Factors Influencing Image of Tourist Destination: Integrated Marketing Communications Approach; Conceptualization and Retrospective re-debate

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Abstract

The significance of the destination image and tourist satisfaction has been extensively studied, but the concept of destination loyalty has not been thoroughly articulated as one might hope. In addition, IMC is a new paradigm that will pave the way of managing of marketing communication considering building and leveraging consumer interests and relationships. This study aims at developing a holistically conceptual framework of how IMC can play a main role in destination loyalty considering tourist perception, destination image, satisfaction and often related attributes. Analyzing the crucial factors such as tourist perception, destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty along with IMCs' conceptual theories and cannons provide insight in the creation of destination image and in further stage tourist loyalty. The holistic conceptual framework is developed within this research endeavor. The conceptual framework is articulated as one might hope based on IMC factors and pre trip image, post trip image, destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty comprising tourist loyalty and how each one of them can be an advertising channel.

Key Words

Integrated marketing communication, tourist loyalty, destination image, tourist satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

The impact of tourist perception, destination and satisfaction on loyalty has been extensively argued in tourism research spheres. A good-quality marketing strategy for tourism destination is tied to determination of the destination image and to what extent its often related concepts are interpreted. In regard to, the odds of success toward providing a positive image of the destination, loyalty to tourist destination and in further stage satisfaction, perceived by tourists, themselves, will be increased via such variables [1-3]. The term loyalty is a concept which is robustly related to tourists' satisfaction. More specifically, loyalty and satisfaction are two sides of the same coin. However, within tourism context, the significance of the destination image and tourist satisfaction has been extensively studied, but the concept of destination loyalty has not been thoroughly articulated as one might hope [4-6]. Therefore, there is a need to focus upon the role of customer satisfaction in developing loyalty [4] as well as how integrated marketing communication is made manifest itself within tourism research spheres. Communication integration is made manifest its role within the marketing communication literature during the early 1990s and still is the interest of many marketing practitioners and scholars [7-10]. This research study seeks to conceptually integrate tourism perceptions, destination image, satisfaction on tourist loyalty via application of integrated marketing communication (IMC). The objectives are; to identify the main role of IMC within tourism research spheres, to scrutinize the factors influence of the tourist perception and destination image, to expose the attributes which are pertinent to tourist satisfaction, and last but not least to uncover the underlying determinants of destination loyalty.

II. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBIT

Historically, the concept of IMC has been seen as a crucial factor in marketing literature [10] and has gained a substantial attention after the rapid improvement of the communication and information technology [11-13]. Accordingly, IMC has been trying to synthesize the connection between the strategic planning of communication and the tactical implementation of communication [14]. This integration leads to driving greater efficiency and effectiveness in a strategically consistent manner to gain desired communication objectives. Within a highly dynamic and fiercely competitive global marketplace, marketers need to scrutinize the extent to which consumers may be affected by marketing communication models. Communication and its effectiveness has been frequently argued by marketing scholars. They are unanimous in the fact that understanding consumer psychology, comprehending consumer behavior and an effective means of communication are at the core of marketing management [15, 16]. Due to their efficiency and reliability, Marketing Communication Models have been seen as novel platforms, which can be applied as competitive marketing instruments within a market-oriented business context. Therefore, marketers should be fully aware of the canons of effective communication, exhaustively. Two models are functional in marketing communication, namely Macro-Model and Micro-Model. The Macro Model of communication process encompasses nine elements [17, 18]: Sender and Receiver refer to the major parties in a communication; Message and Media are known as the crucial communication tools; Encoding, Decoding, Response and Feedback refer to the main communication functions, collectively; and the last but not least is known as Noise (i.e.,

is characterized as disruptions, generated from either sender or receiver during transmission or interpretation processes). Figure 1 depicts nine Macro Communication Models' components.
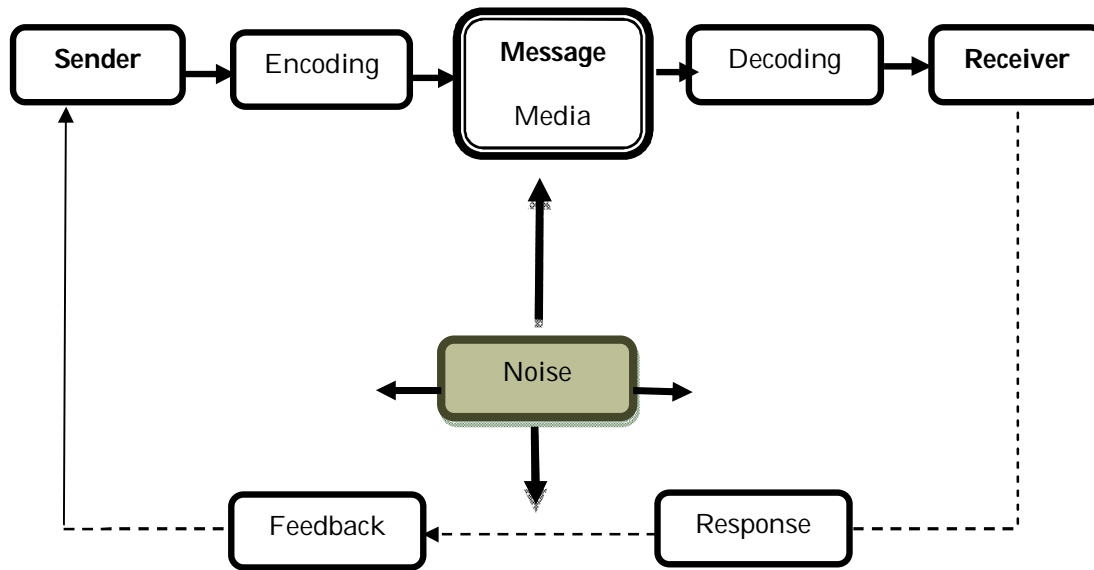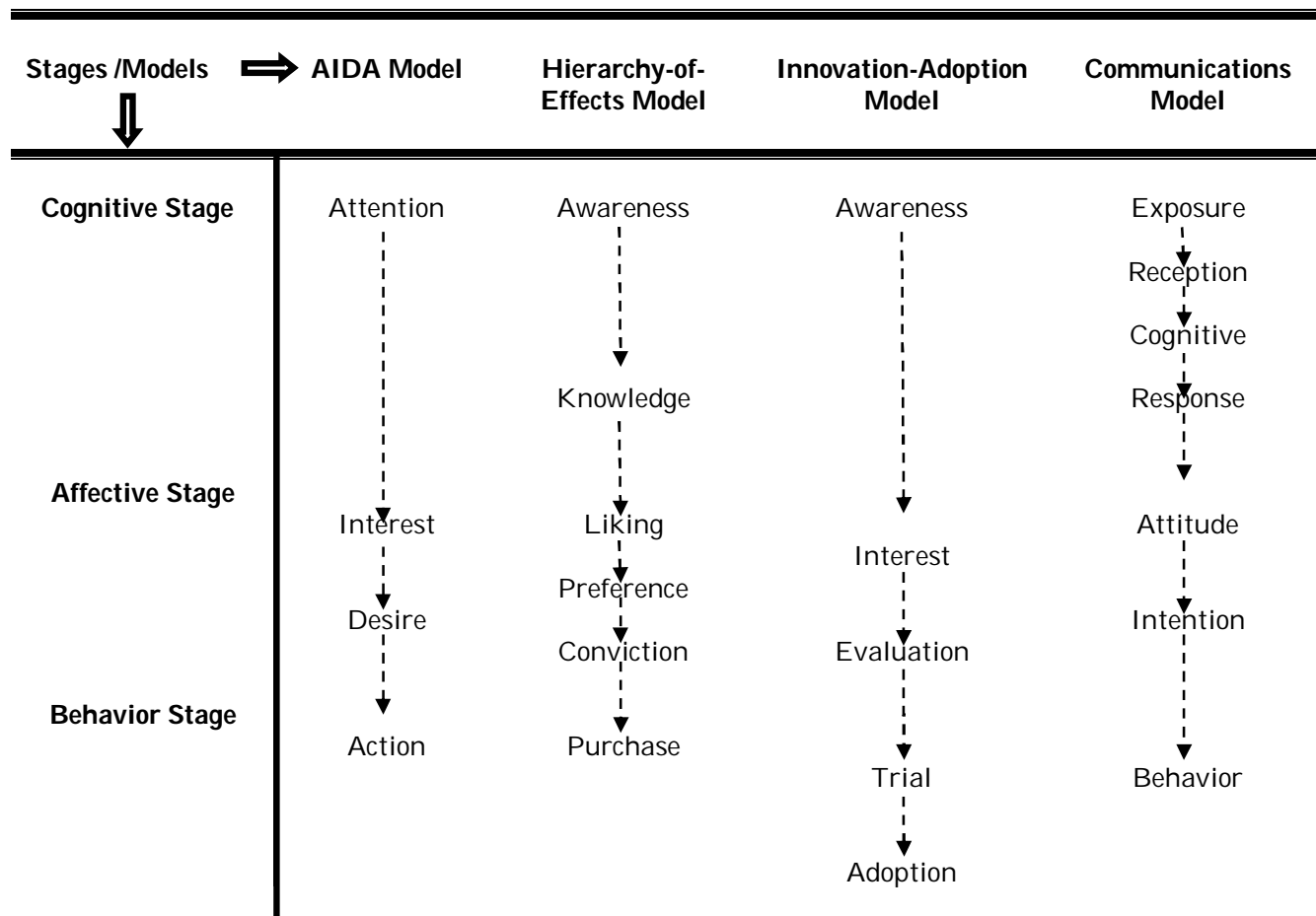

FIGURE 1. ELEMENTS OF MACRO MODEL OF COMMUNICATION PROCESS [17, 18].

The Micro-Models of marketing communication focus upon consumers' typical responses to communication. These models presume that the buyers cross through three stages, namely a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioral, respectively. Buyers' perception includes three sequences; firstly, "learn-feel-do" occurs when the potential customer has high inclusion in a product class and perceives that there is a serious differentiation; secondly, "do-feel-learn" sequence is tend to be relevant when the potential customer has significant participation, but perceives slight or no distinction within the product category; thirdly, "learn-do-feel" refers to a situation in which the potential customer has low involvement and perceives a fundamental distinction without a difference within product cluster [19]. Through being decisive and being selective toward choosing an appropriate sequence, the marketers can come up with a clever plan to obtain efficient communication. Indeed, consumers' responses to communications are central importance in the micro-models of marketing communication. Four Classic Response Hierarchy Models are tabulated in table 1; AIDA Model [20], Hierarchy-of-Effects Model [21], Innovation-Adoption Model [22] and Communications Model [23]. Table 1 exhibits the definitions of IMC.

TABLE 1. DEFINITIONS OF IMC [24]

Author	Definition
American Association of Advertising Agencies (1998)	"A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes added value in a programme that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines – e.g. general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines in order to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact"
Schultz 1992 [25]	"The process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed and which, behaviourally, moves the customer toward a sale and maintains customer loyalty"
Keegan 1992 [26]	"The strategic coordination of all messages and media by an organisation in order to influence its perceived brand value collectively
Kotler 1999 [27]	"IMC is the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organisation and its message"
Duncan 2002 [28]	"A cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue
Schultz & Schultz [29]	"IMC is a strategic process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programmes over time with consumers, customers, prospects and other targeted, relevant internal and external audiences
Kliatchko [30]	"IMC is the concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centred and results-driven brand communication programmes over time"

TABLE 2. RESPONSE HIERARCHY MODELS [19, 21-23].

Stages /Models ⟹	AIDA Model	Hierarchy-of-Effects Model	Innovation-Adoption Model	Communications Model
Cognitive Stage	Attention	Awareness	Awareness	Exposure
				Reception
				Cognitive
		Knowledge		Response
Affective Stage	Interest	Liking		Attitude
		Preference	Interest	
	Desire	Conviction	Evaluation	Intention
Behavior Stage	Action	Purchase	Trial	Behavior
			Adoption	

In addition, IMC is a new paradigm that will pave the way of managing of marketing communication considering building and leveraging consumer interests and relationships [31]. This approach can tie IMC to customer relationship management via integration, measurement, alignment of both traditional and new interactive marketing approaches [32]. It has been deduced out of in-depth literature review that there are few studies focuses upon IMC implementation in hospitality and tourism sector [33, 34]. Consequently, there is a need for more research about the implementation of the IMC concept within tourism and hospitality [10, 34-37].

III. CONCEPTUALIZATION; INSIDE OUT INSIGHTS

A. Tourist satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is of central importance in sustaining the tourism industry due to the fact that it affects the individuals' perceptions of choosing where to go and what to buy [38]. Tourist satisfaction has been extensively studied as time went by. Many scholars have been interpreting their conceptions in this case. For example, to the extent to which the buyers' rewarded for the

sacrifices which have been undergone based on their cognitive state of mind [39]. Satisfaction, itself, has been interpreted as being a kind of stepping away from experiencing, instead evaluating it in order to perceive, to what extent the results have been matched with presupposition in all [40]. Moreover, it can be seen as the favorability of the individuals' evaluation in a subjective manner, raised from the experiences and outcomes of using or consuming [41]. Subsequently, it has been seen as the evaluation of the sense which is related to a product acquisition and consumption of the experience considering the psychological state of the individuals' prior feelings about what they have experienced and consumed [42]. The term "Customer Satisfaction" within service setting contexts, refers to a desired result of service experiences that encompasses an evaluation of to what extent/whether the service has met the customers' expectations and potential needs [43]. More specifically, satisfaction, itself, is closely pertinent to a consequence of the customers' post-purchase evaluations considering not only tangible, but also intangible brand characteristics along with a key determinant of customer loyalty [44]. Moreover, "satisfaction is an overall attitude towards a product provider or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers expect and what they actually receive regarding the fulfilment of a need" [45]. Form a different angle, satisfaction is a potential function of a product's capability of attaining customer expectations [46, 47]. Therefore, an individual's capability to utilize a product/service in a successful manner lead to higher satisfaction level [48, 49]. More specifically, "customer satisfaction can be defined as the overall evaluation of the service performances or utilisation" [50]. Making customers happy brings huge benefit for the marketer. A satisfied customer is more likely to stay loyal. They will recommend other people buy or use those products or services. Accordingly, the literature reveal that the satisfaction is of central importance in customer loyalty as it has seemingly positive influences on both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty outcomes. Prior studies report that these outcomes lead to customer referrals, relationship length, purchase intentions, and service usage [51, 52]. Satisfaction implies the happiness one feels when one has satisfied a yearning, need, or desire. Accordingly, it seems certain that there is a robust relationship between product/service satisfaction and the customers' intention to re-purchase the brand, however, the impact of product satisfaction is higher than service satisfaction [53]. Customer satisfaction can be a measure of how upbeat customers are with the services and results of a grocery store. It can be accomplished by enhancing service quality. Commitment is an important structure for a long term relation and they maintain that the relation with the partner continues if maximum attempts are made to keep it. Endeavours in making the relation long term and axial are valuable. Commitment is the buyer inclination to keep the relation with the seller. Commitment may be a psychological state that makes a person to invest on keeping a relation. Accordingly, commitment is defined as the customer inclination to continue the relation and try to retain the relation with the organisation. Like trust, commitment is regarded an important factor in successful relations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

B. Satisfaction, perceived value and attribution

Based on prior research, the customer loyalty might be affected by some certain factors such as competitors' strategies, thereby, satisfaction is unlikely to be the single predictor of loyalty [54]. Accordingly, it has been suggested that customer satisfaction is perceived to be a kind of evaluation between perceived service performance and in particular, prior expectations [55, 56]. Researchers mentioned that customer satisfaction is positively related to customer loyalty, and customer loyalty boost profitability through better selling of products [57, 58]. Other researcher claimed that customer satisfaction through retention also enhance customer loyalty [58].

Recently, it has been stated that the satisfaction-loyalty link might be moderated by other factors such as customer relationship management (CPM) quality because customer satisfaction is associated with direct past experience with a firm [59]. Other scholars confirm that perceived values also increase the level of customer loyalty [60]. Previous studies identified that perceived value is an important factor for customer loyalty. More specifically, customer value is interpreted as a trade-off between the two matters; firstly, the incurred costs perceived by the consumer and secondly, the benefits of using services and products [61]. Moreover, the term value itself is a complex concept which is similar to service quality and is perceived by the customer per se. Therefore, the product/services' value is defined by the customer rather than the supplier [62]. Also, the customer value relies on some personal characteristics encompassing the location of purchasing or using a product or service, prior knowledge about a product or service, and last but not least financial resources along with the certain circumstances such as time frame [63]. Research also found that in telephone service industry there is significant effect of perceived value on customer loyalty (Bolton & Drew 1991). As such, providing value for customers is known as a strategic tool which is applicable in order to increase the odds of success of the service providers via attracting and then retaining customers, and ultimately building customer loyalty [52, 64]. Hence, it is anticipated that via offering greater value to customers, the service providers are capable of promoting both trust and commitment, therefore, the customer loyalty will be developed. In regard to, it has been posited that through driving CRM performance, service-oriented firms can deliver superior value which is known as the fundamental cannons of the building and in the further stage sustaining competitive advantage [64]. All in all, in an indirect manner, the perceived customer value affects behavioral intentions [65], which are discussed as a catalyst in increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction attributes can be analyzed via considering; cognitive image of natural resources, cognitive image of service quality, cognitive image entertainment and affective image [66]. Satisfaction of tourist can be measured through general attributes of satisfaction per se such as lodging, dining, shopping, accessibility, activities and events and environment [67]. Therefore, tourist satisfaction might be affected by comfort facilities, safety & infrastructure, cultural attractions & shopping, tourist attractions & ambience and variety & accessibility, and ultimately, will affect the destination image [68]. Moreover, the satisfaction of tourist is robustly tied to Destination image, personal involvement, place attachment.

C. Destination loyalty

Central to debate on the idea of the "Customer Loyalty" is the question of how the 'customer loyalty concept', and the often associated meaning and use of the word 'loyalty', are interpreted. Customer loyalty is defined as the dedication of the customer towards any brand or retailer. Loyal customers are committed. Retailers develops customer loyalty through better customer services, positioning, unique product, and database management (Levy, 2001). The term 'loyalty', within customer loyalty context, refers to the extent to which customers are intended to be a frequent purchaser in the future considering the given provider as the sole priority for any prospective transactions [69-71]. Moreover, identifying the factors that significantly influence customer loyalty has provoked a heated debate among marketing scholars and practitioners [72-74]. Indeed, customer loyalty is of central importance in developing the tailor-made market action strategies in all. Above all, there is a question of who is loyal customer? And how do

providers engage in strengthening customer loyalty per se? In response, the loyal customers can be clarified as those who wish to maintain the relationship [75, 76]. On the other hand, the providers, particularly service providers should make a great strike in terms of enhancing customer loyalty via providing complete satisfaction [77, 78], pleasing them, and last but not least setting up switching obstacles [79-81].   Indeed, within globally competitive market context and technology-oriented era, marketers should be equipped with efficient marketing weapons in order to meet their customers' expectations. As other geographical areas, Palestine is also not an exception at all.   It seems certain that the customer loyalty is of central importance in organizations considering as the best intangible assets. Unquestionably, Managing and building a reliable customer relationship can be beneficial. There is empirical evidence that customer loyalty is known as a source of competitive advantage as well as it has an explicit potential of differentiation [82].   Since the customer loyalty is defined as maintaining a relationship considering frequent purchasing, then the firms are making a great strides in adopting a role of value creation facilitators so customers feel a willingness and motivation to engage themselves in the service [83]. An effective strategy with good forecasting may foster customer loyalty. Indeed, the odds of success increases as the customer relationship and subsequently the customer loyalty is maintained. Moreover, it has been stated that investing in increasing customer loyalty can promote the obtaining of a real competitive advantage [84]. To illustrate, loyal customers can be characterized as those who are more willing to pay for products and services as well as recommending the services to other prospective customers [85]. To conclude, they can generate more profit when the length of their relationship with the given provider increases [86]. According to the literature, there are two perceptions toward loyalty in all [87, 88] in which can be categorized as behavioral and attitudinal. To pinpoint, from behavioral vantage point, loyalty is perceived as a way of behaving considering repeated purchasing as a loyalty indicator [82]. On the other hand, from attitudinal perspective, it is perceived as a personal attitude encompassing various emotions which make up the loyalty of customers toward a typical retailer, a product or a service [82]. There is empirical evidence that the customer loyalty might be influenced by both levels of trust and commitment [59]. For example, research uncovers that when there is a consistently competent service, the level of trust increases substantially and consequently leads to long-lasting relationship [89]. Furthermore, the commitment is of central importance in constructing customer loyalty [90]. Recently, the crucial role of customer loyalty has been scrutinized via customer relationship management (CRM) in which it has stated that when a perceived brand image is high, the indirect influence of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty via CRM quality is stronger [59]. Tourist loyalty indicators encompassing; efficiency, service quality, social value, play, aesthetics, perceived monetary cost, perceived risk, time & effort spent and perceived value [91]. Moreover, the level of loyalty of tourist can be affected by Cognitive image of natural resources, cognitive image of service quality, cognitive image entertainment and affective image [66]. All in all, Tourist loyalty relates to tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction and loyalty are two sides of the same coin [4]. Therefore, destinations can be seen as products and tourists can visit them again or recommend them to other potential tourists, thereby, destination loyalty as the level of tourists' perception of a destination as a good place, occurred when they would recommend to others [92].

D. Destination image

Destination image is of importance in tourism research spheres and has been defined as an expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place [93]. Destination image encompasses organic image, shaped by individual's experiences and induced image, shaped by induced information from external sources such as promotion and advertising [94]. Moreover, cognitive image is related to destination image in which refers to beliefs, impressions, ideas, perceptions and knowledge [95]. To that end, image depends on evaluation of services and products [96] which ascribes to various activities and attractions within destination per se [97]. Factors influencing the tourist's perceived image is depicted in figure 2.
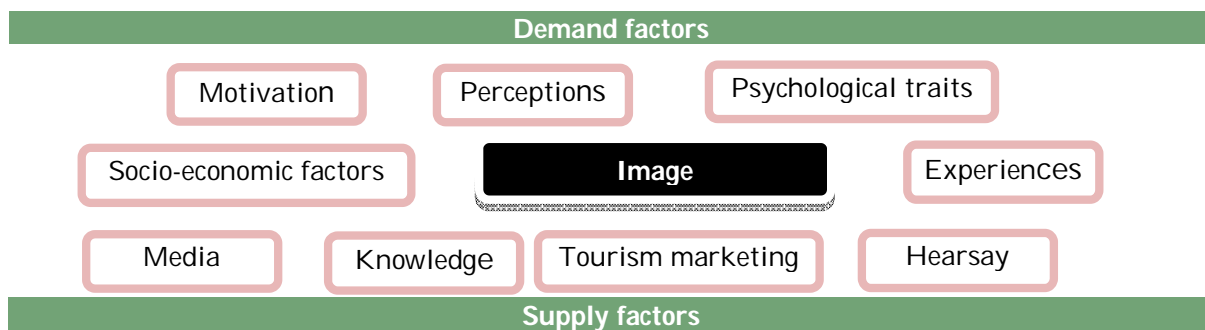
Demand factors

| Motivation | Perceptions | Psychological traits |

| Socio-economic factors | **Image** | Experiences |

| Media | Knowledge | Tourism marketing | Hearsay |

Supply factors

FIGURE 2. FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS PERCEIVED IMAGE [98]

Organic image

Accumulation of mental images of a place through real life experience

Induced image

Modification of image via prior seeking for making decision to travel

Decision to travel according to image efficiency and other related and influential factors

Travel to attraction may condition the image

Modified-induced image

Participation or experience at destination

Return or loyal traveler expressing evaluation and post-anticipation

New accumulation occurs after the visit due to the circular nature of the process
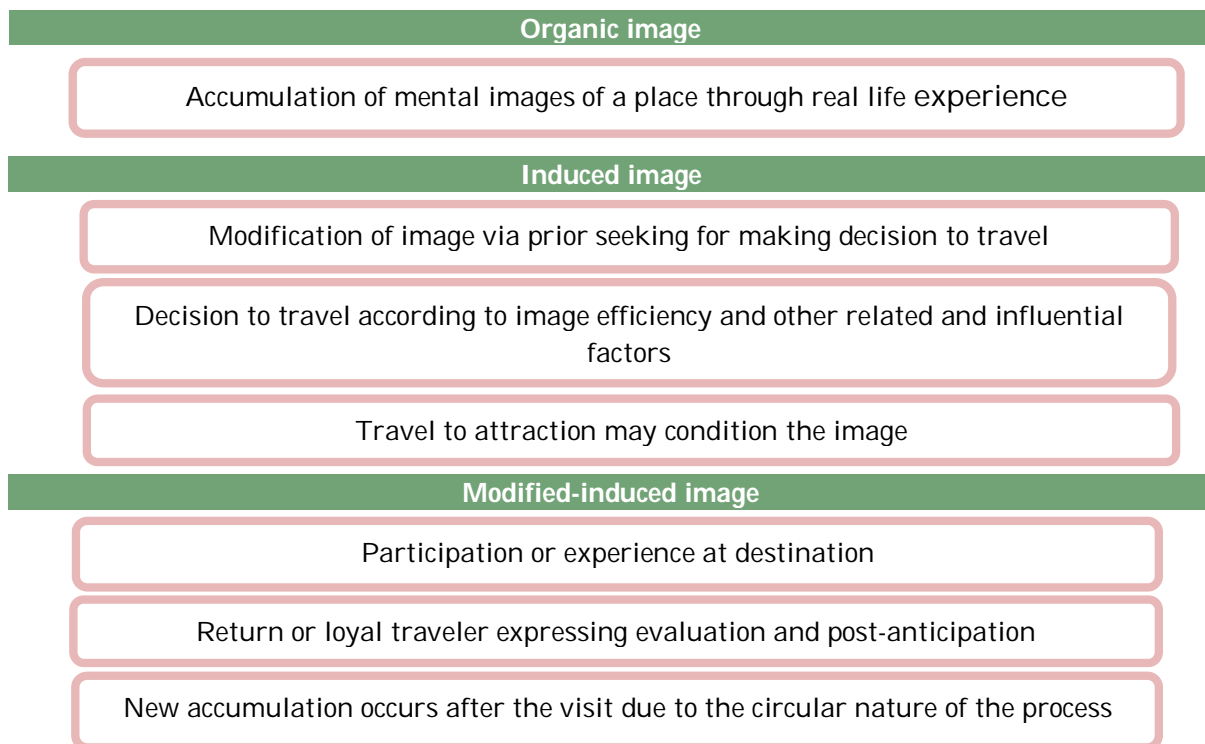
FIGURE 3. STAGE THEORIES OF DESTINATION IMAGE [94]

There is strong theory within destination image, namely stage theory in which is stated that image held by potential visitors, non-visitors and loyal visitors will be differed [94]. Figure 3 schematically exhibits the stage theory of destination image.

I. CONCLUSION

This study aims at developing a holistically conceptual framework of how IMC can play a main role in destination loyalty considering tourist perception, destination image, satisfaction and often related attributes. Following schematic system perception uncovers the underlying factors which are most ought to within tourism sphere. See figure 4.
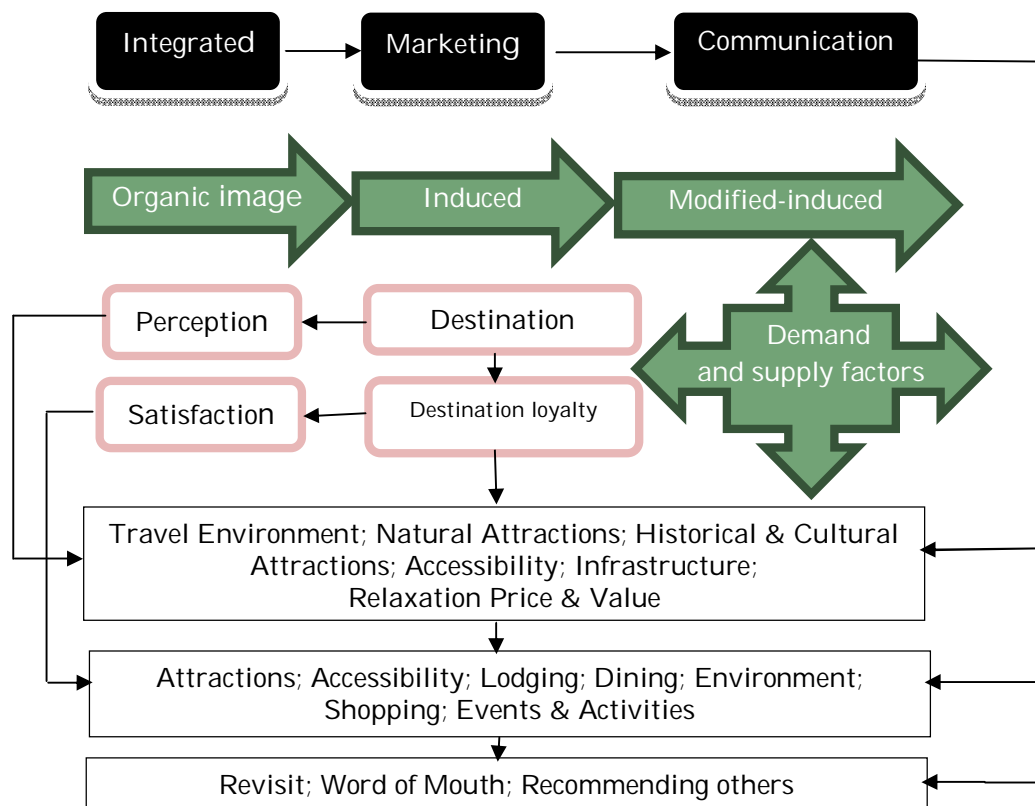

FIGURE 4. HOLISTIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Analyzing the crucial factors such as tourist perception, destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty along with IMCs' conceptual theories and cannons provide insight in the creation of destination image and in further stage tourist loyalty. The holistic conceptual framework is developed within this research endeavor. The conceptual framework is articulated as one might hope based on IMC factors and pre trip image, post trip image, destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty comprising tourist loyalty and how each one of them can be an advertising channel. Therefore, the odds of success will be increased within tourism marketing context. This research will open a new horizon considering how IMC and its often

related interpretations can pave the way toward having a universal tourist hub The future direction for this research intends to be how these factors can mutually influence each other and also which model could be proposed and be validated.

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