

The Impact of an Identity Based Destination Image on Destination Loyalty: with Special Reference to Sri Lanka as a Tourist Destination

H M Aminda Lakmal

Abstract

Destination loyalty and destination image are the two major components used in measuring brand performance in the Consumer Based Brand Equity model (CBBE). Measuring brand performance is one of the major streams in branding literature. This study conceptualized destination brand image as a stakeholder co-created value, which is a new conceptualization in branding literature. Thus, brand community associations were added to represent the stakeholder perspective, which includes functional associations, symbolic associations, and experiential associations, all of which ultimately constitute the dimensions of an identity based destination image. A new scale for identity based destination image was developed by conducting an exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with promax rotation. This method used 211 responses and measured the impact of identity based destination image on destination loyalty using another 260 responses. The theoretical contribution of this study is the development of a new scale to measure identity based destination image with the addition of brand community associations. Also, brand community associations have been verified as an important and integral dimension of identity based destination image. Thus, identity based destination image can be used as a strong predictor of destination performance. Therefore, destination marketers of Sri Lanka can focus on a combination of functional, symbolic, experiential, and brand community associations when coming up with promotional campaigns to promote Sri Lanka as an attractive tourist destination.

Keywords: Destination branding, CBBE model, Identity based destination image, Destination loyalty, Brand community associations.

Mr. H M Aminda Lakmal is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. E-mail: aminda@sjp.ac.lk

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