

**THE EFFECTS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS ON
MALAYSIA'S CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY AND
INTENTION TO VISIT AMONG POTENTIAL TOURISTS FROM
GULF COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF JEDDAH AND DUBAI**

By

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ABSTRACT

It has been long recognized that marketing communications (MC) are important activities that influencing potential tourist's attitude and behavior toward tourism destinations. However, factors such as tourism service intangibility, globalization, increasing advertising expenditure, fierce competition as well as upcoming tourism destinations competing for the same market put much more emphasize on the need for better MC practice and effectiveness. With this in mind, this study argues in favor of assessing the communication effects rather than sales-based effects of MC (as often used by destination marketers). More specifically, this study focuses on the long-term communication effects of MC activities by looking at MCs influence on the perceived destination Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) dimensions (awareness, perceived quality and image) and the influence of these dimensions on the Intention to Visit (ItV) Malaysia among the Gulf Countries (GC) potential tourists. Data was collected using purposive sampling method in two major cities in the gulf area namely Dubai and Jeddah. A self administrated questionnaire was designed especially for the purpose of this study. 405 usable responses were collected and analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques from SPSS version 18. The findings indicated that both controlled and uncontrolled MCs have a significant effect on the three CBBE dimensions (awareness, perceived image and quality), however, uncontrolled MC is found to have a greater influence compare to controlled MC on these dimensions. Additionally, the perceived CBBE dimensions are found to predict ItV. Nevertheless, perceived destination image is found to have the greater influence on the potential tourist's ItV. The findings also revealed that potential tourists from GC did not hold either an extreme positive or negative destination image attributes about Malaysia. Based on the study findings, it is recommended that destination marketers therefore focus on more narrow set of destination image attributes in order to avoid having confused image from the potential consumer point of view. It is also recommended that destination marketers use multiple sources of information to target tourists. In particular, the uncontrolled MC namely WOM seems to be the highest incidence of information source. Theoretically, the study contributes to the body knowledge by providing empirical evidence to support theories and previous literature related to measuring MCs effectiveness and tourism destination brand equity as well as the relationship between destination Brand equity dimensions and the ItV. Further, this study filled the gap in the literature by providing a theoretical framework assessing the effectiveness of MCs especially in the long term. Methodologically, the study contributes by providing a measurement scale for CBBE dimensions of tourism destination attributes based on previous literature and used in this study. Furthermore, factor analysis had identified new attributes with regards to perceived destination image and quality. However, the study's sampling limitations should admittedly be considered in weighing the significance of all these contributions.

ABSTRAK

Komunikasi pemasaran telah lama dikenalpasti sebagai aktiviti-aktiviti penting yang boleh mempengaruhi sikap dan gelagat bakal pelancong. Walaubagaimanapun, faktor-faktor seperti ketidakbolehsentuhan khidmat pelancongan, globalisasi, peningkatan perbelanjaan untuk pengiklanan, persaingan sengit dan pertumbuhan pesat destinasi-destinasi pelancongan baru yang bersaing untuk pasaran yang sama memberikan lebih tekanan kepada perlunya amalan komunikasi pasaran yang lebih berkesan. Memandangkan hal tersebut, kajian ini menekankan perlunya menilai kesan komunikasi berbanding kesan jualan dari komunikasi pemasaran (sebagaimana yang biasa diamalkan oleh pemasar destinasi. Secara khususnya, kajian ini memfokus kepada kesan jangka panjang komunikasi pasaran dengan melihat kepada pengaruh komunikasi pasaran terhadap dimensi-dimensi Ekuiti Jenama berdasarkan Konsumer (kesedaran, tanggapan mengenai kualiti, dan imej) dan kesan dimensi-dimensi ini terhadap Niat untuk Melawat Malaysia dikalangan bakal pelancong dari Negara-Negara Teluk. Data dikutip menggunakan kaedah persampelan purposif di dua bandar utama di kawasan teluk iaitu Dubai dan Jeddah. Soalselidik yang boleh diisi sendiri oleh responden telah digubah untuk mencapai tujuan kajian ini. Sebanyak 405 respons yang boleh digunakan dapat dikumpul dan dianalisa menggunakan beberapa teknik statistik dalam SPSS versi 18. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua komunikasi pemasaran yang terkawal dan tidak terkawal mempunyai kesan terhadap ketiga-tiga dimensi (kesedaran, tanggapan mengenai kualiti, dan imej). Bagaimanapun, tanggapan mengenai imej destinasi dikesan mempunyai lebih pengaruh terhadap Niat untuk Melawat. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa bakal pelancong dari Negara-Negara Teluk tidak mempunyai tanggapan yang terlalu negatif atau terlalu negatif mengenai Malaysia. Berdasarkan hasil kajian, pemasar destinasi disarankan agar menumpu kepada set atribut destinasi yang tertentu sahaja agar imej yang ditonjol tidak mengelirukan bakal pelancong. Pemasar destinasi juga disarankan agar menggunakan pelbagai sumber media untuk menyasar bakal pelancong. Dalam hal ini, komunikasi pasaran tidak terkawal iaitu Perbualan Mulut telah dikenalpasti sebagai adalah satu sumber informasi yang sangat penting. Secara teorinya, kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan dengan memberikan bukti empirikal untuk menyokong teori-teori dan kasil karya terdahulu berkaitan pengukuran keberkesanan komunikasi pemasaran dan equiti jenama destinasi pelancongan, serta perhubungan antara dimensi-dimensi ekuiti jenama dan Niat untuk Melawat. Tambahan lagi, kajian ini mengurangkan jurang pengetahuan dengan memberikan satu kerangka teori untuk menilai keberkesanan komunikasi pemasaran terutamanya dari segi jangka panjang. Secara kaedahnya pula, kajian ini menyumbang dengan memberikan skala pengukuran untuk dimensi-dimensi atribut destinasi pelancongan berdasarkan ulasan karya dan hasil kajian. Ini ditambah pula dengan analisis faktor yang mengenalpasti atribut-attribut baru berkenaan tanggapan mengenai imej dan kualiti destinasi. Walaubagaimanapun, kelemahan dalam persampelan kajian ini perlu diambil kira dalam menilai semua sumbangan yang telah disebutkan.

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ACRONYMS

MC	Marketing Communication
TM	Tourism Malaysia
HOE	Hierarchy Of Effects
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MOF	Ministry Of Finance
ALOS	Average Length of Stay
APC	Average Per Capital Expenditure
N.A	Non-Available
TOM	Top-of-Mind
CBBE	Consumer Based Brand Equity
DMOs	Destination Marketing Organizations
ItV	Intention to Visit
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
GC	Gulf Countries

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It has been long accepted that tourism is an economic activity of attracting tourists and catering to their demand and needs (Rashid and Ismail, 2008; Che-Mat, Zakaria, and Jusoff, 2009). Because of tourism contribution to the national economy, it becomes an important field of study that has attracted attention of researchers (Ortega and González, 2006). Due to factors such as globalization, fierce competition, and new destinations coming up in the tourism market place, the available choice of tourism destinations has been expanded. As a result, it becomes harder for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to distinguish their destinations from their major competitors (Li and Vogelsong, 2002). As such, in order to survive in market place, tourism destination must be recognized in addition to favorable and strong identity (brand equity) from the tourist's perspectives (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Consequently, establishing a unique brand of the destination becomes a major concern. Therefore, awareness, image, and perceived quality as dimensions CBBE are important factors in ensure the long term success of the tourism destination (Rashid and Ismail, 2008).

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