBBs were employed by some brands, especially in Groups 5 and 6. In terms of the integration into the BT value delivery, sea value was referred to most commonly among Groups 1 to 3 while other values were depicted clearly in some groups and were less significant in others. Groups 4 to 7 did not have any marketing sections showing their integration into the delivery of destination values. TBBs in Group 1 were the most consistent with the DB. TBBs in Groups 2, 3, 4, and 5 satisfied one out of two steps in the patterns of consistency. TBBs in Group 6 had no consistent brand elements and do not refer to the destination. Interestingly, those micro and small businesses in Group 7 did not have any brand-related information.

Chapter Five: BT DB creation and development process and the involvement of stakeholders

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings relating to the second research aim of this study are presented. The analytical framework (Figure 3.2) guided the presentation of the findings of the process (section 5.2) and the involvement of stakeholders (section 5.4). First, the findings of the BT DB creation and development process are presented. From the DMOs' points of view, the nature of the DB, how it is managed, and how the stakeholders are involved are considered in the following order: DMOs' representatives' understandings about the destination, their awareness/understanding of BT's DB (section 5.2.1), the creation of the DB (section 5.2.2), and how the DMOs extend and use BT's DB (section 5.2.3) are presented. Then, a conclusion of the process is provided (section 5.3).

From the tourism stakeholders' points of view, the issue of whether or not the tourism stakeholders shared the DB's understanding or were involved in the process is presented in section 5.4, thus: business managers' understanding about the destination and BT's DB (5.4.1); how their own TBBs' creation involved BT's DB contents (section 5.4.2); the involvement of tourism businesses in the DB development (section 5.4.3) are presented. The second research aim is to explain the results of the first research aim, as showed in Chapter 4. Therefore, the seven groups' involvement is presented compatibly with the BT's DB stages in the process. Finally, a conclusion of the stakeholders' involvement is presented (section 5.5).

5.2 The process of the BT DB creation and development

5.2.1 DMOs' awareness/understanding of BT's DB.

5.2.1.1 Understanding about the destination.

According to the both the BTA's president and the BTPC's representative, the initial development stage of the BT tourism industry emerged from their analyses of the destination core values. They explained that the destination core values attracted tourism investors to develop the BT tourism from "nothing" in 1995 to its development stage these days. The BTPC's representative also said that the natural phenomenon the solar eclipse has been the most crucial turning point for the impressive emergence of BT tourism development.

According to the BTA's president, the wonderful weather and the beauty of the natural long white sand beach were considered as "the best values" and "a perfect mix" for the BT tourism development:

Blue sea, white sand beach, and sunny year around are the best values – a perfect mix of the BT natural resources. They attract foreign tourists who want to escape winter, and sunny beaches are a good destination for Vietnamese tourists who want to have a great summer holiday.

Other values were considered as supplementary by the president:

In terms of local culture, Vietnamese culture is the mainstream culture for Vietnamese, but there is also Cham culture which also contributes to cultural tourism development. In fact, culture is not as competitive as the weather and sea values in terms of the local tourism development.

In terms of destination target markets, the destination has measured its own statistics every year since 2005. The BTPC representative said that there has been a stable rate of tourism growth of around 14.5% every year.

However, the BTA's president said that they [the provincial tourism authorities and the BTA] "did not wait passively". The BT target markets were determined by the businesses and authorities:

We all determined leisure tourists as our key markets when we started to do the BT tourism development's strategy. Based on this determination, we did our marketing activities which mainly focus on attracting our target markets and then selling our products right to our target markets.

He said that these steps aim to find out the way to serve tourists better and to "confirm what BT has", that "what [BT] presented in its marketing materials is real".

Understanding BT's competitors also emerged from the president's analysis. He mentioned their competitors as being "destinations which have the same target markets as BT". First, Nha Trang was "the BT's competitor in terms of international tourists' attraction". Second, Vung Tau beach city was "another competitor in terms of attracting Ho Chi Minh city-based tourists."

5.2.1.2 Understanding how destination attributes contributed to the DB building.

The destination core values, segmentation, and competitor analysis were each considered to have influenced the building of BT's DB. First, the destination core values contributed to the differentiation of the DB. However, the differentiated point of the destination was in its typical tourism product development strategy. The typical product was built based on the destination core values. The president said:

> *We have already developed and gained some achievements. And, a larger number of tourists have already recognised our DB's differentiation, our beach resorts.*

The president said that the core part of the destination which has all of the BT values was chosen. The DB vision and orientation were also determined based on the core part of the destination, Mui Ne:

> *Mui Ne is valuable enough to present as BT tourism's potential, which supports us in developing the DB personality.*

Second, clear target market determination was important because it contributed to the DB building in two ways. First, it played an important role in developing the right marketing strategy to attract tourists to visit the destination. Second, the president stressed, was the influence of the DB recognition when tourists were on holiday and after visiting the destination:

> *Segmenting the tourist markets and focusing on them, we are clear about who we will serve so we serve them to the best of our ability. So, we make them remember our brand name and quality of our brand.*

Moreover, he also confirmed BT's target market determination is long-term and has not changed.

Third, the competitor analysis influenced the differentiation of the DB and the limitation of competition. Nha Trang, for example, developed its typical product as beach hotels whereas BT developed beach resorts. Vung Tau is closer to HCM city and attracted one-day tourists so BT aimed to attract more than two-day tourists. As a result, the destination developed its tourism facilities and varied its tourism activities to extend the length of tourist holidays.

In terms of the Mui Ne brand building, the BTPC's representative summarised the building process since 2005 and through the achievement of the Mui Ne tourism:

> *We have already received many positive replies about our professional and friendly services. Below is some evidence: first, the number of tourists who visited the province*

increased steadily. Second, Mui Ne-Phan Thiet has become a famous tourism brand. Mui Ne-Phan Thiet brand is one of the sixth biggest sea tourism centers in Vietnam. Now, it is an attractive destination for tourists within and outside the country and largely called the "romantic paradise of sea resort holidays". Mui Ne-BT was highly rated as one of the best beaches in Asia by the International Association of Windsurfing.

The BTPC's representative mentioned support from the provincial and national tourism authorities for the Mui Ne brand building activities. He said that the provincial authorities achieved the provincial tourism policies [resolution] such as Resolution 19-NQ / TU, and Resolution 06-NQ / TU which were about Binh Thuan tourism development strategy and Binh Thuan destination brand building.

His later comment revealed the support from the national tourism authorities. He said that BT has been chosen to develop as a national sea destination with sea resorts and sea sports:

> *BT beach was also chosen to build and develop the National Sea Sport Training Center by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. The project of the center will be done under the national project of technical infrastructure for national sport from now to 2020. Mui Ne-BT beach was chosen by the Government and the Olympic Council of Asia so the beach was approved to hold three sports at the 5th Asian Sea Sport Olympics in 2016.*

5.2.2 Recalling the BT DB creation.

The process of BT's DB creation and development since 2005 emerged from the interviews of the BTA's president and the BTPC's deputy head. The story of BT's DB is displayed in Figure 5.1, where it can be seen that the DB is the outcome of a long-term process in which the DMOs and the stakeholders' involvement was needed. However, the BT DB also had its own characteristics.

5.2.2.1 Reasons for the birth of the BT DB.

The BTA's president gave three important reasons for the need for the DB building. First, BT had 'nothing' except its natural beauty in 2005. Second, brand representation was much needed when BT wanted to enter into the domestic and international tourism markets:

> *Like a person, you need an ID to be recognised by other people; BT's DB to us is like an ID of the destination to be recognised by our tourists and it was required when we wanted to enter into the domestic and foreign tourism markets.*

Finally, the DB was needed as a foundation for the destination branding and marketing activities.

Figure 5.1 The BT DB's creation and development process.
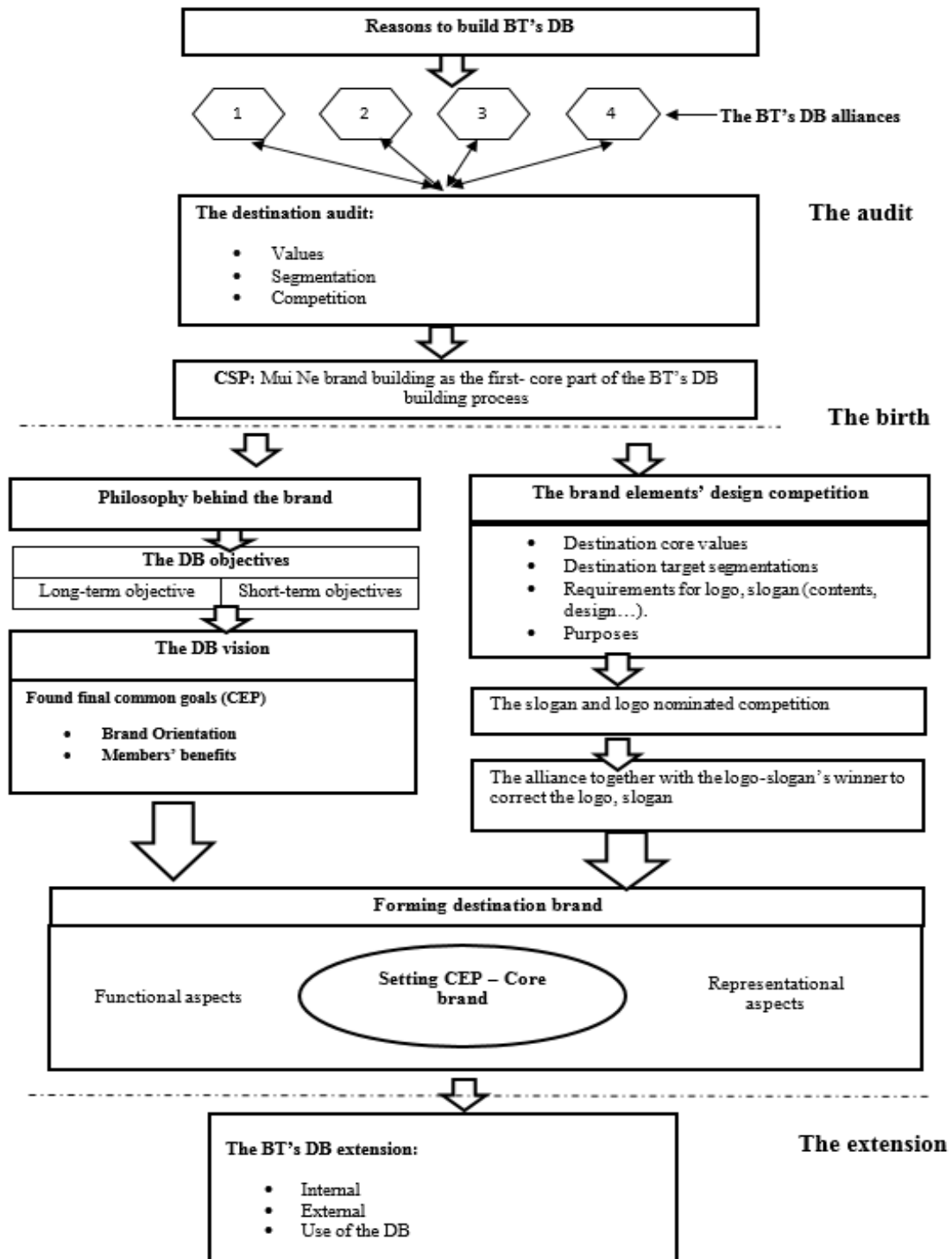
5.2.2.2 BT's DB alliances.

The BTA's president said that the second step in the birth of the brand story was about forming the DB alliances:

> *The BTA as the key DB creator. The provincial department of culture, sports and tourism, the BTPC and voluntary businesses formed the steering group of the DB creators.*

The president then explained why the BTA took responsibility for the DB creation instead of the BTPC or the provincial department of culture, sports, and tourism. The brand was considered as a commercial issue that directly influences the businesses' benefits:

> *Surely, we had the provincial tourism authorities in the alliances as a leader, but the brand building is an issue which directly brings benefits to the businesses within the province, therefore we [the BTA] needed to be more active and more creative to do it. Therefore, we took the key responsibility of brand building and branding.*

Another reason that the BTA took the main responsibility of the brand building was because of funding. The BTPC's representative said that the funds for the brand building came from both the provincial department of culture, sports, and tourism and the BTA's members, particularly from high-class tourism businesses.

The president mentioned the skill requirements of the DB alliance partners. Knowledge of both planning and practice was necessary along with management skills and financial capacity.

Then, the role of the provincial tourism authorities and of the BTA's president in relation to gathering those businesses was also mentioned.

5.2.2.3 The destination audit.

According to the BTA's president, the problem was not how to find businesses but how to ask them join in the brand alliances and to agree to the DB idea. However, not many tourists knew about BT's tourism potential, while the investors needed to make people aware of Mui Ne values and those of BT as whole. So, the DB building was a solution for the investors to promote the destination, do marketing activities, and have "an ID for BT" to enter into both domestic and international tourist markets. As a result, the DB itself was a solution for BT tourism at that time.

5.2.2.3.1 The Common Starting Point of the BT DB alliances.

According to the BTA's president, it was valuable for the BT DB building to gather strength from the tourism business community:

> *Finding common goals and directions in which everyone can see their benefits is important. It is valuable in gathering businesses and the inner strength of the brand.*

The president summarised the relationship between the analyses of core values, segmentation, competitors, core tourism product development, and core part choice in relation to the DB building:

> *We [the BTA, the BTPC and businessmen] discussed together about Mui Ne core values and core products, and now continue together promoting and branding our DB by our PR and marketing activities…We agreed that all brand activities must be based on Mui Ne brand-Mui Ne core values.*

He said that members of the steering group recognised their own benefits in terms of Mui Ne brand building. Moreover, the DB building process was also done to establish the link between the destination and the businesses within the destination:

> *If tourists come to Vietnam, then search for sea/ resort holidays in Vietnam, they will find the result of Da Nang, Nha Trang, Mui Ne, and Vung Tau destination...If the DB reputation of Mui Ne is strong, they will choose Mui Ne and then more links to the private resorts will then be presented.*

5.2.2.3.2 The birth of BT's DB.

According to the BTA's president, the birth of BT's DB had two parts: the competition for the DB's slogan and logo, and the philosophy behind the brand representation.

The slogan used by both the BTPC and BTA resulted from a competition held in 2005. The competition was advertised on BT television and newspapers, and invitations were sent by the BTA to some designers and artists. In the competition, the destination core values, core product, and a short summary of the desired brand were presented to the candidates by the BTA executive members.

The president recalled:

> *In fact, we had many logos, slogans nominated for the competition. We [the BTA] chose the winning ones based on our own original ideas [the destination values] and the creative ideas got from the competition.*

Then, he expressed that the DB alliances also supplemented the winning logo and slogan to present it better and make it more suitable to the spirit of the destination.

He also said that the slogan that was created was but one step in a long process of the DB building. The slogan and other attributes of the brand needed time to be recognised:

> *We understood that people might not understand and recognise us at first sight. We wanted to have DB recognition after tourists visited the destination and experienced our service and facilities.*

He explained that the logo, slogan, and other tangible factors of the DB are a subset of brand attributes that help tourists recognise the destination and act as a personal ID:

> *The DB should be considered in the same way as a person's name. Parents gave their children a name, the fame of that person depends on their own efforts, their life achievements, and their success.*

The president explained that the desired brand would exist among the businesses within the destination but the extent to which it was successful "depended on how tourists feel about and remember the brand values":

> *The BT DB building is a process in which we try to build and make the DB values recognised…The subset of brand attributes [logo and slogan] are the tangible factors that help tourists recall the destination they visited.*

The slogan and the logo used in the BTA marketing materials symbolised the sea, sand, and sun. The president said:

> *Our logo looks like a painting, just 3 curved lines which symbolise the spirit of the destination – our sea-sand-sun.*

The tangible attributes of the brand captured the spirit of the destination. Tourists who had already visited the destination and knowledgeable persons were the brand audiences.

Then, the president explained about the ways in which the businesses in many parts of the province used and together developed the DB. The brand values were developed gradually from provincial to international DB as "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-BT-Vietnam: a famous international destination", and that was their long-term objective until 2020 and vision for 2030.

The president said:

> *And this is also the reason why many tourism business located in Ham Tien part put the taglines "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Binh Thuan-Vietnam" or "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-Vietnam" under their business brand name.*

5.2.3 DB involvement.

5.2.3.1 Internal extension: the DB architecture.

In terms of the DB extension, the DB is extended internally among the tourism businesses within the destination while each business is responsible for presenting and popularising the DB to their own employees. The president said:

> *The brand building is mainly depending on and decided by the executive committee of the BTA. The businesses and the employees will only use it.*

The president also said that the BTA had its monthly meetings with the BTA members (tourism businesses' managers) and the BTA's executive members once per three months. The president and the BTA's executive members were responsible for the meetings with the BTPC when the BTPC had tourism promotion campaigns they needed to discuss. The BTA's executive board took responsibility to exchange the ideas of the business community with the provincial authorities. According to the BTPC's representative, the DB building and brand image enhancement was one of their four most important tasks. As a result, the brand information was discussed in the meetings between the provincial authorities and the BTA's executives, and then popularised amongst the businesses.

The president said that a large number of TBBs were arranged and together promoted the DB. To meet the brand's long-term objective, the business community operated the brand activities from Mui Ne, then to the whole destination, and attempt to become one famous international DB.

5.2.3.2 External extension.

The BTA's president explained how TBBs were grouped and took responsibility for the DB extension:

> *We were divided into groups. In particular, we have a group of senior businesses which are responsible for promoting and branding on this senior market. And, 2 to 3-star resorts in another group which are responsible for branding and attracting lower-income tourists, especially focusing on domestic tourist markets.*

In terms the DB communication activities, all of the DMOs' marketing and promotion used these brand attributes. The president said:

> *We use this brand name when we participate in tourism fairs, on all of our information channels, all of the BTA's activities, on the BTPC website and use for the association's registration.*

The BTPC's representative also commented that the slogan was used in many marketing materials of the provincial tourism activities. It was used not only in brand activities but also in all of the provincial tourism promotion activities. However, the logo was used together with the city logo whenever they participated in a tourism fair, seminar, or other promotional activities.

5.2.3.3 Use of the DB.

Only BTA members can use the DB, but its use is dependent on the decision of the businesses. All of the BTA members' logos and Internet addresses were published on the BTA website. In the BTA and BTPC marketing materials, these TBBs' values were all introduced. In addition, there was an internal network among the businesses, the BTA, and the BTPC. Therefore, if any business needed help or support, they could actively ask others for help. The president said:

> *That is the way in which the DMOs gather the strength of all our BTA's members and other businesses [non-BTA members] within the destination.*

Because of these brand extension and communication activities, the DB will be recognised widely. Moreover, tourists will remember the DB values that were presented through the tangible attributes.

5.3 Conclusion for the process of the BT's DB creation and development.

In section 5.2, the process of the destination creation and development from 2005 till now was depicted based on the interviews with the BTA's president and the BTPC's representative. First, BT's DB was created and developed mostly by the BTA. It was also for the benefit of the tourism businesses operating within the destination. While the role of the BTA, BTPC, and the businesses of the steering groups were important to the DB, the role of the employees of the DMOs and the businesses were not mentioned at all. In the case of the destination, the DB was created and developed based on compatibility with the destination marketing and development strategies. Therefore, BT's typical tourism product and the target tourists were determined when the DB was being developed. As a result, the big idea of the BT DB was from the BTA and the businesses. Second, the BT brand was created with two main parts: the DB representation (logo and slogan) and the philosophy behind DB representation (vision, orientation and long-term objective). According to the BTA's president, while the logo and slogan of the DB might be changed in the near future if needed, the inner content of the DB was a long-term task of the destination development and not easily changed. Third, the extension of the DB had two steps; internally from the BTA to the businesses, and externally from the BTA and the BTPC to tour operators and other tourist audiences outside the province, and from the businesses to tourists.

In the next section, describes how the TBBs were created and developed. In order to consider their involvement in the DB creation and development, each theme of their involvement is presented in comparison with each theme of the DB creation and development process.

5.4 Tourism stakeholders' buy-in or involvement

As mentioned in section 3.4.6 and Table 3.9, businesses in Groups 2, 3, and 4 mostly refused to participate the research. In each of these groups only one business manager agreed to participate. Moreover, their brand-related opinions were mostly based on their ownership. While a business in Group 2 belonged to a family brand, businesses in Groups 3 and 4 were provincially-owned. The businesses' opinions were rather "circular", such as "as a provincially-owned business, we followed the provincial management or the provincial socialist committees' decisions". Therefore, for this part of the study Groups 2, 3, and 4 are re-grouped into one group. In the following sections, the involvement of Group 1, Groups 2-3-4, Group 5, Group 6, and Group 7 are presented according to the analytical framework (Figure 3.2).

5.4.1 Awareness/understanding of BT's DB.

5.4.1.1 Understanding about the destination.

Overall, the business managers in the seven groups shared the same understanding about the destination's most competitive values, segmentation, and competitors. First, similar to the DMOs' representatives, all of the business managers interviewed in all groups said that BT's natural beach beauty and its sunshine with a consistent average temperature were the most competitive values of the destination.

About the destination segmentation, all managers in all groups, except for two resort managers in Group 6, answered that leisure tourists were the largest source of tourists in BT. Moreover, BT leisure tourists could be divided into two segments: Vietnamese and foreign tourists who visited BT for their leisure holidays. In addition, these two smaller sources went on holiday in two different time periods: The Vietnamese tourists from May to October and foreign tourists from October to April. Only two business managers in Group 6 said that leisure tourists were loyal brand tourists.

Third, all managers in all groups determined that Nha Trang and Vung Tau destinations provided the most competition to BT. Nha Trang was one of the nine most beautiful bays of the world, so international tourists who want a beautiful beach might choose Nha Trang rather than BT. Vung Tau was closer to HCM City [the biggest source of domestic tourists in Vietnam] than BT. So, if tourists from HCM city want to save travel time, they might choose Vung Tau rather than BT.

5.4.1.2 Understanding of how destination core values, segmentation, and competitor analysis contribute to the DB.

The understanding of how these destination attributes contributed to the DB building differed between the DMOs and the seven groups, among groups, and among businesses in each group.

Group 1: very consistent brand elements and reference to the destination.

Although understanding of how each attribute contributed to the DB building varied, overall in Group 1 it was similar to that of the DMOs. All of the managers said that the destination values, segmentation, and competitor analysis played an important role in: determining the distinctiveness of BT's DB, choosing the most competitive values to advertise to tourists and distinguishing the destination from other destinations, doing the right marketing strategies, and making the DB recognisable.

Group 2: consistent brand elements and reference to the destination. Groups 3, and 4: consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination or vice versa.

The manager in Group 2 said that the destination brand is one element which should be consistent with the development strategy, the destination product's development, and the target markets' determination.

Two managers in Groups 3 and 4 are in provincial-owned businesses. Each said that their business was originally a state-owned enterprise and was under equitisation, but still under the provincial management at the present. That's why these managers said that they did not care much about the DB building.

Group 5: consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination.

Some managers in Group 5 mentioned the indirect and direct influence of the DB building and recognition. However, all of the contributions mentioned by the managers were related to BT destination marketing and the destination joint-marketing with other destinations. For example, X resort's manager mentioned joint-marketing between BT and other cities in an effort to be more competitive than their competitor, Nha Trang:

> *Mui Ne is located near HCM city, and also located on the triangle of Vietnam's famous destinations: HCM city-Mui Ne-Da Lat. So tourists originating from HCM city can visit Mui Ne for a short holiday or weekend holiday. Those who travel through Vietnam will visit Mui Ne on the way to the triangle tourist destinations.*

Group 6: no consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination.

Most differently, the business managers in Group 6 mostly mentioned the competitive characteristics of sun and beach in BT but also mentioned many emerging values and argued that it is time for BT to add these new values and result in being more competitive than other destinations.

Some managers mentioned culture as a new value. For example, Poshanu resort's manager suggested that the vibrant local culture should be developed as core values of the DB at the present time:

> *Champa towers symbolise Champa cultural icons as well as Champa local people lifestyle here. They differentiate the destination from other coastal destinations. Basically, tourists come here for leisure holidays, but more than other coastal*

destinations, tourists also have great opportunities to explore interesting local culture and lifestyles.

Three business managers in this group stated that the DB should develop in a sustainable way which keeps "the truth of the brand" but also improves the quality of service from regional to international standards.

5.4.1.3 Understanding of the DB.

All the managers in the seven groups said that they knew about the DB content and slogan. Some of them mentioned the long-term objective of the Mui Ne-BT brand. For example, Blue Ocean resort's manager in Group 1 said:

> *Mui Ne has been named in the heart of many tourists with its blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine…In our resort, we had a comment survey for tourists. In my experience, the theme blue sea, white sand, and sunshine were mentioned frequently. These were simple but impressed, easy to remember and to be introduced to others.*

The "Mui Ne-Phan Thiet-BT-Vietnam: an international famous destination" was referred to by many managers. They said that this was the long-term objective of the DB and the destination development goals.

Another manager described the role of the BTA and the BTPC as the DB leaders and the role of the BT business community as the DB's followers and supporters. Bien Nam resort's manager said that his business was a small one which benefited from the values of the Mui Ne brand and values. Bien Nam is located right on the most beautiful part of the destination – in the heart of Mui Ne. So, his business follow what the BTA planned for the DB.

However, there were also some varied ideas about BT's DB in Groups 3 and 6.

Group 3: no consistent brand elements but reference to the destination.

The manager in Group 3 said that they were state-owned businesses so they need to follow what the BT provincial tourism authorities advise, and he was not concerned about the destination brand content.

Group 6: no consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination.

All the managers interviewed said that they all knew and understood the DB representation [slogan and graphic contents]. Two of the eight managers also stated that they were BTA executive members so they followed what the BTA planned for the destination. Moreover,

because they were executive members they also joined in discussing the DB development. Some of the managers described BT's DB as the BTA's brand.

In contrast to other groups, businesses in Group 6 also explained the emerging values of the DB, that is, the "Capital of resorts" "green tourism" and "vibrant local culture". All of them mentioned that there were informal brand values raised by tourists who visited the destination. In addition, they said that brand existed in the minds of tourists. As a result, the emerging values raised by tourists should be captured by the businesses and the DMOs in the DB development.

5.4.2 Recalling TBBs' creations.

Each business had its own story of its brand creation. In all groups, there were TBBs which were older or younger than the BT DB. The big ideas of the original TBBs mostly came from the business owners or board of managers. In addition, except for two TBBs in Group 6, all of the TBBs were created without asking for help or support from the DMOs or using the BT DB as a reference. The managers interviewed in all groups did not clarify the opportunities or difficulties they met when they created their TBBs.

In terms of brand creators, most managers said that the investors, owners, and board of managers created their TBBs. For example, the manager of Bamboo Village Resort said that the idea of the TBB came first from the business's owner. The manager mentioned the important role of his TBB creator's skills, tourism knowledge, and experience in general and the knowledge of BT destination (tourism potential, values, and history):

> *The first idea of the Bamboo Village brand was from Mrs Ngo Thanh Loan…With her experience and talents as a traveller and investor, she invested and decided to develop the Bamboo Village business. She decided to develop the business following the Hawaii bungalow style…, and keep developing our original brand idea: a green, sustainable development.*

In terms of the DMOs' support and DB creation, all of the business managers said that their own businesses did not receive help from the DMOs. The reasons were varied. For example, the Bamboo Village manager said that "the Bamboo Village brand now has already had 16 years of development. At the time of the Bamboo brand's creation, the BTA had not been established yet. So, the Bamboo was created by its business owners". The Fiore and Poshanu brands have just been established. Their managers said that they received support from the

provincial authorities and the BTA in many fields, but their own managers created the brand and decided by themselves how the brand would develop. Poshanu resort's manager said:

> *If any business needs help, they should post their situations in the BTA or some businesses' sub-networks, they will receive help. The support mainly was for issues of human resources, management skills… In terms of brand creation, we built up by our own".*

Interestingly, the birth of each of the TBBs in Groups 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 was also influenced by their own ownership, as below.

Group 2: consistent brand elements and reference to the destination. Groups 3, and 4: consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination or vice versa.

The business manager in Group 2 said that this business was in a family brand with one another resort in Ham Tien. Therefore, his business shared the same brand contents with another resort, its family brand. He said that he was not clear about the time of creation but the idea of the brand was from the owner and without the influence of the DMOs or other suppliers.

Two provincially-owned business managers in Groups 3 and 4 company's manager said that it was originally also a provincially-owned business, and then was under equitisation. The brand logo was for the business registration. The manager in Group 4 also stated his business did not have any idea about "something called brand". He commented that brands were something for the private sector.

Group 5: consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination.

In this group, the role of their own businesses' context and the location of the businesses played a very important role in their own brand building. First, two businesses were HCM city-originating businesses and belonged to Vietnamese hotel groups. They said that their brand logo and slogan were decided by their hotel group's logo and slogans. For example, Hoang Ngoc resort's manager said that the brand name and logo were used for all of the hotels in the Hoang Ngoc hotel group and that the brand name and logo were created with no vision and intention at the beginning:

> *Truly speaking, the brand name and logo were created by the owner-investor. When we created them, we had no intention or brand orientation that was compatible with the DB attributes. However, we have started orientate to develop our brand strategies recently.*

In contrast, the creation and development of three other brands (E, F, and G resorts' brands) depended strongly on Mui Ne values. For example, G resort's manager said:

We are located in Mui Ne. Mui Ne is very well known for its beautiful beach. Many tourists say they go to Mui Ne for holidays, but, they do not say they go to BT for holidays…We enjoy the fame of Mui Ne and we always have many visitors staying with us.

Group 6: no consistent brand elements and no reference to the destination.

- *The birth of the TBBs*

Two businesses belonged to an international hotel group and were operated and managed following the "on-brand" handbook, the host brand's toolkits. The managers also said that the owners of the businesses were Vietnamese people. However, they often received brand guidelines from the host brand overseas and also from the Vietnamese owners and managers' experience. Anantara's resort manager said:

We had our Anantara on-brand handbook. The handbook was our brand guide so we had to follow its requirements. By doing this, we kept our brand strong. You see, in the first page of the handbook was our brand promise. See, Anantara brand promise was to bring story collecting travellers closer to local culture and experiences through luxurious and heartfelt hospitality in exotic destination.

Figure 5.2. Photo of the Anantara's resort on-brand handbook
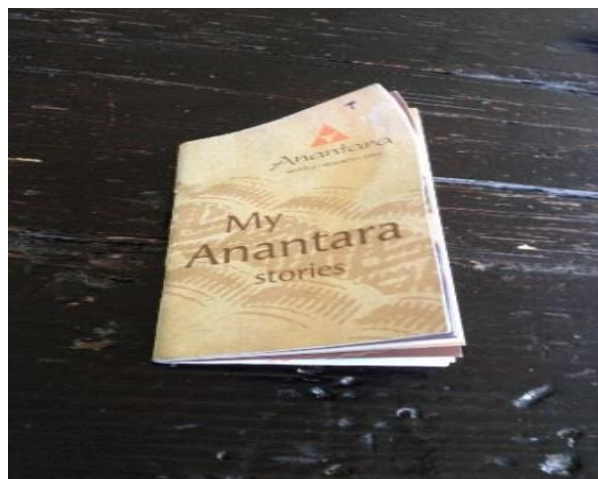
Source: Photo taken by the researcher.

Overall, there were three different ways in which the big ideas of the TBBs of Group 6 were built up. First, two TBBs were created by their host international brand. Second, two TBBs, Seahorse and Poshanu resorts, were family brands created by two sisters (Figure 5.2). These

two business managers said that they got support and supplemental ideas from each other because they were family businesses. Poshanu has been established for four years while the Seahorse resort was a famous and strong brand for longer time. Poshanu resort's manager also said that Poshanu resort's brand was created with the idea of BT local culture in a sea resort while the Seahorse resort was developed as a luxurious resort with a Vietnamese rural lifestyle. So, they benefited, supplemented, and shared tourist segments.

Figure 5.3. Screen shots of Seahorse and Poshanu resorts' brand logos

Source: www.poshanuresort.com and www.seahorseresortvn.com

Third, three other TBBs were chosen to differentiate them from the others. They were confident with their brand recognition and would like to develop it to attract another segment of tourists. For example, Fiore resort's manger:

> *Our brand name meant that life is full of happiness. We focused on caring for both the physical and mental health of the tourists. Tourists come to us for relaxation and comfort but also to easily find many activities and our support for their physical health care. That's our brand promise and what we will try to serve tourists.*

Group 7: no have brand-related information.

Most of businesses in Group 7 refused the research invitation. They said that they were small businesses (such as restaurants, the museum, and souvenir shops) with no idea or intention to build up brand in near future. For example, a restaurant's owner said that brand was an issue for higher class businesses and not for restaurants like his business:

> *Our goal was to serve sea foods, local cuisine for tourists who want to try our food. Our customers were also local people here. Moreover, this was a local restaurant. Brand, I think it was for the provincial authorities and high-class businesses with a lot of money and the aim of foreign tourists' attraction.*

The museum's representative said that the museum was a historic site and that brand development or brand-related issues were commercial issues. As a result, a brand was not their museum duty.

Two businesses agreed to participate in the research, a mini hotel and a local tour operator. The mini hotel's owner said that the hotel was a family hotel. They enjoyed the budget tourist market. They knew about the BTA's role in the Binh Thuan destination brand and the destination brand development strategy. But the owner said that she does not have any intention to develop her business brand.

5.4.3 Involvement in the BT DB development.

In sum, the involvement of tourism businesses in BT's DB varied among groups, who differed in their interest and adoption of the DB. Generally, they said that they were interested in the DB activities and programmes. However, in all groups, the managers interviewed said that they did not adopt any visual part of the DB. Their participation in DB activities and programmes was dependent on their funds.

Group 1: very consistent brand elements and reference to destination.

- *The DB interest*

In terms of the businesses interests in the destination, there were three small themes. First, all of the business managers said that their businesses had many brand activities that support and complement the BT DB's building process. Importantly, all of the managers said that their businesses contributed in two ways. The first contribution was the funds for BT's DB building and developments. Secondly, the fame of their own TBB also contributed to the recognition of BT's DB.

When these business managers self-evaluated the role of their businesses in the DB building and development, many said that each business played important roles in the DB development. Many managers evaluated each business as being like a piece of "a puzzle consisting of the destination picture". For example, Doi Su resort's general manager said:

> *Have you played the puzzle game? So, it looks like this game. We communicated and served tourists most when they visited the destination. So, what they felt about us will contribute to what they remember of the destination. As a result, somehow we are what the tourists will obtain about the destination values and brand.*

Seagull, Blue Ocean, and Little Mui Ne resorts' managers also used this theme when they mentioned to their roles in the BT's DB building and development. Little Mui Ne Cottage resort's manager said:

The role of each business is important. Each resort is a factor, a supporter that contributes to the reputation of BT's DB.

In this group, the meetings and seminars between the businesses and the BTA were the key channel for DB information sharing. Besides that, the businesses also had discussions with the BTPC and the provincial department of culture, sports, and tourism. Blue Ocean resort's manager said:

We had meetings with the BTA's executive every month. So, we can discuss and share our ideas together. Then, the BTA's executive members met every three months to discuss more. So, the BTA is responsible for meeting with the provincial authorities. The BTA is our business community's representative.

In terms of whether these businesses were willing to sacrifice their company's interest to adopt the DB, most of business managers said "yes" while some of them said that it depended on their businesses' financial capabilities and on the DB activities. For example, Blue Ocean resort's manager said:

It cannot be said that you sacrificed your own business. With the issue of the DB building and development, its final goal was to make tourists aware of the destination, to attract them to the destination. As a result, if they want to visit you or they introduced the BT to their friends, they will visit the destination and will stay with your resort. So, the DB is developed well, it brings benefits to your business.

- *DB adoption*

In terms of DB adoption, it is apparent from the data that the DMOs did not have any DB guide and toolkits. The key channel of the DB information sharing was meetings among the BTA members. They all mentioned the meetings they have every month. In these meetings, they share not only the issue of the DB but also general issues of tourism development in BT. Similar visual parts between their brands and the DB were coincidental and might be because the understanding of the destination values was so clear.

However, all of the business managers said that they used only their own brand attributes (logo, slogan, and other attributes) in their marketing materials, and not the DB logo. In

addition, they introduced the DB activities and promotions but did not use the visual parts of the BT DB. For example, Little Mui Ne Cottage resort's manager said:

> *We advertised the destination and its values. So the DB was a value of the destination because many people would like to enjoy holidays in Mui Ne. However, the slogan and the DB slogan and ours were similar coincidentally. We did not intend to adopt these slogans and logo. Because our logo and business brand contents were created before the DB creation.*

Group 2: consistent brand elements and reference to the destination. Groups 3 and 4: consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination or vice versa.

The business manager in Group 2 said that the business supported the BT DB. However, all of the activities were through the BTA and therefore, their funds and activities contributed to what the BTA did for the DB building. In terms of the destination brand discussion, the manager said that they have joined in the BTA community. Their destination brand knowledge was from the meeting they have with the BTA every month. In terms of the destination brand adoption, the manager said that:

> *we benefited from the destination values for tourism, so to our own business, the location is still the key. We surely introduced the destination values, so it might be incorporated with the destination values somehow.*

The business in Group 3 said that how the business was interested in or adopted the DB was decided by the socialist committees as it was a state-owned business and under management of the provincial socialist committees. In contrast, the business manager in Group 4 refused to answer the questions related to their own business interest in and adoption of the destination brand.

Group 5: consistent brand elements but no reference to the destination.

In this group, the business interests in and adoption of the DB can be divided into two smaller groups. The first group includes those businesses which mentioned enjoying the benefits from their brand strategies being consistent with the Mui Ne core part as the representative of BT's DB. The second group included two high-class businesses which were on the BTA executive board. The two business managers also mentioned the development stages of the BT DB and argued that the businesses should be active and have their own ways of contributing to the development of the DB. Hoang Ngoc resort's general manager said:

As a tourism business within the destination, we surely contribute to the development of the destination tourism. Reasons? Because the destination development in general and the DB reputation brings benefits to us. As you see, my business slogan at work for employees is "a resort within resorts". However, you also make your own more competitive than others because you should and because you can! If you get better and better, then you will benefit back to the destination.

At the same time, they mentioned that the business also should remain associated with the DB original core contents.

Group 6: no consistent brand elements and no reference to destination.

- *The interest in the DB*

Five out of eight business managers said that they joined all of the DB-related seminars, meetings, and activities through the BTA meeting every month. Three other businesses joined both the BTA and the BTPC activities. However, it is apparent from the data that all of these businesses participated in the DB activities because they aimed to support the BTA roles. For example, the Bamboo Village resort's manager said:

We *should support the DB activities because the DB building itself was a good thing to do. Moreover, we belonged to the BTA community so we supported our community.*

Also supporting the role of the BTA, Anantara, Fiore, and Cham Villas resorts' managers had the same idea as the Bamboo Village resort's manager. However, the extent their support depended on brand activities and funds for those activities. The second reason for their interest in the DB was because of their own benefits. All of the business managers interviewed said that the DB was good for the reputation of the destination, marketing, and advertising and so it would bring benefits for the business community.

The communication channels that the businesses got information from about the DB were through the BTA meetings, seminars, emails, and through a sub-network among businesses. The activities they joined were tourism fairs in HCM city, and foreign tourism fairs in Russia, Europe, and Korea.

However, the managers in this group said that these businesses' adoption of the DB depended on each brand activity, the destination development stages, and business ability. In terms of adoption of the visual DB, they said that they did not adopt any part. For example, Fiore Healthy resort's manager said:

Our adoption of the DB logo, slogan, vision, or goals depended on these activities' goals, the destination development stage, and our own business abilities. We did not adopt the slogan and logo of blue sea, white sand, and yellow sunshine because it now is not very impressive, personally we think.

Group 7: No have brand-related information.

The business managers interviewed said that they were not concerned about the destination brand development because its development needs a lot of funds. So, it was not for small businesses.

5.5 Conclusion of the stakeholders' buy-in or involvement.

The involvement of tourism businesses in the DB should be considered in two ways: themes of the brand development process; according to groups. According to the themes, the understanding of BT as a destination and the BT DB was shared between the seven groups and the DMOs. In addition, most of the businesses were interested in the DB and took part in DB activities [tourism fairs, promotional activities]. In turn, the information about DB activities was also shared via meetings and emails or documents from the BTA to the businesses. However, the ways in which the BT DB's attributes (core values, segmentations, and competitors) contributed to the DB were understood differently by the seven groups and the DMOs. In terms of DB involvement, none of the businesses adopted any visual part of the DB. Interestingly, many businesses in Group 1 had brand logos and slogans which were very similar to those of the DB but this was coincidental because the values all came from the Mui Ne values.

Group 1 had the largest number of themes similar to the DB. Although their own brand creations did not receive support from the DMOs, they were coincidentally similar to the DMOs in terms of the Mui Ne values' used in their brand positioning. Overall, Group 1 was the group mostly involved in the DB development process. In terms of groups 2, 3, and 4, the businesses shared the same understanding of the destination and the DB as the DMOs but their involvement in the DB birth and extension depended on the management of their own family businesses and the provincial authorities and socialists committee's decisions. Reasons included business extension, being provincially-owned businesses, or one that had just finished their equitization, so that they did not care much about the commercial issues of the brand. However, the differences between the businesses and the DMOs in terms of the DB developments appeared clearly in Groups 5 and 6. Both these groups showed a clear

understanding of the destination, DB, and their involvements in the DB process. Their business contexts (ownership, on-brand businesses) influenced their own brand development and their consistency with the DB. Some of them were influenced by family brands, others by their on-brand strategy of their own business groups. Moreover, the need for change, adding emerging values to the DB, and confidence in change leaders also emerged from the businesses in these two groups.

In sum, the findings of this chapter helped to conceptualise the explanation of the consistency as shown in Chapter 4, and to guide the presentation of the next chapter, the discussion chapter. In Chapter 6, a combination of Chapters 4 and 5 is presented so that the reasons for the variation in the consistency between the business groups and the DB are discussed.

Chapter Six: Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

for future research

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has two related research aims:

(1) To assess the consistency between the DB and TBBs in Binh Thuan province;

(2) To examine the process of DB creation and development in Binh Thuan province, the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this, and the influence of this process on consistency.

To address the research aims, a wide variety of relevant literature was reviewed; this led to the development of the conceptual framework that served as a theoretical foundation for this study. The conceptual framework then guided the methodology used. To address the two research aims, BT destination in Vietnam was chosen as the case study. The two phases of this study were also outlined in Chapter Three. Two associated methods: content analysis and in-depth interviews were used to address the two research aims. The former was to address the consistency of BT's DB and 87 TBBs within the destination. The latter was used to address the process of BT's DB creation and development and the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in this. Based on the analyses of the consistency, the characteristics of the seven groups of TBBs according to their consistency to BT's DB were presented. Based on the analyses of the BT's DB creation and development process, the nature of the DB, the brand management of the BT's DMOs, and the involvement of tourism business stakeholders in the process were addressed.

In this chapter, an explanation for the consistency sought in the nature of the DB, the DMOs' brand management and the involvement of tourism stakeholders in the process of the DB creation and development are presented (section 6.2). In section 6.3, reflections between the findings discovered from the BT's DB case study and the existing understandings of the consistency are discussed. A conclusion and practical implications for future research are provided in section 6.4.

6.2 An explanation of the consistency of BT's DB and TBBs

In Chapter Four, the findings of the consistency between the DB and TBBs were presented. From the results of the content analyses, the TBBs in Group 1 were very consistent with the DB, the businesses in Groups 2 to 7 were less consistent or not consistent at all with the DB. In terms of the consistency of each group, the selling points and target markets were the most consistent elements while the positioning statements varied among the businesses and many of them were not consistent with the DB positioning statement. As suggested by the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, the complex nature of the DB, the internal brand management, and the involvement of the stakeholders all influenced consistency. Therefore, this study seeks an explanation of the patterns of consistency in the process of the creation and development of BT's DB and the involvement of the destination's stakeholders in this.

6.2.1 The nature of BT's DB.

The long-term process of BT's DB creation and development and the complex set of DB components influenced the patterns of consistency between the DB and TBBs. First, the consistency was influenced by a set of DB's component. It emerged from the BTA and BTPC interviews that the DMOs had to address a set of DB components in order to create and develop a DB, and maintain them over time (2005-2014). The results of the first phase showed that only TBBs in Groups 1 and 2 were consistent with all components of the DB and showed integration into the DB architecture. However, TBBs in five other groups satisfied only one out of two steps of the patterns of consistency or were not consistent with any the DB's component. As a result, the number of TBBs which were consistent with the DB are limited.

The long-term process of BT's DB creation and development influenced the consistency. The results of the second phase confirm that BT's DB is created in 2005, determined its development plan to 2020 and looking forward to 2030. The long-term process of the DB needed a lot of funding to develop and maintain the DB. So, many small businesses in Group 7 stated that the brand building was for those with a lot of funds to support. They could not involve in the brand building and developing. This influenced the consistency because those micro and small businesses were worried about money, were not concern about the DB creation and development. As a result, they did not have any brand information or consistent brand activities to supplement the DB.

Second, the DB was developing in a continuous interaction among value-identity components of the destination, DMOs, and business stakeholders. In the interaction, the core values of the

destination, DMOs, and stakeholders summarise the brand identity: blue sea-white sand-yellow sunshine. However, during the destination development, some values about the destination and the stakeholders emerged which some stakeholders then wanted to add to the DB. From the empirical study, the ideas of emerging destination values (green tourism, local cultural experience…) from the businesses in Group 6 were the examples. As a result, the changing destination values negatively influence the messages about the destination that the TBBs deliver and, thus, affect the consistency.

6.2.2 Binh Thuan DMOs' destination brand management.

The ways in which BT's DMOs managed the process of DB creation and development from 2005 until the present involved many factors which influenced levels of consistency. The DMOs' brand management can be seen as a process of three stages: the audit, birth, and extension of the DB factors. Each of these stages influenced levels of consistency. In general, the bottom-up brand management of the BT DMOs, the uniformity of the DB development – the destination marketing – development strategies, the choice of a "plain" philosophy of BT's DB, and the organisation of the internal and external DB extension could support consistency. However, the lack of control over the message about the destination that the TBBs deliver combined with the real power of brand management for the DMOs negatively influenced the consistency.

In the whole process, the factor of the bottom-up approach management of the BT's DMOs supported the consistency. BT's DB was managed from bottom-up thus: the tourism businesses, the BTA, the BTPC, the provincial tourism department, and the provincial government. It emerged clearly from the data that the BTA was the brand creator and responsible for the DB development while the businesses were responsible for operating the DB. The bottom-up approach showed clearly in the audit, the birth, and the extension of BT's DB process. Through all three stages, the BTA involved the tourism businesses. As a result, the BT's DBM and its operational level tourism products were very close. While the businesses contributed their ideas in the DB audit and big idea, the philosophy of the DB, the businesses felt free to be interested in and to adopt the DB, and to receive the brand information from the DMOs and could take the DB ownership together with the DMOs. Meetings, discussions every three months among the BTA executive members, meetings every month among the BTA members, and brand information sharing through Internet communications such as email and businesses' sub-network forums, contributed to the same understanding of the meanings and activities of the DB and kept businesses tracking the DB

extension. As a result, most of the businesses in Groups 1 to 6 were clear about the DB logo, slogan, and meanings and were interested in the DB extension.

At the stage of the DB audit, the DMOs were clever in involving the businesses from the beginning and having their support in the following stages of the process. The DB alliances, including the BTA, the BTPC, and some of volunteering businesses analysed the situation of BT. First, the DMOs recognised the "nothing" except for the natural beauty of the BT as the advantages of BT's DB. The "nothing" situation made the tourism businesses recognise the need for the DB building to enter into the tourism markets. Tourism businesses were clearly aware of this, and this motivated them to be involved in the DB development.

The steps of the destination analyses (destination core values, target markets, competitors) and CSP determination could influence consistency. Consistency was evident in terms of selling points and target markets between the DB and the tourism product brand. BT's DB was being developed to be more competitive than its competitors (Nha Trang, Vung Tau) and targeted tourists that were different to the competitors. The destination's products and target tourists were oriented uniformly. BT has beach resorts as the largest number of tourism businesses and leisure tourists as the largest source of tourists.

In the birth of BT's DB, the "plain" philosophy supported consistency. In the case of the DB, the brand logo and slogan and its meanings symbolised the spirit of BT: blue sea-white sand-yellow sunshine. The plain meaning of the DB enabled businesses to be easily understood, followed, captured, and obtained.

At the stage of the DB extension, the DB identity based on the destination core values by the DMOs influenced the DB extension and then could support the consistent behaviour of the businesses. Although the BT's DMOs did not have DB guidelines or toolkits, the meanings of "blue sea-white sand-yellow sunshine" were easily captured and obtained. In terms of internal extension, the DB was extended from the BTA and the BTPC to the businesses within the destination. Internally, the DB started orienting from Mui Ne as core brand, and then gradually extended to the whole of BT, to become a national and international destination. In reality, all of the tourism businesses, even those which are not located in Mui Ne are needed to promote Mui Ne in their brand and marketing activities. Externally, the businesses were responsible for extending to tourists. Four- and five-star resorts took responsibility for delivering the DB to up-market tourists and two- to three-star resorts extended the DB to economy tourists. All of them were responsible for attracting leisure tourists as the destination's main type of the tourists.

However, other factors did not support the consistency of BT's DB and TBBs. First, the current (2014) developing stage of the BT tourism and the need to refresh the DB did not support the consistency. BT now has some emerging values which need to be added to the DB. Over many years, the destination went from "nothing" except its natural beauty in 2005 to become one of the most stable and rapidly tourism destination in Vietnam. Many new values were emerging from the destination development such as water sports, culture, and green tourism. As a result, "some difficulties are perceived by DB managers in implementing methods for tracking destination branding initiative" (Pike, 2005; 2007 cited by Sartori et al., 2012, p. 337).

During the birth and extension of BT's DB, there was a lack of both DMOs' control and real power of management of what messages that the TBBs deliver about the destination. The DMOs did not support the businesses when they created their own brands. Moreover, the DMOs did not have any documents related to the DB toolkits to guide the businesses to behave consistently with the DB development. So, the businesses did not have a brand reference or guidelines while they created or developed their TBBs. At the stage of the DB extension, while the DMOs had good communication with the businesses and a close leadership style, the BTA and the BTPC only asked for voluntary interest and adoption from the businesses. Consequently, as can be seen from the results in Chapter Four, a number of TBBs varied their positioning statements which were not consistent with the "blue sea-white sand-yellow sunshine" identity of the destination. Moreover, the DMOs did not use real power to control and manage the adoption or extension from the businesses to tourists. As a result, some businesses acted disconnectedly, like businesses in Groups 5, 6, and 7.

6.2.3 The involvement of tourism business stakeholders.

The results of this study show that if business stakeholders buy in to the destination and DB, are involved with it, and support all of/most of the phases of the DB creation and development, they are likely to be very consistent with the DB. For example, the businesses in Group 1 shared the same understanding of the destination and the DB with the DMOs. Although the businesses in Group 1 did not receive support from the DMOs or use the DB as reference for their brand creations, their TBBs were based on the values of Mui Ne or their location so that they coincidentally had the same elements of their brand with the DB. Moreover, they were interested and involved in BT's DB extension. As a result, the businesses in Group 1, compared to other groups, were mostly involved in BT's DB process so their brands were very consistent with the DB.

The second factor that supports consistency was the role of the BTA. In general, the BTA is an organisation built up and operated for the benefits of the tourism businesses within BT. Many businesses in all groups said that they acted as BTA followers. In Groups 2, 3, and 4, some provincially-owned businesses said that they followed the BTA's planning for the DB, and followed the DB development and the provincial development strategy. Some of them were not concerned about their own TBBs but still referred to the destination.

However, many factors did not lead to consistency. First, the disconnected involvement of the business stakeholders influenced the consistency. For example, the businesses in Groups 5 and 6 shared the same understanding of the DB with the DMOs. However, the businesses did not have a DB guide and toolkits or other the DMOs support when they created the brand. Moreover, these TBBs were influenced by their hotel group's brand creation and on-brand development policies. As a result, their brands were created and operated by the management of hotel groups outside of BT. In reality, many of the businesses in Groups 5 and 6 belong to hotel groups from HCM city and foreign hotel groups, or have family brands shared with another business. As a result, their adoption or involvement in the DB development was limited or sometimes could not be adopted.

Another reason why some businesses were not consistent with the DB was their lack of the concern with the DB. Most of the businesses in Group 7, for example, refused the research invitation because they were small businesses, who thought that branding is the duty of the provincial authorities and only benefits high-class businesses. They did not involve in any stage of BT's DB creation and development.

6.3 Reflections on BT's DB case study and the existing literature

The following sections 6.3.1 to 6.3.3 discuss about what similarities and differences between BT's DB case study and the existing literature of the consistency related to DB, the DBM and the internal stakeholders' involvement.

6.3.1 The nature of DB.

DB is already a complex matter to apply and manage, and with different destinations this complexity increases (Tasci, 2011; UNWTO, 2009). This empirical study confirm that a DB is created and developed by a process in which destination core values, identity, and other planning components of brand and managing of internal stakeholders are linked together. So, the consistency among DB components influences the consistency between the DB and TBBs

(Lee et al., 2006; Nelson, 2014). Moreover, this study also confirms that a DB is the outcome of a long-term process in which the internal brand management and the involvement of internal stakeholders in the whole process are important in developing consistency (Bregoli, 2012; Cox et al., 2014; Tasci, 2011). This study also confirm that the DB architecture is an important component of the DB process (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Gnoth, 2007). In addition, an appropriate DB architecture positively influences the internal brand strength and results in consistency between the DB and TBBs.

First, this study confirms Morgan & Pritchard's views that "once the brand's core values have been established, they should underpin and imbue all subsequent marketing activity – especially in literature text and illustration – so that the brand values are cohesively communicated. A logotype or brand signature and a destination style guide, which ensures consistency of message and approach, should also reinforce the brand values" (2002, p. 26). As a result, this study confirms that the DMOs and TBBs should attempt to work together to deliver consistent memories of the destination that also should be presented clearly in the brand's symbolic contents. In other words, the DB's core values should be referred to by the TBBs in their marketing materials so that consistency will be guaranteed.

This study confirms the role of brand architecture as an important component of a DB and one that contributes to the consistency of the DB and TBBs. The BT results show that a brand's architecture should reflect all the key components of a DB and in essence be the blueprint which guides brand building, development, and marketing (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Gnoth, 2007; Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). The BT's DMOs confirmed that the way they organised the brands helped them to gather businesses to promote Mui Ne together, limited inner competition among businesses within the destination, and divided the target markets' marketing for each type of business. The significance of the organisation of brands was also found in some existing studies. Crockett and Wood (2002, p. 125) examined the brand Western Australia and stated that "it is necessary to incorporate all the elements, including individual businesses and organizations which are inextricably linked to the 'total overall product', that make up the state and its personality. A co-operative approach is essential to achieve a positive long-term image of Western Australia". From the case of BT destination, the importance of this co-operative approach is confirmed.

This study confirms that a DB architecture, DB internal extension, which is agreed between the BT's DMOs and the business stakeholders and among the businesses is important for the DB. There was a need for the relationship between internal and external DB extension. The internal strength of the DB requires agreement and support from the internal stakeholders, which then motivates them to deliver the DB promises consistently to tourists through their activities, and then influence the external extension of DB. This study's contribution to the brand literature is that DB architecture is important for internal strength of the DB, limits competition among businesses within the destination, and supports consistency between the DB and TBBs.

The situation of BT's DB could also influence consistency. From 2005 to now (2014), BT's DB has had 9 years of creation and development. This DB has been created and developed in the context of a "young" destination where the tourism industry has developed for less than 20 years from 1995 to the present, mostly increasing the development stage of the destination. So, the achievement of the tourism industry might attract businesses and gather them in the DB development strategy. Consistency between the businesses and the DB coordinators could change if the destination tourism industry itself changes.

6.3.2 Internal destination brand management.

The case of BT confirms that the "bottom-up approach would allow stakeholders to join in to create a collective brand personality" (Cox et al., 2014, p. 9) and "the involvement of the local stakeholders during the first phases of identification of the brand values and the following internal communication campaign have been capable of sharing the main constituents of the destination identity" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). Therefore, the bottom-up approach could give opportunities from the DMOs to manage the DB "with consistent but flexible" strategies (Cox et al., 2014; Crockett & Wood, 2002; 2004). This study confirms that DB creation and development is, in essence, not a managerial process but one of co-ordination (Kavaratzis, 2012); for example, the co-creation of brands by multiple people gathered in the DB alliance and for greater continuous involvement for the whole process of the DB development.

This study also contributes to the literature by showing that the creation of TBBs might not be influenced by the DMOs. Some TBB creations and developments were influenced by their own business contexts and the values of the destination. As a result, the TBBs created and operated under their businesses "on-brand" strategies. However, the businesses located and operated in the destination was because of the destination values. So, this study suggests that the DB should involve businesses by increasing their awareness about the link between the

DB and the destination values, keeping them informed, and discussing the DB development strategy.

However, the process of BT's DB creation and development confirms that "the DMOs have to address a complex set of issues in order to enhance the different dimensions of brand equity and maintain them over time" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 337). This study found that monthly and three monthly meetings between the DMOs and businesses, and the use of Internet information sharing tools such as email, were valuable. The information sharing helps the DMOs to develop understanding of DB development, and the business managers in tracking the DB development. Over time, some businesses also show their changing preferences of the DB values. Therefore, this study confirms the role of the DB communication from the DB managers to the businesses and "any change must be managed within the overall consistency of the brand" (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002, p. 39).

This study also reveals that a real power or control over the message that the TBBs deliver is needed for consistency. In terms of consistency, the study showed that the tourism businesses were mostly consistent with the selling points and target markets, while the positioning statements reflected via the slogans were varied. Therefore, "a priority for brand authorities is thus to disseminate the updated information about the market results and positioning of the branding strategy" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 337). In addition, "DB managers should try to enact different means of internal communication, aimed not only at informing stakeholders about the attributes and benefits of the brand, but also at reinforcing their emotional attachment and motivating them to deliver the brand promises through their activities" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). For the DB adoption, the DMOs also "should be estimate "actual cost associated with the adoption of the brand and market performance" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). In addition, the DMOs need to be more proactive in stimulating buy-in by empowering members and helping them adopt more DB activities (Cox et al., 2014).

6.3.3 The involvement of tourism business stakeholders.

This study, especially the examples of TBBs in Group 1, shows that continuing involvement of tourism stakeholders in the whole process of the DB creation and development is important for the consistency of the DB. This result supports the importance of a participative approach to the brand and branding process in order to enhance its overall internal equity (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 337). A disconnected involvement in the DB development process influenced negatively the consistency. This result supports Kavaratzis' (2012, p. 7) point that "this is

contrasted to a critical evaluation of place [destination] branding practice where stakeholders are paid 'lip service' regarding their participation, rather than being given opportunities to get more fully involved in the development of their place brand".

Moreover, this study confirms that "involving stakeholders does make a difference and has positive effects on the clarity of the brand concept" and "increased effectiveness of city brands in terms of attracting the target groups [businesses]" (Klijn et al., 2012, p. 499). It is evident from BT's DB case that most tourism businesses were clear about the DB logo and slogans. However, this study supports the results of Sartori et al.'s (2012) study which indicated "the need for tourism partnerships to disseminate information on the outcomes of the planning strategy" (p. 337). Particularly, the DMOs also need to update tourism businesses about the long-term objective, vision, and orientation of the DB as many TBBs still did not know about these. In addition, because the small businesses in Group 7 seemed not involved at all in the DB process, it caused by their brand concepts' knowledge and benefits were less and were likely wrong.

It emerged from the results of this study that the DB was popularly "considered more as an instrument of customer retention and as a guarantee of quality than as an enhancer of market visibility, which could be influenced by the lack of knowledge about the market performance of the branding strategy" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). Evidently, a large number of business managers in Groups 1, 5, and 6 said that the DB is as a symbol of the BT tourism quality or as a marketing tool. They "identify themselves with the brand proposition, but tend to incorporate the [destination] brand more as blueprint for customer relations [leisure tourists] than for corporate communication" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 338). While the provincially-owned businesses in Groups 3 and 4 operated as the BTA followers and the provincial socialist committees' decision, the businesses in Group 7, as micro and small businesses, argued that the DB was the duty of the provincial authorities and the high-class businesses with huge funds. Therefore, the awareness of the destination "brand's benefits and costs are likely biased" (Sartori et al., 2012, p. 337).

6.4 Conclusion and practical implication for future research

Overall, this study makes a first attempt to examine the consistency between a DB and TBBs by exploring the consistency in a comprehensive process of a DB creation and development. For this purpose, a conceptual framework of the DB creation and development – drawn from the literature on the DB, DB components, the internal DBM, and the involvement of tourism stakeholders – was proposed and applied to the case of BT's DB.

In particular, this empirical study supports the influence of the complex nature of DBs on consistency. This study confirms that a DB is created and developed as a long-term process in which the destination core values play an important role for building the DB identity, underpinning all of the following components of the DB, and resulting in influencing TBBs' consistency with the DB. Moreover, this study supports the importance of the DB architecture in developing consistency. The DB architecture influences the internal and external extension of the DB and then influences the consistency between the organisation of DB and TBBs. Therefore, it seems that appropriate DB architecture is important for the consistency between the DB and TBBs.

In terms of DBM, this study supports the importance of a bottom-up brand management approach and a co-creation and co-ordination of a DB to ensure consistency. In the existing literature, the bottom-up brand management approach was considered important for the consistency of DB (Cox et al., 2014; Sartori et al., 2012). However, studies in Western Australia (Crockett & Wood, 2002) and Louisiana (Slater, 2002) show that a top-down brand management was popular while bottom-up brand management was in the wish list of the researchers. Therefore, this study contributes an example of the bottom-up brand management for further research. However, it is important to mention that the DBM of the BT, as a tourism DB at provincial level, seems to be a characteristic of the transitional economy in Vietnam from a planned to market economy. It emerged from the data that BT's DB was created by the BTA and brand alliances in 2005, approvals were later obtained from the provincial authorities (around 2008), therefore, further research of DBs and DBM in the context of transitional economies is needed.

In terms of the involvement of tourism stakeholders, this study confirms that a participative approach – or the full involvement of tourism stakeholders – in the process of a DB creation and development is needed for consistency. This study is the first attempt at studying the consistency between the DB and TBBs. In line with existing studies of internal brand strength (Bregoli, 2012, Cox et al., 2014), this study confirms that by developing a communication

tool that allows assessment of internal brand strength, destination managers can put in place actions aimed at improving it and, as a result, the overall consistent DB. Moreover, this study is important because the DB sustainability lies in the ability to achieve a consistency between the DB and TBBs (Cox et al., 2014; Tasci, 2011).

This study is the first attempt at studying the consistency between the DB and TBBs. The study is important because it builds on others that show that DB sustainability lies in the ability to achieve a consistency between the DB and TBBs. In line with existing studies of internal brand strength (Bregoli, 2012, Cox et al., 2014), this study confirms that by developing a communication tool that allows assessment of internal brand strength, destination managers can put in place actions aimed at improving it and, as a result, the overall consistent DB. Furthermore, in terms of the involvement of tourism stakeholders, the study confirms that a participative approach – or the full involvement of tourism stakeholders – in the process of a DB creation and development is needed to ensure consistency.

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Appendix 1

Destination brand and tourism business brands in Binh Thuan province, Vietnam

A Checklist of Questions for DMO's representatives

1. Background

1. Could you tell me something about yourself (job duties, tasks…) and how long have you worked for this organization? How long have you been appointed to this position?

2. Could you give me some background on your organization (functions, missions)?

2. Brand awareness/ understanding

2.1. Understanding about the destination:

Destination values:

3. What are Binh Thuan's (BT's) main advantages (assets, experiences) in terms of visitors appeal? In order of priority, which advantages are the strongest and most appealing for visitors?

1…………………………………..	4…………………………………..
2…………………………………..	5…………………………………..
3…………………………………..	6…………………………………..

4. How powerful and distinctive are these compared to other destinations in South Central Coast of Vietnam? And how accessible are these assets/experiences for visitors?

5. How do these main assets/experiences contribute to BT's destination brand (DB)?

Destination segmentation:

6. What are BT's key visitor segments? Can you prioritize these segments? And how does your organization identify these segments?

7. How do these key visitor segments influence BT's DB?

Destination competitors:

8. Who are current and potential competitors of BT's tourism industry? What are each competitor's unique competitive advantages?

9. How is the competition likely to affect BT's destination brand?

2.2 Understanding/ awareness about destination brand:

10. What perception do DMO's authorities want to create with BT's DB in the minds of:

- tourism business within the province
- your DMO's employees

11. What is the distinctive style of BT's DB?

- In other words, how would you describe BT's DB (identity, personality (functional, symbolic, and emotional elements); positioning (slogan))?

12. What is BT's DB promise to its internal stakeholders (tourism business, DMO's employees)? Is it the same promise to visitors?

3. Brand creation

3.1. Recalling the birth of BT's DB essence

13. When was BT's DB essence created? And how long did the brand essence creation program last?

14. Could you tell me about the situation of the BT tourism industry when the BT's DB essence was created?

- (Background, leadership, BT tourism board, funds for brand...)

15. What advantages did the DMO have and what challenges did it face when creating the brand essence? At that time, who were the main competitors and target markets of the BT tourism industry?

16. In order of priority, who played the key roles in creating the DB essence? Did DMO seek the involvement of any tourism private boards/companies in the creation of BT's DB essence? Why/ why not?

17. Why does BT tourism need a DB? Was there any pressure/requirements from regional or national organisation's brand or any other influence BT's DB?

18. What skills, talents and attitude of DMO's employees/ managers and tourism businesses within BT required for the DB essence creation?

3.2. The big idea

19. Where did the idea of BT's DB and its brand contents (slogan, logo, graphic) come from? How were these features of the brand decided?

20. Were the brand building process influenced by tourism stakeholders (international, national, and local businesses)?

21. How does BT's DB get across the diversity of what BT has to offer international travelers, while keeping the DB contents tightly focused?

4. Brand involvement

4.1. Brand extension

22. Have the BT's DB been influenced by the need to include various tourism products when the DB was created?

- And how did the DB communicate this need?
- How did the DB co-ordinated with various tourism businesses within BT province?

23. How is the strength of the BT's DB reinforced? What activities are used to communicate the BT's DB internally? And how these activities foster the core values of the BT's DB?

4.2. Shared ownership with businesses OR levering the brand.

24. Do commercial businesses have rights to use the destination brand on their marketing materials and in their promotional campaigns? If yes, are there any requirements/ limitations for using the DB? If no, why?

25. Is there anything more you would like you add about BT's DB and the BT brand building process?