


Chapter 20

Narrative Advertising in Destination Branding

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ABSTRACT

Due to its potential economic return, tourism-related initiatives, including governments, are increasingly focusing on the tourism destination market. It is critical to use efficient marketing methods to enhance travel motivation—especially under the global crises like a pandemic—by encouraging positive consumer impressions of tourism destinations. The main purpose of tourism marketing is to develop a destination image that can enable a sustainable demand for visits through interaction with consumer expectations. One of the most effective marketing methods is to compile stories, which have become a traditional method throughout human history. Narratives use stories to convey various options on behalf of the destination experience in order to build an optimum perception of persuasion. Any destination can have a unique historical culture and original characteristics to be the source materials for effective narrative advertising. These stories should trigger their intention to visit by attracting the attention of potential tourists, and even convince them to visit these destinations.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered one of the most important sectors in today's global economy and is critical to a large number of countries and to the public in tourism regions. In recent years, the importance of building destination brands in a competitive environment, and the successful management of relevant sustainable factors has become clear. Under these highly competitive conditions, destination branding is an effective process regarding the relationship between the brand image of that particular destination and the tourist behavior ensuring revisits and favorable consumer reactions. (Hultman et al., 2017). Narrative advertising, which has become a favorite component of target marketing especially through the use of social media, can be decisive in the decision-making process of tourist candidates (Tussyadiah, 2011).

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It is observed that these narratives, which contribute to the competitive advantages, can also make the travel experiences of the tourists in these destinations more meaningful (Youssef et al., 2019).

Tourists' choice of destination depends on the attractiveness of the destination and its potential contribution to influence tourists' satisfaction. The fact that tourists revisit a particular tourism destination because of their positive past experiences and participate in the same tourism activities can also affect the future travel choices of tourists. Satisfaction with past experiences nurtures future travel intention. On the other hand, realization for a positive decision of a tourist candidate is directly related to tourist motivation which can be increased by branding strategies especially, through narrative advertising. This direct relationship between destination potential and tourist motivation can be formulated as follows:

$$\text{Destination potential} = \text{Tourist motivation} - (\text{Costs} + \text{risks})$$

Tourists perceive a destination brand not only with its physical features but also with the perspective of social facts and emotional values it reflects (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017). It is critical to use efficient marketing methods to enhance travel motivation by encouraging positive consumer impressions of tourism destinations. Theoretically, one of the most effective components of the source of this tourist motivation is destination branding. Additionally, the effect of destination branding on the decision-making processes of tourist candidates gets amplified with narrative marketing strategies. Narratives use stories to convey various options on behalf of the destination experience in order to build an optimum perception of consumer persuasion. Popular destination brands often have a distinctive feature that can trigger a positive emotion. Narrative advertising is recognized as an effective method to convey and spread the destination brand equity and the features that make the destination unique.

A destination brand is ultimately a concept that gets developed in the minds of potential travelers and can be defined by the brand identity that becomes evident by a differentiated brand image that is shaped and pursued by unique components.

The attraction effect of tourist destinations depends largely on the success of marketing strategies. Destinations that create an internationally competitive environment require the most efficient marketing strategies within their possibilities in order to reach potential tourists and become the center of attraction. One of the most important methods that marketers adopt is to build an efficient narrative advertising that allows them to stand out from the crowd with a slogan and differentiate with destination brand-equity enhancement tools such as destination personality.

Destination marketing includes many interactive environmental variables, especially safety, political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Regarding the safety dimension, as an extraordinary period evaluation, throughout the Covid-19 timeline, tough conditions have led to significant income losses for tourism businesses and employees, especially due to the limitation of international flights. Temporary and limited financial supports provided by governments have generally not been sufficient for these tourism businesses and especially for workers in the undeclared economy (Williams, 2020). Under such extraordinary global restrictions and constraints, the power of the potential customer motivation which can be built through efficient destination branding becomes even more important in the competitive environment (Sheresheva, 2020). The old situation that we used to describe as 'normal' actually had problems, and therefore, it would be a more appropriate strategy to adapt to new conditions rather than return to the old one (Benjamin et al., 2020).

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