



Article Title

The Influence of DMO Advertising on Specific Destination Visitation Behaviors.

Citation

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Abstract

Using data provided by travelers to a small college town from Midwestern U.S., this research examines the influence of destination-branded, print, and online advertising media on travelers' visitation of advertised attractions, restaurants, shops, and outdoor activities. The strongest predictors of specific visitation behaviors are DMO-branded media (guidebooks and websites) and print media. This research has three notable contributions: (1) provides a solid theoretical base for understanding what happens beyond the main visitation decision, (2) provides insight into cross-media advertising in tourism, and (3) links pre-visit advertising to actual visitation behavior, instead of intentions to perform a behavior.

Summary

This research offers viable managerial implications that should help destination decision-makers improve the overall marketing function of the destination. First, this research emphasized the relationships between certain advertising media and specific traveler behavior at the destination. From an economic impact perspective, the results of this research offer destination decision-makers a methodology for increasing the economic impact of tourism by stimulating visitation of the most impactful attractions at the destination using carefully placed advertising within the media that are the most influential. This way, the destination not only can maximize the economic impact generated by travelers, but also direct tourism spending to certain areas of the destination, according to the destination's development and positioning strategies.

A second important implication comes from unveiling the grouping structure of the advertising media used by the DMO. By illustrating the relationships between certain groups of advertising media and travelers' local visitation behavior, the DMO can improve the management of its

media planning/scheduling strategies and advertising space. Such improvements strategies should result in increasingly effective advertising, which is desirable, especially given today's carefully scrutinized advertising budgets.

In addition, as the DMO represents a multitude of destination stakeholders, increased advertising effectiveness can lead to synergistic relationships among all stakeholders within the destination. This is especially important today, as the marketing focus is shifting from being predominantly transactional to becoming increasingly founded on relationships among networks, groups, and communities.

In this context, such relationships are critical, as generally the various publics located within the destination are not intimately familiar with the operational tasks of the DMO, but tend to evaluate the DMO's performance based on relatively visible outcome measures from the destination, such as hotel occupancy or travelers' spending.

Finally, this research provides insight into the relative effectiveness of various advertising media used by the DMO. As the influence of DMO branded media and print media tend to increase the likelihood of visitation of local attractions, DMO may be better positioned to add or remove advertising media, measured by their relative effectiveness. Yet, destination decision makers should make decisions consistent with the notion that most advertising media used by the DMO are in reality complementary, and that they work seamlessly together to produce the desired behavioral effects in travelers, which was revealed by this research. Thus, as decision makers face increasingly diverse and fragmented potential consumer segments the approach suggested here may increase advertising effectiveness by capturing the interest-action patterns of consumers with different responses to various advertising media.