

The Incorporation of Themes Related to Islandness in Tourism Branding among Cold-Water, Warm-Water, and Temperate-Water Islands

Authors : Susan C. Graham

Abstract : Islands have a long established allure for travellers the world over. From earliest accounts of human history, travellers were drawn by the sense of islandness embodied by these destinations. The concept of islandness describes the essence of what makes islands unique relative to non-islands and extends beyond geographic interpretations by attempting to capture the specific sense of self-exhibited by islanders in relation to their connection to place. The themes most strongly associated with islandness include a) a strong connection to water as both the life blood and a physical barrier, b) a unique culture and robust arts community that is deeply linked to both the island and islanders, c) an appreciation of and for nature, d) a rich sense of history and tradition connected to the place, e) a sense of community and belonging that arose through shared triumphs and struggles, and f) a profound awareness of independence, separateness, and uniqueness derived from both physical and social experience. The island brand, like all brands, is a marketing tactic designed to succinctly express a specific value proposition in simplistic ways which might include a brand symbol, logo, slogan, or representation meant to distinguish one brand from another. If a value proposition is the identification of attributes that separate one brand from another by highlighting the brand's uniqueness, then presumably island brands may, at least in part, emphasize islandness as part of the destination brand. Yet it may be naïve to expect all islands to brand themselves using similar themes when islands can differ so substantially in terms of population, geography, political climate, economy, culture, and history. Of particular interest is the increased focus on tourism among 'cold-water' islands. This paper will examine the incorporation of themes related to islandness in tourism branding among cold-water, warm-water, and temperate-water islands. The tourism logos of 83 islands were collected and assessed for the use of themes related to islandness, namely water, arts and culture, nature, history and tradition, community and belongingness, and independence, separateness, and uniqueness. The ratings for each theme related to islandness for each of the 83 island destinations were then analyzed to identify if differences exist between cold-water, warm-water, and temperate-water islands. A general consensus of what constitutes 'cold-water' destinations is lacking, therefore a water temperature of 15C was adopted using the guidelines from the National Center for Cold Water Safety. Among these 83 islands, the average high and average low water temperatures of 196 specific locations, including the capital, northern, and southern most points of each island, was recorded to determine if the location was a cold-water (average high and low below 15C), warm-water (average high and low above 15C), or temperate-water (average high above 15C and low below 15C) location.

Keywords : branding, cold-water, islands, tourism

Conference Title : ICETTS 2018 : International Conference on Extreme Tourism and Tourism Sciences

Conference Location : Stockholm, Sweden

Conference Dates : July 12-13, 2018