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PROGRAMME



GROWER'S ROLE IN PROMOTING THE VALUE OF NEW
ZEALAND KIWIFRUIT:
MECHANISMS WHICH ENCOURAGE THE USE OF GOOD
PRACTICE TO CREATE A POSITIVE IDENTITY FOR SOCIAL
LICENSE TO OPERATE

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Abstract

New Zealand's kiwifruit industry which sells a high-value product may have the opportunity to utilise improved social capital to strengthen its leading position. This report analyses the kiwifruit industry's position in gaining social licence to operate and argues for communication mechanisms which will create socioemotional value and thus social capital amongst stakeholders to form SLO with the aim to ultimately create value and sustainable longevity of the kiwifruit industry for New Zealand's kiwifruit growers.

Trust, a decrease of social distance between growers and their stakeholders, and a strong understanding of grower drivers are critical communication mechanisms to encourage best practice by New Zealand's kiwifruit growers. Financial and non-financial incentives to encourage good practice are also analysed.

Keywords: Kiwifruit, Horticulture, Best Practice, Brand Value, Social Licence, New Zealand, Identity

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In an environment of dramatic and continuous disruption, the biggest risk facing organisations is maintaining relevance. In the past, organisations developed strategies which used language like winning, beating the competition or leaving nothing on the table. The focus today is on long term sustainability and earning the right to serve customers and partners. This change in language is reflective of a change in the ground rules surrounding markets that the pace of innovation and disruption is imposing (KMPG, 2019).

1 Introduction & Outline of the report

New Zealand's kiwifruit industry is strongly focused on its commitments to producing a high-quality product that meets the increasing demands of its main export markets. (Rosin C. H., 2007)

Today, Social Licence to Operate (SLO) is critical for business longevity. While SLO is a relatively new topic within New Zealand's primary industries, this report will argue that the kiwifruit industry is in a good position to implement communication mechanisms which further encourage growers to conduct good practice beyond the regulatory minimum. In addition, it will be argued that this implementation will further strengthen industry's ability to utilise SLO to create sustainable value and long-term profitability.

To investigate possible communication mechanisms which could be used by the kiwifruit industry to gain and retain SLO, an analysis of primary and secondary sources is conducted. The analysis suggests communication mechanisms which could be implemented from a theoretical perspective to encourage growers to implement practices to create SLO.

1.1 Hypothesis

Hypothesis

There are communication mechanisms which can be implemented that encourage and instil an understanding in New Zealand kiwifruit growers that the use of good practice, rather than meeting minimum standards, will increase the value of the product which will ultimately support grower returns.

1.1.1 Explanation and benefits of the hypothesis

The traditional concept of business profitability has been disrupted by the need for businesses to have a social license to operate in order for them to mitigate the risk of losing relevance. The aim of this contemporary model is to achieve long term sustainability and the right to serve customers and partners (KMPG, 2019). The report's hypothesis of increased 'value' via social licence therefore does not relate to financial returns in the first instance, but rather to sustained economic viability for the long-term.

Accordingly, this report argues that while Zespri already sells a high-value product, more emphasis is now being placed on this by industry stakeholders. In this respect, utilisation of good practice such as GLOBALG.A.P rather than meeting the regulators minimum standards is one of the critical factors required to achieve social licence from relevant stakeholders. This is particularly relevant for New Zealand's kiwifruit industry which has limited production volumes¹ but can produce and market a high value product.

1.1.2 Importance of the research for the kiwifruit industry

This report argues that to produce a high value product, good practice rather than meeting the regulatory standard is necessary. Regulatory standards in New Zealand are defined by government regulators such as WorkSafe, the Environmental Protection Authority, Immigration New Zealand, the Ministry for Business and Innovation, amongst others. Above and beyond these regulators, the New Zealand kiwifruit industry follows Zespri Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) standards. The Zespri GAP checklist is based on the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard, but also includes elements required under the Zespri System and all growers are audited for compliance.

For this report, good practice is defined as practice that goes above the minimum standard as described by the regulators.

Prior to the increased influence of SLO stakeholders, it could be argued that grower's SLO was based on its identity of producing a high value product which set it apart from its competitors. This report argues that meeting the minimum standards enforced through these regulations is no longer sufficient to achieve SLO from stakeholders, in particular, consumers.

Mechanisms to encourage best practice are prevalent throughout New Zealand's primary industries, including kiwifruit. There are other industries in New Zealand, such as dairy, who currently

¹ 'While the world total production of kiwifruit has increased by over 50% during the last decade, the kiwifruit remains a niche fruit, taking up an estimated 0.22% of the global fruit bowl, which is dominated by apples, oranges, and bananas' (NZKGI, 2018)

incentivise particular drivers which impact upon the industry's SLO. Synlait, for example, reward their farmers who demonstrate leadership in two social licence drivers - food safety and sustainability through their Lead With Pride programme (Synlait, 2019).

In the kiwifruit industry, one form of incentive related to producing kiwifruit is based on taste, size and time. There is a minimum taste (based on dry matter) and size standard for different varieties to meet Class 1 Standard Supply as well as financial incentives for an early harvest. (ZESPRI, 2019). In order to receive these incentives, Growers implement technical know-how.

However, this report will not focus on good practice that creates a high value product from its taste, size and time perspective, but rather will narrow its analysis of good practice vs regulatory standard to concentrate on consumer-driven drivers for change which are regulated. These will be classified to be intangible attributes which form a socioemotional connection with stakeholders. An example of such good practice is worker welfare which could involve the level of provision of accommodation, transportation to place of employment and flexibility of working hours.

This issue is a very timely topic as the industry becomes more focused on areas of sustainability, such as worker welfare, which has partially come about as a result of demand driven by stakeholders such as supermarket chains (Rosin C. H., 2007). The kiwifruit industry is already very busy in this area of sustainability to proactively gain social capital. One example is front-footing the topic of water sustainability as a joint industry effort.

Furthermore, in terms of timeliness, when an industry is going through a profitable growth phase, the option to focus on more than minimum standards to remain profitable becomes available rather than concentrating on 'survival'. Baines states that the nature of the relationship between community and company is likely to be influenced strongly by the size of the company (Baines, 2017). When businesses are succeeding, they are no longer seen to be in a 'survival-mode' and have the capacity to achieve more the minimum regulatory level. Here, as with Fonterra (Clark-Hall, 2018), it can be argued that with grower's success also comes increased public scrutiny and government controls and thus a greater need for SLO. Accordingly, it can be questioned if the kiwifruit industry has kept up with the evolution of socioemotional values of its stakeholders and their perceptions of the kiwifruit industry. The kiwifruit industry's SLO becomes threatened if it lags behind.

Such a question does have a legitimate background. KPMG argue that 'the agri-food sector globally has often been viewed as a poor employer, providing tough, unskilled physical work, often in harsh weather conditions, with anti-social hours and low pay; hardly a great story to tell the world.' Furthermore, 'If producers fail to meet employment standards that are acceptable to consumers, they may find themselves being considered modern slave masters and having the market access of their products restricted, as more countries introduce Modern Slavery legislation' (KMPG, 2019). Sensitivity towards this is ever more pertinent today as digitalisation now allows for stories to 'go viral', so that in today's world, a relatively small issue can gain global attention (KMPG, 2019). For the kiwifruit industry, only a small number of cases of worker exploitation could have large ramifications for growers (Richardson, 2019).

Lastly, It must also be noted that the scope of the report focuses on New Zealand kiwifruit grower's SLO, not Zespri or other kiwifruit businesses such as post-harvest operators. It is notable that these stakeholders do attempt to achieve a SLO via e.g. investment into local communities (Sunlive, 2019). However, the effectiveness of these drivers are outside the scope of this report.

1.1.3 The kiwifruit industry already creates social capital

The intention of this hypothesis is to state that, although the kiwifruit industry, and Zespri in particular, is already strongly considering sustainability as part of social capital for its high-value product, the fact that the industry is in a growth phase allows for the potential to create further improvements and communication mechanisms to strengthen this position. There are many examples to support this position.

One example of the industry creating social capital with overseas stakeholders is through the implementation of the GLOBALG.A.P standards. These standards are explained in more detail below, but in essence, they are an example of the industry going above the regulatory standard and into the area of good practice.

From a domestic perspective, an example of the industry creating social capital with domestic stakeholders is through community investment. There are many examples of different members of the industry investing into the local community, which also creates social capital. For example, during the 2018/19 year, Zespri grew its community investment to over \$500,000 each year, taking diabetes nurses into primary schools to teach about nutrition, investing in the Otago Kiwi Trust and supporting training for Surf Lifesaving New Zealand (Zespri, 2019).

Zespri recognises the importance of the local community and states:

Our industry's foundations lie in the people who choose to be a part of our broader kiwifruit family. We know that without their collective efforts, whether that be on orchard, in the supply chain, or within one of our market-facing roles here at Zespri, the kiwifruit industry would not be able to achieve the success it does today. This sense of community defines our industry and it's important that we protect and enhance it. At Zespri, this means making sure that we continue to support organisations and projects that help strengthen our people and our communities. As our business and footprint across the world grows, so too must the contribution we make (Zespri, 2019).

Lastly, one example of on-orchard practice where the New Zealand kiwifruit industry is owning issues by proactively front-footing them is in the aforementioned area of water. In this example, members of the industry have come together to form an industry strategy on water in acknowledgement of protecting its quality and quantity as an important resource. Here, not only is the resource protected for future generations, but the industry gains social capital with stakeholders for its work in this area.

2 Methodology and Ethical Considerations²

Qualitative methods were chosen for this report because, unlike quantitative methods, they provide an in-depth understanding and evaluation of the topic, while analysing a small number of sources. Qualitative methods also allow the opportunity for the researcher to be open to new variables and relationships that might have not been possible to identify through quantitative research (Francisco, 2001) (Morse, 1999).

The methodological analysis presented below will show that neither qualitative nor quantitative analyses are perfect. Subsequently, the methodology most suited to this report had to be chosen. It was argued that a qualitative methodology was best suited because it overcomes two central problems relating firstly to the complexity within theory analysis, and secondly to the extraction of information from primary sources. The methodology for the gathering of primary information will also be presented. It will argue that 'one-on-one' semi-structured interviews are the best option to gather information for this report. This information can then be made relative by referencing perspectives against secondary information.

2.1 Primary sources: Interview strategy

A qualitative methodology was implemented for the collection of primary information through semi-structured expert interviews. While it can be argued that key questions are able to influence interviewee responses, they keep the interview on topic and concentrate on information that the interviewee is particularly knowledgeable about. The positive side of semi-structured interviews is that they achieve the goal of covering a broad range of opinions and provide original answers from within interviewees' subjective thought. Questions of the semi-structured interview included current reward systems for use of best practice, use of best practice to increase product value and current discussion in this space.

One-on-one interviews are advantageous in that the general opinions expressed could be taken at face value. This format differs from other qualitative interview methodologies such as analysing feelings commonly practiced in ethnographic field work that requires more in-depth analysis (Crang, 2003). Nevertheless, while it was possible to take information at face value, it is true that biases are presented in such interviews. This problem was resolved through two different avenues. Firstly, over time, throughout interviews with people from different sectors, biases were revealed through contradicting arguments, and secondly through comparing the biased arguments with secondary sources. The interviewee also becomes aware of bias by having a broad range of knowledge concerning the different schools of thought surrounding the topic. This was achieved by studying secondary information in-depth before the interviews. Biases were also discovered through comparison of primary with secondary resources. When choosing interviewees, a mixture of both academics and people who work in this area were chosen. Academics were chosen for their ability to understand the research in its interrelationship with other theories. Interviewees who work in this area were chosen for their understanding of discussion around the practical application of this topic. Requests for interviews were sent, and the positive response rate was 100 percent. From August – November 2019, expert interviews were conducted with nine people who work in this area.

² The author repeated the same research methodology used in a previous work (Murphy, M. 2009. *Globalization As A Tool To Protect Nation-State Sovereignty: A Conceptual Examination Of Nation-State Export Culture And Public Diplomacy*. SVH, Germany).

Interviews ranged between 30 – 60 minutes and written notes were taken throughout the interviews.

2.2 Secondary sources

Through these interviews, a broad range of arguments were collated. It was important to recognise that the arguments presented by the interviewees were not representative of the topic but were rather one view. To overcome this problem, the information presented was compared to secondary sources after the interview. Accordingly, after primary information had been gathered and a pattern of different arguments were found, secondary sources (namely academic texts) were used to conduct further research into these arguments. The secondary sources expanded and provided referenced legitimization to the information provided in the interviews.

3 Growers now need to be encouraged to use good practice

“... simple analysis would suggest that resilience in the kiwifruit sector would involve maintaining the beneficial relationships through which consumer concerns about the environmental and social impacts of orchard management are translated into industry practices that have encouraged reduced use of pesticides... The challenge of such a normative position lies in the need to distinguish between the positive and negative aspects that can be expected in any system. In other words, are there aspects of the kiwifruit sector which are more detrimental than beneficial—and can the basin of attraction remain stable if these are changed?” (Rosin, Dwiartama, Hunt, & van den Dungen, 2012).

New Zealand’s kiwifruit industry has been explained to be highly regulated by multiple stakeholders. While orchard management practices are determined by growers and orchard landowners, practices are also ‘affected by the environmental, social and economic contexts within which an individual is situated (Rosin C. H., 2007). Regulation sets the minimum standards required for the production of kiwifruit, but little regulation encourages the implementation of good practice in the area of social capital which promote socioemotional values required for SLO. The Infinite Game will be explained to place more emphasis on SLO today.

3.1 Social Licence to Operate and the Infinite Game

In an environment of dramatic and continuous disruption, the biggest risk facing organisations is maintaining relevance. In the past, organisations developed strategies which used language like winning, beating the competition or leaving nothing on the table. The focus today is on long term sustainability and earning the right to serve customers and partners. This change in language is reflective of a change in the ground rules surrounding markets that the pace of innovation and disruption is imposing (KMPG, 2019).

Primary industries have found themselves in a new environment of the Infinite Game. KPMG argue that businesses should no longer be concerned with shorter term gains but should rather be concerned with maintaining relevance (KMPG, 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that SLO plays a critical role within this need to stay relevant and is therefore included in businesses models. Under the Infinite Game, gone should be the days of focus placed on quick financial returns. Today, the lifecycle of a company is more important.

A critical component of SLO for a business to be successful within the Infinite Game is trust. Trust is understood as the most important driver of reputation, followed by leadership/success, fairness and responsibility (Colmar Brunton, 2019). In particular, trust involves if the business can be trusted, has a positive influence on society and is honest and ethical in the way that business is conducted. Brands, including those of the kiwifruit industry, are more resilient if they invest ‘reservoirs of trust-building activity’ (Colmar Brunton, 2019), which includes investment into building social capital with stakeholders. Trust is gained by stakeholders when businesses fulfil the socioemotional criteria required for SLO.

If trust is not gained by the stakeholder, the business begins to fail within the Infinite Game and the regulator begins to play a stronger role. At its extreme, if SLO is seen to not be fulfilled by stakeholders, the stakeholders can put pressure upon the regulators to remove the legal licence. As with the previously stated example, it would only take a small number of cases of worker exploitation for overseas markets to lose their trust in the New Zealand kiwifruit industry (Richardson, 2019). Studies have shown that although SLO can take years to form, it can be taken away very quickly and is difficult to regain (Hall, Lacey, Carr-Cornish, & Dowd, 2015). The importance of retaining SLO cannot be underestimated. Today positive perceptions of primary industries are measured by both urban and rural respondents' views and are slipping in areas such as dairy farming (Clark-Hall, 2018). Therefore it is important that growers embrace the need for SLO before trust is lost by its stakeholders and government regulation is increased to recover that trust.

For the promotion of good practice by growers, trust also needs to be formed between the organisations which promote the trust, such as NZKGI and Zespri, and growers. Growers are unlikely to trust these organisations to implement best practice unless there is some evidence that doing so is in the growers interest (Richardson, 2019), i.e. there will be some financial return for the grower. This particularly true for those who argue that kiwifruit growers often have little understanding of their cost structure (Richardson, 2019). One way that evidence can be formed is through studies into the areas where SLO is required. For example, if studies showed that better worker welfare results in better returns, then growers would have more trust to adopt this. The same situation would be true for water quality which is currently an important topic of the industry where more research is required to demonstrate how the costs could be measured. Another area where research could take place is with efficiencies around the cost of contracting labour. This analysis could also be expanded out to analyse the cost return of higher quality more well-paid pruning versus low quality pruning paid at minimum wage.

4 SLO requires good practice for a positive identity

4.1 Social Licence to Operate

It has been explained that SLO has been brought about as a response from societal pressures (Hall, Lacey, Carr-Cornish, & Dowd, 2015) whereby SLO is granted to a stakeholder through the establishment of trust which is created through the meeting of expectations. This differs from Corporate Social Responsibility where businesses choose which topics they will concentrate on. With SLO it is the community and stakeholders who identify the issues (Lacey, 2012). So, just as regulators seek to influence businesses, SLO is reactive pressure from stakeholders to influence these same businesses with a set of ethical expectations. "Social licence has thus '...emerged in recent years as a concept to describe the informal approval or acceptance that communities grant to a resource development company or industry" (Thomson, 2011).

The socioemotional values of SLO

Of specific importance within the concept of SLO are the socioemotional values that form trust with stakeholders. Amongst human, social, financial, human-made and natural capital (Rosin, Dwiartama, Hunt, & van den Dungen, 2012), the socioemotional is a form of social capital of high importance within the Infinite Game. For this report it is important to note that the socioemotional capital, stemming from social capital is the hardest of the five forms of capital to measure. The difficulty in measuring the socioemotional is due to its intangibility.

Current application of SLO

As a concept, SLO derives from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and was first deployed by the United Nations. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the UN 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework apply SLO as an argument for responsible business conduct, connecting to social expectations and bridging to public regulation (Buhmann, 2016) in a similar way that states are bound to UN conventions such as Human Rights. However, unlike Human Rights, SLO factors are often above regulatory requirements and do not allow enforceable legal sanction (Parsons, 2014). This means that there is no tangible licence, but it is rather a social construct developed by stakeholders.

Within academia, SLO is a relatively new concept, with little development (Buhmann, 2016). 'SLO has largely been developed out of the literature on CSR, and the key themes of corporate citizenship, social sustainability, reputation and legitimacy have been central to developing an understanding of an industry's position in its relationship with communities' (Owen J. K., 2013). This usually concentrates on the interplay of power between business, management, society, community, ethics and environment (Parsons, 2014).

Within the primary industries, SLO literature first came about in the mid-1990s with a focus on mineral extraction businesses in Australia (Edwards, 2016) where companies are driven by the need to reduce reputational risk by creating social acceptance and legitimacy that they are conducting responsible practices, which can be challenged at both national and local levels (Parsons, 2014).

Within New Zealand specifically, SLO is a relatively new term, first introduced in 2012 (Edwards, 2016) and is used in the aquaculture, dairy and mining industries due to their rapid intensification and consequent impact on natural resources. It was introduced by Lewis and Martin of the CSIRO in their 2011 publication: "Defending the Social Licence of Farming" (Ruckstuhl, 2014). In 2015, Scion CE Dr Warren Parker described social licence as '...a local community's acceptance or approval of a company project or ongoing presence in an area' (Edwards, 2016). Edwards also states that 'a

study of pulp mill managers in New Zealand (and other countries) found that the consensus definition of SLO was ‘the pressures for responsible environmental performance that they felt from neighbours, employees, community groups, the news media and environmental advocacy groups’ (Edwards, 2016). William Rolleston, president, Federated Farmers of New Zealand (2014-2017) describe social licence where the values of the local community and the industry align’. Where values align suggests elements of trust (i.e. through mutual expectations)’ (Edwards, 2016).

Within the kiwifruit industry, and for kiwifruit growers who are analysed for this report, SLO must be understood in difference to the above through the specific variables identified with kiwifruit growers. This analysis of the grower identity through habitus and community is an important part of this reports methodology as the analysis of kiwifruit grower-specific variables will create the differentiation and need for specifically tailored communication mechanisms to promote the need for good practice.

5 Grower identity constructs

Analysis of shared interests can be used to ascertain and capitalise on the most effective communication measures to promote SLO amongst growers.

Kiwifruit growers have been shown to be adaptive to changing circumstances, such as their need to re-negotiate their positions and relationships with others with the introduction of Psa. This involved grower's groups coordinating "...spraying and set rules limiting the numbers of contractors and visitors that could come and go in their areas. This is the process of stabilisation" (Dwiartama, 2017). Such collective action undertaken by growers in response to Psa could also be implemented to adapt to the need for SLO whereby relationships (networks, relationships, structures, processes etc.) between growers and their stakeholders evolve to meet SLO expectations.

However, in order for growers to promote a positive identity, there needs to be an understanding of their current identity of habitus and grower community. By understanding the status quo of these perspectives, it becomes possible to develop mechanisms to promote a positive identity and gain SLO. Each of these aforementioned contributors to grower identity will now be examined in more detail.

5.1 Habitus

Habitus is a useful concept to find groups with common understandings and common understandings within groups, particularly for the establishment of targeted communication mechanisms whereby behaviours relate to a person's response to particular situations or stimulus (Jones, 2016).

Bourdieu's habitus, described as 'disposition to act,' is not necessarily conscious or articulated but becomes embodied in people through practice (Hunt L. , 2009) meaning the way that growers act in relation to the social, economic and political environment they exist within influences their perceived identity and thus actions in regards to SLO, particularly around accepted practices. Through this, a habitus is able to 'establish a common 'currency' among the participants with which to measure the relative levels of [social] capital'. (Rosin, Dwiartama, Hunt, & van den Dungen, 2012).

One example of habitus is kiwifruit growers a sense of being part of the land (Fairweather, et al., 2007)^{3,4}. Hunt argues that though interaction amongst such variables such as being part of the land, 'orchardists are able to express their autonomy and individuality as they have many ways to 'play the game' of kiwifruit growing while sustaining rewards of an economic and symbolic nature that match with their habitus and allow them to reinforce and maintain their identities as good orchardists and people living meaningful lives'. (Hunt L. , 2009). This also means that there are different understandings around factors relating to SLO such as risks and opportunities, which central constructs for growers to understand the necessity, and impact on the success of communication mechanisms to encourage growers to implement SLO.

³ Although evolution within the industry of more orchard managers and growers being investors or leasing out their land may be creating more of a disconnect.

⁴ Further to this, disruption is another important variable which should be mentioned which impacts upon the habitus. Examples of disruption include risks such as biosecurity, resources including capital as well as disruption through innovation.

Accordingly, within habitus, while there are the constructs which bring growers together (such as being part of the land) there are variables within such constructs which create differences between growers. Such variables include the social, economic and political environment as well as other grower attributes such as being a conventional or organic orchardist creates different communities, identities and meaning systems amongst growers (Beebe, Haque, Jarvis, Kenney, & Patton, 2013).

This complexity arising from growers means that while metanarratives can be applied to the grower habitus, there are individual variables which will mechanisms to communicate the need for best practice to growers. An in-depth understanding of these variables is crucial for effective implementation of communication mechanisms and is a recommendation for future research.

5.2 Community

It is the internal processes whereby ‘...local actors become aware of their shared interests and institute collective action’ (Beebe, Haque, Jarvis, Kenney, & Patton, 2013) which contribute to the perception of a community.

While all New Zealand kiwifruit growers make up the New Zealand kiwifruit community, sub-groups within this grower collective can also be recognised. To recognise these subgroups, the individual needs and wants of New Zealand’s kiwifruit growers must be understood. ‘Kiwifruit growers (or orchardists) comprise a diverse group of individuals with a variety of perspectives on and approaches to sustainable production. This diversity is the product of a broad range of social, cultural, economic, and ecological influences and experiences’ (Hunt L. R., 2005). For example, analysis by Fairweather identified that organic orchardists have stronger agreement with alternative management systems and less agreement with conventional management systems. Furthermore, separation between grower values can be seen for example with green and gold orchardists who are more dependent on chemicals and manufactured fertilisers while organic orchardists are more dependent on composts and organic remedies (Fairweather, et al., 2007). These subgroups of shared interests within the national community create perceptions of sub-communities and may be more or less likely to support the implementation of a positive identity to gain SLO.

Despite the different communities within the kiwifruit grower population, there are factors that also bind growers together as one community. Regulation is an example of a component which creates a shared sense of community binding together growers, packhouses and Zespri (Rosin C. H., 2007). This initially started with organic certification. Another example of a component making a shared sense of community amongst kiwifruit growers is membership to the representative body for the advocacy of New Zealand’s kiwifruit growers, New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Inc. Another source of grower identity is the shared ownership of their marketer and distributor, Zespri – only kiwifruit producers can only Zespri shares and the board of directors is elected by producers.

Recognising different characteristics within different grower pools is also important in ascertaining types of growers who are more likely to try to achieve good practice rather than the regulatory minimum. While it has been found that organic kiwifruit growers are more likely to aim for best practice, it does not argue that organic growers are intrinsically for, or have a socioemotional connection to best practice. Rather, (Campbell, Rosin, Hunt, & Fairweather, 2012) define two types of organic growers, namely those who are subjectively well-disposed towards environmental

production standards or not and can be categorised as ‘pragmatic organic’ versus ‘committed organic’⁵.

Community defection & consequences

While it has been presented that communities and sub-communities exist amongst kiwifruit growers, the growers also have the ability to defect from the community, although there are consequences for this defection. Growers who choose to not follow practice norms in areas such as worker welfare could face censure from the grower community through gaining a reputation as a bad employer which could create recruitment issues for that grower. Determination of if growers are following good practice could come from “...intermediaries that act as gatekeepers whose evaluations affect the positive strength of an identity (Beebe, Haque, Jarvis, Kenney, & Patton, 2013). The topic of community defection could therefore be a useful tool in encouraging the use of best practice.

Fear of Missing Out

While defection is a detractor from the community, the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is an attractor mechanism that motivates conformation within the community. Industry recognition is one area which provides an example of motivation for conformity and can support the implementation of SLO mechanisms. Here, in the case of utilising good practice to create social capital with stakeholders, those who are implementing the good practice are seen as ‘haves’, while those who have not received recognition (the ‘have nots) under FOMO have a desire to gain the recognition. However, this could also lead to negative repercussions through tall poppy syndrome, which, similar to the Ballance Awards, ultimately may or may not encourage growers performing at the minimum level of the regular to adopt good practice. Such risks must be taken into consideration with consideration to communication mechanisms.

5.3 Potential grower resistance to SLO

While this reports’ analysis attempts to identify communication mechanisms to encourage good practice for SLO, it is equally important to analyse potential resistance to implementation of the good practice. By identifying potential reasons for resistance, communication mechanisms to overcome this resistance could be implemented.

⁵ The pragmatic vs committed argument also brings to light that while SLO gives stakeholders a sense of perceived power to drive change, SLO also gives businesses the ability to create an image associated with their industry as a response to the socioemotional needs of stakeholders. This point brings critique of SLO to the fore whereby it’s application could be seen “...more about reducing overt opposition to industry than it is about engagement for long-term benefits or increasing democratic involvement in decision making” (Owen J. K., 2013).

Increased bureaucracy

There are arguments for and against grower resistance for the adoption of good practice when it is perceived as a form of additional regulation. For example, when considering socioemotional drivers, Rosin et al. argue that growers understand the need for regulation to create SLO:

“Many of the kiwifruit orchardists recognised the impact of consumer demands on their freedom to act in relation to management practice. ...some did claim that such controls unfairly impacted on their orchard’s production. ...In response to local community concerns, most kiwifruit orchardists are eager to demonstrate their respect for or attention to the sensitivities of neighbours by alerting them when planning to spray—especially in the case of Hi-Cane” (Rosin, Dwiartama, Hunt, & van den Dungen, 2012).

While the above may hold true, regulation in areas where there is no immediate tangible financial profitability for growers, such as with water quality, could receive push-back from growers because of the potential increased bureaucracy that it brings them (Stokes, 2019). Another possible reason is impingement on grower time against other priorities, despite understanding the importance for regulation or the need for good practice (Rosin, Dwiartama, Hunt, & van den Dungen, 2012). Dissatisfaction can also be seen by growers ‘...who feel that a conventionalisation through broad implementation of regulation ultimately ‘betray[s] the ‘authentic’ social practice... to new and less trustworthy modes’ for which GLOBALG.A.P is provided as an example (Campbell, Rosin, Hunt, & Fairweather, 2012)⁶. One further example is apparent via a 2007 study by Rosin which found that surveyed kiwifruit growers perceived a KiwiGreen monitoring programme with dissatisfaction as it was imposed by external stakeholders which had little impact or reward and that shifted the focus for the assessment of a good orchardist from the practices ‘in the orchard’ to those ‘in the office’ (Rosin C. H., 2007). It is suggested that it is possible for regulation to become accepted as it becomes normalised.

Accordingly, if the communication encouraging growers to implement good practice to achieve SLO is perceived by growers as further regulation rather than creating the intrinsic understanding of the benefit of achieving stakeholders’ socioemotional needs, growers may resist its implementation. Subsequently, the strategic approach to communication mechanisms to achieve SLO must take this risk into consideration and proactively counter it. This countering can take place in many forms and are listed in the recommended communication mechanisms below.

However, while there are arguments for and against grower acceptance of good practice which may be perceived as increased regulation, Rosin has noted that audits often take some time to become a normalised feature of good orcharding practice (Rosin C. H., 2007). This means that while a form of good practice may initially be seen as increased bureaucracy, over time, this negative perception may be lost as the understanding of its output to gain SLO receives acceptance from growers. As future research, a follow-up surveys into perceptions of the KiwiGreen programme would help test this argument for the kiwifruit industry.

Disassociation through physical distance

While growers have domestic stakeholders for which they need SLO, there are also stakeholders further afield in e.g. export markets which also provide growers with SLO. Here, it could be

⁶ This is also a good example of habitus and the different perceptions that growers may have of it

hypothesised that the physical distance between growers orchards and the markets in which kiwifruit is sold could potentially reduce the ability to create trust with overseas stakeholders. However, while stating this, the impact, if any, is unclear and requires further research. It must also be recognised that the industry proactively offers growers the opportunity to view the supply chain, including growers having the ability to view their kiwifruit in market. Furthermore, Zespri is constantly updating growers on feedback from their customers in overseas markets and is thereby creating a connection.

6 Recommendations: Communication mechanisms

From the analysis of the primary and secondary sources, the following communication mechanisms are conceptualised as recommendations to be implemented in order to encourage growers to conduct practices that will create SLO amongst stakeholders. This is by no means a complete list and may be expanded as a result of the recommended further research.

Promote the value of SLO

This report argues that when the messaging to growers about SLO could be perceived as additional bureaucracy, it increases the risk of lack of buy-in and defection from implementation of practices supporting SLO. Subsequently messaging to growers should be strategic with the focus to reduce resistance and rather gain buy-in through creating an understanding that SLO increases the value of kiwifruit within the infinite game which flows back to the industry and subsequently the grower. Communication on the benefits of implementing best practice to gain SLO here is key. When growers have more knowledge about the importance of best practice and how this increases the value of the industry to become a point of difference in comparison to its competition, best practice should gain more acceptance from growers.

While it has been stated to be difficult to ascertain, a financial evaluation of the increased commercial profitability through value added by SLO would be a strong tool to be incorporated as a communication mechanism to gain acceptance for good practice by growers. 'Furthermore when best practice for SLO has been implemented by growers and the value achieves general acceptance that it is in the interest for the whole industry, the industry will experience a value change and a normalisation amongst growers for the implementation of best practice as a new grower standard which should lift the value of the industry as a whole' (Milne, 2019).

Focus on trust for social capital

Trust has been explained as the most important driver of reputation and thus an essential communication mechanism for growers to create social capital by SLO stakeholders. The Colmar Brunton Corporate Index 2019 argues that trust (in building reputation) should be action, rather than word, orientated. This means that to create trust, communication mechanisms should encourage demonstratable actions of businesses doing 'the right thing' that stakeholders can 'see and feel' (Colmar Brunton, 2019). Although it has been argued that social capital is difficult to quantify, the level of trust amongst stakeholders could be surveyed, as could suggestions on ways to improve.

It is argued that while there are many different issues that organisations such as NZKGI and Zespri can promote in order to build social capital, there is a ceiling on the number of things that growers and stakeholders in markets can concentrate on at once (Richardson, 2019) without overwhelming the target audiences and losing their trust. This is because it is difficult to build social capital when an industry must convince the stakeholders that there is a problem in the first place. Also, when taking the risk of overwhelming stakeholders with issues into consideration, it could be argued that it is better to concentrate on a small number of issues that are at top of mind of stakeholders. Here in order to choose the correct small number of issues and build trust, timing is very important to make sure that the topic is relevant for all stakeholders and to generate change.

An example of an area in 2019 where the kiwifruit industry has sought to improve social capital is on the topic of orchard spray use. In response to questions on spray use by some members of a local community, NZKGI as the grower representative body (and other industry stakeholders) built trust by promoting safe use of sprays through the appointment of a spray advisor, holding community meetings, delivering information to local residents and conducting grower meetings. The aim of these actions was to build trust with the local community by visibly showing that growers were aware of the importance of safe spray practices and that they are concerned about the topic. Conversations on the topic were good examples of the importance of capturing the socioemotional value of stakeholders as often misconstrued information concerning, for example, spray drift mitigation, or the health impact from sprays were often discussed on an emotive level rather than through factual discussion. By understanding the concept and value of the socioemotional, in light of the necessity to gain social capital, communication mechanisms could be implemented which focused on trust in order to capture the local communities SLO.

This report has also argued that there needs to be evidence-based trust between growers and the organisations which are promoting the trust such as NZKGI and Zespri in order for growers to be convinced to implement good practice activities which build social capital. It must also be taken into consideration that even if there is evidence that there are financial efficiencies for growers to invest more above the regulatory level, they may not be able to afford to do so. Examples of growers who may find themselves in this position could be new growers or growers who have bought SunGold licence and are in debt. Here a conflict can be seen to exist between some growers who may be searching for short-term gain, and the organisations such as NZKGI and Zespri who are trying to work within the Infinite Game.

Connect growers with stakeholders

Grower's physical distance from stakeholders outside of New Zealand has been argued to potentially contribute to a lack of perceived value in SLO. Consequently, communication mechanisms should increase the connections (physical or otherwise) between growers and SLO stakeholders. This could be done, for example, through market visits (which already exist to a limited extent) or other forms of communication which increase the understanding of these stakeholders to growers.

Zespri, as the marketer of kiwifruit, offers New Zealand kiwifruit growers the ability to view their fruit in overseas markets. The type of market trips vary, however growers are often given the opportunity to view their kiwifruit travel through the supply chain from being unloaded from ships into warehouses, through further processing and on to supermarket shelves. Growers can also meet with the people involved with each steps of the supply chain. Not only can the connection between growers and their stakeholders build relationships and, to some extent social capital, between growers and stakeholders, but grower's experiences of the supply chain make the understandings of these stakeholders real. These tangible experiences can strengthen the understanding that there is a need to fulfil the socioemotional values of the stakeholders to gain SLO and thus the need to undertake good practice to maintain and create social capital. Furthermore, under the theories of habitus and community, the experiences that the growers bring back to their community can be shared with other growers, including the aforementioned need to conduct good practice.

One other area in which connections can be formed with growers is through overseas stakeholders who visit New Zealand orchards. Zespri is an example of an industry stakeholder who offers overseas stakeholders the ability to view New Zealand orchards and meet growers. Zespri brings around 800

people a year through the industry as part of our Tours and Events programme – around a third from New Zealand and others from offshore. The guests include MPs, government officials, customers, investors and Zespri Global Supply growers. Such visits allow for an increased understanding between growers and these stakeholders which can impact upon the socioemotional values for SLO. Zespri acknowledge this by saying ‘Overwhelmingly we find that the more they know about our industry the more they support us because they can see we’re succeeding through a combination of hard work and innovation, cooperation and a commitment to doing what’s right, and that success is benefiting others’ (Fox, 2019).

In summary, communication mechanisms which encourage connections between growers and overseas stakeholders should be encouraged to support the formation of SLO.

Understand drivers

This report has looked at habitus and community in terms of where growers get the perceptions of their environment from. The variables stemming from grower habitus and community have been argued to be essential in understanding grower drivers to implement practices which encourage good practice to achieve SLO. Communication mechanisms should concentrate on these drivers. Analysis of the drivers could formulate the financial and/or recognition-based rewards which encourage growers to utilise good practice to achieve SLO.

Habitus, particularly the attitudes or beliefs and the profitability in relation to the social, economic and political (including regulatory) environment which as with the community allows for common ideals amongst growers can be utilised but must take the different perceptions that growers have of the habitus into consideration in order to be effective.

Communication mechanisms should surround grower risks, opportunities and rewards. As previously mentioned, evidence-based research into the impact of different areas of best practice will provide motivation for growers to have trust in the different risks, opportunities and rewards. For example, if there was evidence that higher paid but higher quality pruning had better financial returns, the driver of the reward would encourage growers to use this form of best practice.

7 Carrot rather than Stick: Incentives as drivers which can be communicated

While regulation sets the minimum standard and punishes those who do not meet this area, the communication of incentives which work as drivers can create opportunity to go beyond the regulatory standard and move into good practice. Incentives are just one example that, when communicated, can drive improvement. In. Different incentives that could be communicated will now be discussed.

At its macro level, Rosin argues that communication mechanisms to encourage growers to implement good practice to support drivers of SLO can be put in two categories of 'monetary returns or greater social status from the perspective of the farmer' (Rosin C. H., 2007).

7.1 Financial incentives

Fonterra's The Cooperative Difference programme provides both financial (Farm Source Reward Dollars) and non-financial recognition for the production of high quality milk, caring of animals, protecting the environment, supporting farmers people and community and engaging in farmer's co-op as well as support farms wanting to improve by providing tailored, industry-leading support. (Fonterra, 2019). Similarly, Alliance & Silver Fern Farms have incentives/KPIs around best practice, as does Synlait with their Lead With Pride programme which also recognises best practice.

The kiwifruit industry rewards growers for tangible performance metrics such as taste of kiwifruit and time of harvest, however further research is required to assess the extent of financial recognition for the creation of social capital for grower on-orchard practices. The additional value gained by the industry through the implementation of GLOBALG.A.P would be a good starting point for this analysis, but could also be expanded further into areas beyond GLOBALG.A.P and is explored further in the Future Research section below.

7.2 Non-financial recognition-based incentives

There are a range of different opportunities for the kiwifruit industry to offer non-financial recognition-based incentives to growers.. Also, due to the setup of the New Zealand kiwifruit industry with departments such as Zespri's Orchard Productivity Centre which already increases the products value, the industry is in a unique position to share information on how to best implement good practice.

The following are proposals with the suggestion for further investigation:

Ranking system

Auditing of industry practice could create an overall, or segmented levels of recognised practice such as bronze (meeting the regulator), silver (good practice) or gold (exceptional good practice).

Through such a ranking system, growers could identify where they are positioned in relation to other growers and grower's positioning within the ranking system would create room for understanding and motivation for growers to move within the ranking, i.e. to improve their ranking. For such a system to function, further research would be needed to determine if there would be sufficient

benefit to encourage growers to participate, as well as if there would be any way of extracting additional value from the market for such a system.

However possible implications must also be acknowledged. Such a ranking system creating a hierarchy within the grower community could lead to a backlash in the form of defection from the auditing or distaste of the growers conducting exceptionally good practice by those only meeting, or not meeting, the regulators requirements. This would be particularly relevant in the New Zealand context in the form of the Tall Poppy Syndrome. Furthermore, such a ranking system would give more clarity as to where the industry sits in meeting stakeholder SLO. However, this could also be a threat whereby if the ranking is too low and this is low ranking is communicated to stakeholders, it may encourage the stakeholders to remove SLO. Implementation of this audit would involve further research pertaining to what levels qualify as silver or gold industry practice and an analysis of creating a tiered class system of growers.

Displayable certification

Certification could be given to those who exceed the regulators standards. Display of Certification reminds growers of what they have achieved as well as displays this achievement to others. Note here should be made that the achievement levels should be reasonable and obtainable and that educational opportunities need to be made available for growers to understand how to achieve the higher level(s). Certification that can be displayed functions as a reminder for growers of the level they have achieved and which they need to maintain or exceed. Certification also advertises the level obtained by the grower to other growers and stakeholders which gives the possibility for SLO to be gained for the individual grower and for the grower to gain recognition for the level achieved by other growers in the grower community.

As with the ranking system, further research would be needed to determine if there would be sufficient benefit to encourage growers to participate, as well as if there would be any way of extracting additional value from the market for such a system, given that all growers are already certified to GLOBALG.A.P

Also as with the ranking system, Tall Poppy Syndrome may prevail creating a bash against the grower displaying the certification, or inhibiting the grower from displaying the certification at all. Further research is required into the strengths, threats, rewards and opportunities so ascertain if such certification would be effective on a practical level.

Good practice awards

An award programme, similar to the Ballance Farm Environment Awards could be implemented as a driver which recognises the top implementors of good practice. The awards give the grower community the ability to showcase the top growers conducting good practice, setting the bar for other growers to attain. The awards also work as a mechanism to communicate good practice being conducted by growers to stakeholders. This could create more social capital required for SLO. However, awards which recognise only the top growers conducting good practice are not inclusive to other growers who are also creating sufficient social capital to gain SLO. This inability to be recognised could lead to a lack of motivation to participate in the awards and thus defeat its purpose. Furthermore, the number of other similar awards and related events must also be taken into consideration. Analysis should take place as to if there are already too many similar related

activities in the primary industry, acknowledging the potential threat that the voice of the award may be lost amongst other awards.

8 Future research: Expanding the analysis

Limitations to the analysis of this report include a restricted scope of primary and secondary research which could be expanded under the research methodology of gathering a range of perceptions relating to the topic. It is also important to note that the communication mechanisms have been proposed as theoretical possibilities and more research is required to ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of their practical implementation.

- This report has stated that the kiwifruit industry is already producing social capital which is contributing to producing a world-leading high-value product. Further research into the intangible social capital created could be conducted in order to ascertain the level and how that compares with the requirements of stakeholders.
- The primary interviews conducted for this report were not exhaustive and could be expanded to include the perceptions from others involved in the primary industry and the SLO topic. For example, interviews with those involved with Wakatū and an understanding of how the value of their business model contributed to SLO may be useful. Further, interviews with other organisations similar to NZKGI such as Pipfruit New Zealand should be conducted for research around SLO matters to do with employment, education and immigration. In addition, interviews with companies implementing good practice, such as Trevelyan in the area of sustainability and how SLO is built could also be conducted.
- Habitus has been argued to bind growers together but also allow for variable drivers between growers which influences the communication mechanisms required to promote the need for best practice. In response to these different variables, further research has been recommended to investigate the variable drivers to create more effective communication mechanisms. Associated with this could be an investigation into a hypothesis that there is an evolution of values through an attitudinal shift within the kiwifruit growers, from those who are against compliance to those who see compliance as a way to run their business, to those who will go beyond operating at a compliance level and move into the good practice space. A heightened understanding of beliefs, values and drivers of the growers in this area undertaking good practice could be useful in its expansion to the wider grower population.
- More research needs to be conducted into the lifecycle of communication mechanisms. Basis for this research could be four phases of the SLO model as described by Stronge & Kannemeyer, namely socialising, engaging, integrating, monitoring and evaluation (Kannemeyer, 2019).
- Analysis could also be expanded to examine the role of technological innovation and its potential to support SLO drivers.
- From a social constructionist ontological perspective, it would also be interesting to analyse how objective stakeholders perceive businesses. While this would not be a new area of analysis (Parsons, 2014), (Edwards, 2016) it may be useful to have a stronger understanding of how businesses may sway stakeholder's perception of a business's identity through the communication of their SLO drivers. From this perspective, it would be interesting to analyse to what extent businesses may communicate an inflated identity to suit their purposes.
- Analysis of secondary sources could be collated further and include areas such as trust in relation to best value products with national stories, such as the 100% New Zealand marketing campaign. In particular, it could analyse to what extent this formed trust with its audience, and to what extent this trust can be maintained, i.e. is this still a perception or could the trust now be lost if this identity is no longer a reality, that is, that New Zealand is no longer perceived as "100% Pure".

9 Conclusion

Businesses have experienced a shift away from short-term profits and now focus on business longevity within the Infinite Game. To achieve business longevity, businesses require SLO from stakeholders. SLO consists of socioemotional values which build trust between the stakeholders and the businesses. This report has also argued that in order for SLO to be implemented, growers need to implement good practice, as currently exists to an extent with GLOBALG.A.P, rather than the regulatory minimum standard in order to create the socioemotional value required for SLO. However, for growers to understand the importance of the need for good practice, communication mechanisms need to be implemented. This report has then analysed grower's identity in the form of habitus and community as well as resistance to the implementation of good practice in order to identify communication mechanisms that will encourage grower good practice.

The new knowledge that this report contributes to the kiwifruit industry is the adaptation of current SLO theory for the contemporary kiwifruit industry and most importantly, the argument for proactive strategic communication mechanisms to promote SLO.

While there is scope for further analysis into the theoretical communication mechanisms proposed as well as scope to identify more communication mechanisms, those identified through the research of this report include trust, an even closer connections between growers and their domestic and international stakeholders, and a strong understanding of grower drivers as critical to encourage best practice in New Zealand's kiwifruit growers. Further to these findings, analysis was made of the different financial and non-financial incentives to propose communication mechanisms to encourage good practice. To this end, ranking system(s), displayable certification, good practice awards and utilisation of the fear of missing out were suggested as for potential implementation to encourage good practice.

Finally, future research in terms of limitations of this report were presented.

In summary, communication mechanisms have been identified which could encourage more grower good practice to create socioemotional value and thus social capital amongst stakeholders to form SLO and ultimately create value and sustainable longevity of the kiwifruit industry for New Zealand's kiwifruit growers.

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