

# Tourism Destination Marketing: Academic Knowledge

Subjects: Others

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A holistic, multi-organization view of marketing or destination management organizations (DMOs) who must muster the best efforts of many partner organizations and individuals (stakeholders) to have the greatest success. Destination marketing is described as “a continuous, sequential process through which a DMO plans, researches, implements, controls and evaluates programs aimed at satisfying tourists’ needs and wants as well as the destination’s and DMO’s visions, goals and objectives”. The effectiveness of marketing activities depends on the efforts and plans of tourism suppliers and other entities. This definition posits that marketing is a managerial function/domain that should be performed in a systematic manner adopting and implementing the appropriate approaches, as well as suitable tools and methods. In doing so, it is believed that a tourism destination (through the organizational structure of a DMO) can attain the expected outputs beneficial to all stakeholders, i.e., the tourism industry, hosting communities/populations, and tourists/visitors. The effective implementation of tourism destination marketing principles and methods constitutes an efficient and smart pillar, a cornerstone to attain a balance/equilibrium between the perceptions and interests, sometimes conflicting, of stakeholders by minimizing the negative impacts and maximizing the benefits resulting from tourism. All the same, it is worth noting that marketing is not a panacea, nor a kind of magic stick.

Keywords: marketing ; tourism destination ; managerial cycle ; marketing planning ; strategies ; marketing action plans

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Over the last three decades, the business environment and markets in tourism and travel industries have evolved and been significantly changed due to a series of factors, such as globalization, volatile markets, highly intense competition, crises of all kinds, and widespread diffusion of information and communication technologies <sup>[1]</sup>. Academic literature indicates that all these factors—shifters and drifters—are considerably influencing tourists’ consumption behavior, as well as business functions and processes of tourism suppliers and destinations <sup>[2][3]</sup>.

Against this background, the volume of published research focusing primarily on issues of tourism destination management and marketing has been steadily growing over the years. The focus of this entry paper is on the research area of destination marketing. The article’s purpose is twofold: (i) to perform a synthesis of the wealth of academic research published over the last three decades and (ii) to suggest pathways/avenues for future research. This synthesis allows us to identify and highlight the key elements of academic knowledge in this field. The following points provide a definition of the topic and briefly present the approach to and methodology implemented in performing the synthesis of existing literature.

By outlining and synthesizing what is known in this research field, this entry paper lays the groundwork, providing a timely insight into the current state of research on marketing of tourism destinations. Through a systematic quantitative literature review of articles published in tourism-related journals, this is achieved through meeting the article’s aim. This outline of existing knowledge provides opportunities, directions, and avenues for future research in this increasingly important domain/area of tourism.

The approach to this entry is as follows. Marketing is a very broad research field; the same stands for the area of tourism destination marketing <sup>[1][4]</sup>. It is believed that to better consider and synthesize the existing knowledge in this area, we have to adopt a systematic approach aimed at structuring and classifying the wealth and variety of academic knowledge. This article argues that the most adequate approach is to consider the topic in terms of marketing management, allowing us to achieve a better perception and acquire a more integrative image.

According to Kotler and Keller <sup>[5]</sup>, “Marketing management is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of programs designed to bring about desired exchanges with target audiences for the purpose of personal and of mutual gain. It relies heavily on the adoption and coordination of product, price, promotion and place for achieving responses.” Hence, marketing management is a business process of managing marketing activities. Marketing management decisions are based on strong knowledge of marketing functions and clear understanding and application of managerial methods and techniques for decision-making <sup>[3][5][6]</sup>. Therefore, this article considers and synthesizes the marketing knowledge/existing literature as a managerial process.

**Methodology:** This entry adopted and implemented the following methodology. Given that the aim of this article was to outline the current state of knowledge on tourism destination marketing, the best suited method to address this aim is the systematic quantitative review. The type of review is systematic as the methods used to survey and select the papers are explicit and reproducible [7]. The four-step systematic quantitative literature review process consists of (i) determining review aim; (ii) identifying search terms, databases, and literature selection criteria; (iii) searching the databases for the literature and screening search outcomes against the criteria before refining exclusion and inclusion criteria; and (iv) appraising literature quality and relevance, structuring summary tables through extracting relevant information. Given this study's review aim, the search strings "tourism destination" OR "marketing destination" OR "tourism promotion" were used in titles, keywords, and abstracts to search for relevant literature firstly in the Scopus academic database, followed by four additional databases: EBSCO, Elsevier, ProQuest, and Emerald. To safeguard the quality and effectiveness of the review, only original research articles published in English-language peer-reviewed journals were considered. The search was time-bound for the last three decades, since 1990.

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## References

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