

Role of photo stimuli on tourists' attitudes and brand recognition of out-door advertisement

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Abstract

Despite extensive research on advertising and its consequences, there is still a lack of research investigating modern and creative advertising strategy in shaping destination image. To fill the research gap, this quantitative approach study assesses the impact of tourism photo stimuli attributes on tourists' attitude and brand recognition of outdoor advertisement. The findings revealed that photographic subject was the most influential factor for brand recognition and the lightbox billboard was rated the most attractive in advertising medium. However, there was no significant relationship detected between attitudes towards outdoor advertisement and brand recognition. Future research is needed to look into to other platform or medium of advertising and how they can influence tourists' attitude and brand recognition.

Keywords:

Creative advertising, tourists' attitude, photo attributes, brand recognition, outdoor advertising

1 Introduction

Tourism advertising plays a major role in not only promoting tourist destinations but also stimulating awareness as well as changing tourists' attitude and perceptions and acting as a platform for promotional campaigns. Tourism advertising mostly use

images that may affect travel choices, satisfaction and behavioural intention among tourists. Furthermore, the impact of tourism advertising is not limited to actual visits but is extended to psychological effects and behavioural responses (including destination image formation) that may bring about a visit in the longer term.

The communication media through marketing programs has helped create brand knowledge. Collard and Dellas (2012) stated brands have three primary functions: navigating, reassuring and engaging. These functions help consumers to choose from a vast array of similar selections. These three functions contribute to the establishment of brand image and awareness. To develop brand image and awareness, businesses need to also utilize the out-of-home (OOH) advertising media as a platform. OOH, advertising is a medium to create an awareness campaign. Outdoor advertising exposes the brands to local markets by having suitable position and publicity. Regarding geographic flexibility, advertising can be placed along highways, near stores, airport or anywhere that the laws permit. Moreover, outdoor advertising can reach people in specific geographic and demographic area or even national markets.

One of the most common OOH media in tourism industry today is a photo. At many tourist destinations and places, billboards and posters are seen. However, very limited knowledge is available about the effectiveness of the photos or, more specifically, what elements of the photos that can boost the tourists' awareness about the products or services advertised. Previous research has looked at the aspect of colour, the copy, the location or other aspects focusing on the technical format of the advertisements (see for example Donthu et al., 1993, Osborned & Coleman, 2008). Responding the growing tourism industry, there is an urgent need to evaluate other elements of advertising photos such as the subject, the interactivity effects, and attention.

With regards to the outdoor advertisement and brand recognition, creativity is another important factor in printing, colouring and incorporating other elements like digital signs into advertisements that attract attention. The images of a destination in the eyes of tourists are influenced by the destination advertisement image (Min, Martin, & Jung, 2013). These destinations, however, are largely dependent on the tourists' perceptions, and advertising is one of the most efficient means in shaping tourists' perceptions and mental images of destinations (Marino, 2007). To be efficient, advertisements need to be creative and attractive. One of the creativity measures is the interactive effect (Smith & Yang, 2004). The types of attractions such as nature, theme park, cultural and historical and the island also can be categorized in the advertising creative. Wang and Sparks (2016) further stated to shape the image of destinations; advertisements need to capitalize on the visual attention. Considering the preceding discussions, this study investigated the impact of tourism photo stimuli attributes towards tourist's brand recognition. The research also looked into the mediating role of tourists' attitudes on outdoor advertising.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Tourism photo stimuli attributes

Pictorial shapes the markets' image of a destination; hence, advertisements for the destination need incorporate visual components to represent the intangibility of the products offered to catch visual attentions of the tourists (Wang & Sparks, 2014). According to Wedel and Pieters (2012), photographic images attract attentions influencing travel choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. In addition, previous studies have documented a significant relationship between promotional strategies and image formation in advertising (Michaelidou, Siamagka, Moraes & Micevski, 2013; Pan, 2011). One of the photo attributes focused in this study was the photographic subject that influenced tourists' views as media consumers: It affects consumers' willingness and desire to travel (Echtner & Richer, 1993). Further, Stylidis, Belhassen, and Shani (2015) discovered that image affects travel choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intention.

Its interactive effect represents a creative photo. The focus on creative products is particularly relevant for advertising because consumers mainly notice and discover the types of ads people would judge as creative (Altesch, 1999). Nevertheless, an inherent problem in the area is the lack of clarity in the terms used to describe what constitutes a creative product. Based on the Arbitron Out of Home Advertising (2013), the innovation of creative development includes a broad range of formats, sizes, locations, and technologies. All these types provide unlimited chances to surround and immerse consumers as success stories illustrate the tremendous strategic and creative potential. Schmeltz (2012) said involving consumers in two-ways interactive message offline as well as online enables organizations to create emotional stimuli. Also, to bolster corporate brand image and reputation, Schmeltz (2012) stated that the reputation needs to engage their consumers' via media that encourage and facilitate interaction and involvement.

Also, Matheson (2006) suggested that creative industries create ads that attract attention and focus on how consumers evaluate the design and patterns. Hence, another important attribute of a creative photo is its feature of attention and scanning pattern. A study by Outdoor Advertising Association of America (2013) about the campaign done by Westin Hotels and Resorts revealed that creative OOH ads with equipped with attention and scanning patterns resulted in a significant boost in customers' awareness, stay during business trip,

2.2 Brand recognition

Brand recognition helps companies understand how much the public can identify the company through visual cues or other brand attributes such as colours, logo, and specific advertisement. Brand recognition determines the consumers' awareness and familiarity with the product or service (Burnett & Hutton, 2007; Homburg, Klarmann, &

Schmitt, 2010). More importantly, Bennett (1999) identified that an intention of purchase and favorability toward a brand or product is associated with the exposure to the message and increased awareness of the sponsoring brand. However, Aakers (1991) argued that to differentiate the good and services from their competitors, the brand is a name with a dual purpose for identification. Hence, brand recognition is a key success in marketing. The important question to ask is: What attributes or visual elements do they associate with the brand? By identifying this element, the brand is listed top of mind in a specific category; it is shown that consumers received the message of brand awareness. Additionally, the recognition also identifies how successful the advertising campaigns are. Therefore, to increase the brand awareness campaigns, there are some essential ways. Firstly, by measuring advertising success that can help to measure whether the advertising raised visibility and effectively engaged in the market. Burnett (2015) agreed that to compete with the rivals, deepening your understanding of the competitive market in brand recognition plays an important role. Also, refining the visual and brand identity require specific elements of your creative messaging.

2.3 Out of Home Advertising (OOH)

According to the Arbitron Out-of-Home Advertising Study (2013), people spend more time out of their home, especially in urban areas. The study mentioned that more than 89% of the United States residents aged 18 or older is exposed to outdoor advertising each day. Outdoor advertising reaches consumers 24 hours per week during their daily commute, on their lunch break, and throughout shopping trips. Before a consumer takes a service or makes a buying decision, out of home advertising is often to be the last message they receive or see. Moreover, 70% of their waking hours are spent away from home. OOH is the oldest media in existence, dating back to circus posters and horse-drawn streetcar advertising in the mid-1800's. OOH has a remarkable history to become constantly evolved in adapting with new markets, new formats, new technology and new opportunities. Also, Research studies repeatedly revealed that OOH significantly lowers the cost of advertising. Index reach of 1,000 people online can cost up to \$17.50 per thousand impressions; magazines can cost up to \$21.00 per thousand reaches. At \$3.38-\$8.65 per thousand impressions, OOH delivers the message to the market efficiently. According to Nielsen (2009), traditional TV advertisers are hungry for an effective substitute and digital out of home advertisement for it appears to be one of the solutions. It is also a cost-effective way for promoting or marketing brands or products.

2.4 Attitude toward advertising

Outdoor advertising is associated with positive attitudes toward advertising in general and exhibits greater recall in the outdoor advertisement as compared to negative attitudes (Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 2003). Mehta's (2000) study discovered

that advertisement recall is successful when consumers found that the advertisement provides useful information and the consumers view it as not being manipulative. Almost all of the advertising belief statements tested in the study positively related with buying interests. Furthermore, involvement with specific advertisement was examined by Burns et al. (2003). The findings reported that involvement influences attitude toward the advertising generally as the amount of time spent looking at the advertisement. However, the more the consumers involved in the advertisement leads to consumers believing that advertising to be manipulative and irritating. Donthu, Cherian, and Bhargava (1993) and Mehta (2000) tested the relationship between general attitudes toward advertising and its effectiveness. The above studies have also demonstrated the significant relationship between advertisement recall and attitude in advertising.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

Data were gathered by surveying tourists at two airports located in the east coast region in Malaysia. The rationale for the airport selection was because the researcher expected to get more tourists to participate in the study. Collecting data at KLIA airport was not possible due to the high fees charged by the airport as well as the large area as well as busy traffic. SPSS was used to compute descriptive statistics, and multiple regression analysis was performed. Judd and Kenny's (1981) formula was used to quantify the indirect effects.

3.2 Field survey

The survey was conducted in the East Coast Airports—Sultan Ismail Petra, Kota Bharu, Sultan Ahmad Shah Airport, Kuantan and Sultan Mahmud Kuala Terengganu. A total of 410 questionnaires were successfully collected via dual mode (i.e., online distribution [Qualtrics] and paper-based distribution). According to Roscoe (1975), a sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for most research. The first result of frequency test reported about respondents' experience visiting East Coast Airport and which airport where the questionnaire was answered. Looking at Table 1, the number of respondents visited East Coast Airport (Sultan Ismail Petra, Kota Bharu; Sultan Mahmud Airport, Kuala Terengganu; Sultan Ahmad Shah, Kuantan) were 85.1 percent ($n=337$) visited East Coast Airport against 14.9 percent ($n=59$). With regards to the responding location for the East Coast Airport, Sultan Ismail Petra Kota Bharu had the most respondents answering the questionnaire 42.4 percent ($n = 144$) compared to Sultan Mahmud Airport Kuala Terengganu 34.4 percent ($n = 117$), while for Sultan Ahmad Shah Airport Kuantan only 17.4 percent ($n = 59$) and others airport was 5.9 percent ($n = 20$).

Table 1: The number and percentage (%) of overall respondents reported visited and responding location survey in east coast airport

%	Variable	n
Visited East Coast Airport		
85.1	Yes	337
14.9	No	59
Responding location		
42.4	Sultan Ismail Petra Airport, Kota Bharu, Kelantan	144
34.4	Sultan Mahmud Airport, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu	117
17.4	Sultan Ahmad Shah Airport, Kuantan, Pahang	59
5.9	Others	20

4 Demographic Profiles

In term of the demographic profiles, the number of male respondents was more than the female respondents (59.3 percent [$n = 243$], 40.7 percent [$n = 167$], respectively). The data also revealed that the respondents' ages ranged between 18 years to 50 years old and above. The majority of respondents were between 30 and 39 years of age, which made up 47.1 percent ($n = 193$) of the total respondents followed by 18 to 29 years old, which represented 26.6 percent ($n = 109$). While the age of 40 to 50 years old was accounted around 19.0 percent ($n = 78$) and followed by 50 years old and above with only 7.83 percent ($n = 30$).

As regard for the information about destination, 48.8 percent ($n = 199$) of the respondents obtained information about tourism destination from social advertising followed by newspaper with 40.3 percent ($n = 167$), magazines with 35.7% ($n = 148$), radio/TV with 11.2 percent ($n = 112$), video ads with 19.8 percent ($n = 82$) and others sources of information with 4.8 percent ($n = 20$). According to Tucker (2016), social advertising involving Internet allows consumers to interact across digital social networks. According to CamScore (2011), Facebook was the most visited website in the US in 2010 which accounting 20 percent of all time spent on the Internet, a higher proportion than Google or Yahoo. This show, in today's world more people especially tourist more rely on technology to gain information as it is fast, reliable and ease of use.

The frequency of travel per year for domestic and international travelers shown that most of the respondents were traveling 2 to 5 times per year with 52.1 percent ($n = 203$) compared to the lowest frequency of 14 to 17 times per year with 1.0 percent ($n = 4$). Moreover, only 19 percent respondents ($n = 74$) were travelling only one time per year, followed by 10 to 13 times per ear with 3.6 percent ($n = 14$) and only 8.5 percent ($n = 33$) respondents travelling 18 and above times per year.

5 Findings

5.1 Photo stimuli attributes, brand recognition, and tourists attitude toward outdoor advertisement

The purposes of this study were to examine the impact of photo stimuli attributes on brand recognition and to test the indirect effects. The study found a significant relationship between tourism photo stimuli attributes and brand recognition of an outdoor advertisement (all β coefficients were at $p < .05$, see Table 3). This finding was consistent with Millar and Stoica (2004)'s study, where photographic, interactive effect and attention and scanning patterns attract attention that affects travel choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intention.

Table 3: Multiple regression result for Model 1

Variables	Model/Std β
Photographic Subject	.440***
Attention Scanning	.190***
Interactive Effect	.190***
R ²	.520

*** $p < .001$

The study also found a significant relationship between tourism photo stimuli attributes towards tourists' attitudes of an outdoor advertisement. However, attention and scanning attribute showed non-significant influence ($\beta = .046$, $p = .460$, see Table 4) due to the image used for a certain advertisement. Thus, the creativity of the product or advertisement should be more engaged from the eyes of the tourist to create more emotional stimuli as well as to bolster corporate brand image and reputation (Hutton & Nolte, 2011). Examining the link between tourists' attitude and brand recognition, the result showed a significant relationship ($\beta = .420$, $p < .001$). This finding is in line with Geary (2013) who documented that brand recognition can be stimulated by the brand awareness in which consumers received the message and, hence, the advertising campaign is successful.

Table 4: Multiple regression result for Model 2

Variables	Model/Std β
Photographic Subject	.183**
Attention Scanning	.046
Interactive Effect	.340***
R ²	.260

*** $p < .001$

5.2 Mediating effect of attitude towards outdoors ads

Although the result showed a small effect, it is noteworthy that the indirect (mediating) effects were statistically significant. The mediating effect indicated that the consumers could identify advertisement campaign just by viewing the product or service's logo, tag line or packaging. The brand is successful when people can state a brand without being explicitly exposed to the company's name but rather through visual signifiers like the logo, slogans, and colours (Bierzynski, 2011).

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the impact and relationship of tourism photo stimuli attribute towards tourists' brand recognition of an outdoor advertisement. To what extent tourism photo stimuli attributes give impact on tourists' brand recognition of an outdoor advertisement? The result of the study has shown that there is a significant relationship between tourism photo stimuli attributes and tourists' brand recognition of an outdoor advertisement. This finding was consistent with Millar and Stoica (2003)'s study, where photographic, interactive effect, as well as attention and scanning patterns, attract attention that affects travel choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. Hence, the attributes give high positive impact on the brand recognition towards an outdoor advertisement. The successful result produces the most positive brand responses, the underpinning of intense and active brand loyalty. Creating strong, favourable and unique associations is a real challenge for marketers, but it is essential in building customers-based brand recognition. Strong brands typically have a firmly established association with consumers, for example, Incredible India Tourism Advertisement.

Secondly, this research aimed to evaluate the impact of tourism photo stimuli attributes towards tourists' attitudes of an outdoor advertisement and to what extent tourism photo stimuli attributes give impact on the attitude of an outdoor advertisement? The result indicated there is a significant relationship between tourism photo stimuli attributes towards tourists' attitudes of an outdoor advertisement. Wang and Sparks (2014) suggested that different types of attention are engaged with different types of tourism image and a different group of potential tourists. From the regression analysis, the attribute that gives the most impact on tourist attitude is photographic subject. Only one attribute (i.e., attention & scanning) shows the insignificant impact on tourists' attitude. The non-significant finding could be due to the disturbing images used for a certain advertisement. For example not all tourism images are suitable to be advertised at the pillar wrap. In this case, the creativity of the product or advertisement should be more engaged from the eyes of the tourist to create more emotional stimuli as well as to bolster corporate brand image and reputation (Hutton & Nolte, 2011).

Thirdly, we targeted to evaluate the relationship between attitudes towards outdoor advertisement and brand recognition. The regression analysis result showed there is a significant relationship between attitudes towards outdoor advertisement and brand recognition. Previous research by Geary (2013) documented that brand recognition can be stimulated by the brand awareness in which consumer received by message and how successful are advertising campaigns. For instance, how Incredible India campaign was successfully held in New York boldly expressed the country's "extraordinary" and "cultural and diversity" through its wide dispersal of billboards at Times Square, Winter Garden, and Lincoln Centre as well as branded taxis, buses, bus shelters, TV, and radio announcement. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the tourist, they do not effectively engage in the market yet also measuring the advertising less success in the competitive market.

One of our main findings revealed that the mediating effect of tourists' attitude on the relationship between photo stimuli attributes and brand recognition was a significant but small effect. Three specific mediating relationships were tested to examine the mediating effects of tourists' attitude. All three hypotheses tested were supported, showing significant mediating effects of Tourism Attitudes toward the relationship between the three predictors with Brand Recognition. However, it is important to note that the indirect effects (mediating effects) were small but statistically significant. Specifically, the results of the mediating analysis indicated that advertisement campaign could be identified by the consumer just by viewing the product or service's logo, tag line or packaging. The successful brand when people can state a brand without being explicitly exposed to the company's name but rather through visual signifiers like the logo, slogans, and colours (Bierzynski, 2011).

To conclude, this study found, there was a significant relationship between tourism photo stimuli attributes towards tourists' attitudes of an outdoor advertisement. Also, the findings indicated that attention and scanning patterns had a higher impact on the brand recognition of outdoor advertisement. As discussed, the light-box billboard was the most attractive advertising medium, followed by radio and online medium. Moreover, the relationship between tourist attitude and brand recognition identified that tourists' attitude mediated the relationship between photo stimulate attributes and brand recognition. Despite the findings, there were limitations that should be taken into account. This study suffered limited resources as well as the limited area of data collection. Lack of cooperation from the tourists was among the factors adding to the limitations. Future research needed to extend the scope and include more attributes to evaluate tourism behaviour and tourism advertising.

7 About the authors

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