

ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED PROMOTIONAL TOOLS FOR THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM INDUSTRY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Promotion is the process of marketing communication to inform, persuade, remind and influence consumers or users in favor of your product or service. There are many elements or tools of promotion - viz. advertising, sales promotion, publicity or public relations, events and experiences, sales force or personnel selling, internet marketing, and word of mouth marketing etc. The decision of selecting a promotional tool or media for the promotion of an offering varies with firm to firm and industry to industry. Tourism industry is a very dynamic industry and contributes a lot to the revenue of the state. As per the economic survey of Himachal Pradesh for the year 2020-21, the tourism industry contributes to 7% in the total GDP of the state. In order to encourage the tourist inflow and to increase the revenue of tourism industry a lot of efforts are required to employ for the promotion of the tourism industry and tourism products. Through the present study an attempt is made to assess the reliability and popularity of few major selected promotional tools for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh. The present study is conducted in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh in which responses were taken from 100 tourists which included 35 foreign and 65 Indian tourists through convenience non probability sampling method with the help of a well-designed questionnaire. In order to analyze the data various mathematical and statistical tools such as simple percentage method, average, standard deviation are used.

Keywords: Tourism, Promotion, Advertisement, Publicity, Internet Marketing, Tourism Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and services they offers for sell. The marketing communications mix consists of eight major modes of communication viz. advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word of mouth and personal selling. Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor via print media (newspapers and magazines), broadcast media (radio and television), network media (telephone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic media (audiotape, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, Web page), and display media (billboards, signs, posters). Sales

promotion is a variety of short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or service including consumer promotions (such as samples, coupons, and premiums), trade promotions (such as advertising and display allowances), and business and sales force promotions (contests for sales reps). Events and experiences are the company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or special brand-related interactions with consumers, including sports, arts, entertainment, and cause events as well as less formal activities. Public relations and publicity are the variety of programs directed internally to employees of the company or externally to consumers, other firms, the government, and media to promote or protect a company's image or its individual product communications. Direct marketing is use of mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, or Internet to communicate directly with or solicit response or dialogue from specific customers and prospects. Interactive marketing are online activities and programs designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness, improve image, or elicit sales of products and services. Word-of-mouth marketing includes people-to-people oral, written, or electronic communications that relate to the merits or experiences of purchasing or using products or services. And finally personal selling is Face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders.

TOURISM INDUSTRY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh is one of the fastest growing states in India. Himachal Pradesh is a sub-Himalayan state and it has a varied climate that changes with the altitude. It is also known as the Land of Gods, topographic diversity and natural beauty. The rich natural resources of the state are favourably suited for investment in major sectors such as procurement of agricultural produce, hydroelectric power, cement and tourism. There are a variety of festivals celebrated by the locals of Himachal Pradesh. There are approximately 6000 temples in Himachal Pradesh. Tourism is a major engine of economic growth, and source of revenue earnings as well as generator of employment in the state. As per the economic survey of Himachal Pradesh for the year 2020-21, the tourism industry contributes to 7% in the total GDP of the state. The Himachal Pradesh offers several forms of tourism viz. adventure, medical, wellness, sports, eco-tourism, films, rural and religious tourism etc., that are extremely innovative as well as appealing to its tourists. The tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh has provided a mean of leaving to a number of Himachali and non-Himachali people. The State is endowed with all the basic resources necessary for thriving tourism activity like geographical and cultural diversity, clean and peaceful environment and beautiful streams, sacred shrines, historic monuments and the

friendly hospitable people. Tourism Industry in Himachal Pradesh has been given high priority and the Government has developed appropriate infrastructure for its development which includes public utility services, roads, communication network, airports, transport facilities, water supply and civic amenities etc.

Table-1: Foreign and Domestic Tourists arrival in Himachal Pradesh 2010-2020

Year	Foreign Tourists Arrived	%age Change in FTA	Indian Tourists Arrived	%age Change in DTA	Total Tourist Arrival	%age Change over the years
2010	4,53,616	-	1,28,11,986	-	1,32,65,602	-
2011	4,84,518	6.81	1,46,04,888	13.99	1,50,89,406	13.75
2012	5,00,284	3.25	1,56,46,048	7.13	1,61,46,332	7.00
2013	4,14,249	-17.20	1,47,15,586	-5.95	1,51,29,835	-6.30
2014	3,89,699	-5.93	1,59,24,701	8.22	1,63,14,400	7.83
2015	4,06,108	4.21	1,71,25,045	7.54	1,75,31,153	7.46
2016	4,52,770	11.49	1,79,97,750	5.10	1,84,50,520	5.24
2017	4,70,992	4.02	1,91,30,541	6.29	1,96,01,533	6.24
2018	3,56,568	-24.29	1,60,93,935	-15.87	1,64,50,503	-16.08
2019	3,82,876	7.37	1,68,29,231	4.56	1,72,12,107	4.62
2020	42,665	-88.85	31,70,714	-81.15	32,13,379	-81.33

Source:- Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Himachal Pradesh

In the year 2010 tourists visited to the state were 1, 32,65,602 out of which 4,53,616 were foreign tourists and 1,28,11,986 were Indian tourists (Table – 2). A decline of 6.30% has been observed in the year 2013 in tourists arrival to Himachal Pradesh, this decline has been observed due to more terrorist activities in Jammu & Kashmir. Himachal Pradesh is a neighbouring state of Jammu and Kashmir hence has also been impacted the due to this. Another decrease of 16.08% is observed in the year 2018 in total tourist arrival as compare to the year 2017 and if separately talking the foreign tourist arrival declined by 24.29% and domestic tourist arrival declined by 15.87% in comparison to the year 2017. The major reason behind this decline in tourist arrival in the year 2018 was water crisis in Shimla. Flights and hotel bookings for Shimla are down by about 30% compared to last year in light of the worst-ever water crisis plaguing the city, according to travel operators and portals. Again an increase by 4.62% in total tourist arrival in the year 2019 has been recorded, but in next year in 2020 tourist arrival has declined due to COVID-19 pandemic both in terms of domestic and international tourists. A fall by 88.85% has been recorded in international tourists' arrival whereas a fall of 81.15% has been recorded in domestic tourist arrival.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Hunt, 1975) through his study proposed perceived image from the perspective of tourists. He believed that the image of a tourist destination, as a purely subjective concept, is the impression that people hold on the status of non-residence. **Brown & Reingen, (1987)** recognized that family, friends, and acquaintances are personal sources of recommendations for word of mouth vehicles whereas columns, articles, and commentary by journalists, columnists, consumers, and experts to be found in newspaper, magazines, specialized publications, online discussion forums, and expert systems are regarded as impersonal sources of word of mouth recommendations. Baloglu & McCleary, (1999) believed that the perceived image was formed through the interpretation of the rational and emotional of the tourists, who included two dimensions: cognitive image and emotional image. **Silverman, (2001)** through his study stated that any other type of communication would be perceived as commercial and formal because advertising, public, and media relations communicate a message specifically selected, conceived, and expressed by the product or service vendor through an owned or leased medium. Including media relations could be debatable because, although these are well planned, managers do not necessarily have any direct control over the end result. Word of mouth communication can occur face to face, by phone, email, mailing list, or any other means of communication. **Masouleh & Morteza, (2002)** stated that books on Country Studies (City or Region), compact disks offering advertising, information brochure, internet sites, emails, radio, posters, television, press, direct mail, database, tourist information centers and displays are popular source for tourism information. **Senecel & Nantel, (2004)** argued that the expert systems and discussion forums as impersonal recommendation sources because consumers are influenced in their choice of products online by recommendations posted online. **Ketabchi & Mohammad, (2004)** stated through their study that discussion and results in tourism advertising, in print, television and radio stations, each stage has a specific effect on tourism industry. Each country's tourism industry can generally be measured by its ability and plan and after reviewing the country's interest and need for the industry; then strategies can be planned and improve the development of the industry. **Shwu-Ing et al., (2008)** obtained in this study that the internet as a marketing and communications tool is primarily used in the tourism industry. Therefore, it is not surprising that the previous research has described of the structural relationship between tourism and the internet based advertising. **Rong and Mu, (2013)** stated that there are various ways to increase the market in the tourism industry. The use of a brand name in getting the public's attention works well or method of regional cooperation in tourism, however, the use of advertising as the

primary means of success requires a carefully analysis of the tools in the fields of scientific, social and economic behavior.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

From the literature review, it is clear that the various studies revealed different aspects related to the various promotional Medias for the promotion of tourism industry. However a very few studies has been found related to the assessment of reliability and popularity of various promotional medias as a promotional tool for the tourism industry. Keeping in view the various facts the present study is conducted *to assess the reliability and popularity of few major selected promotional tools for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh*. The present study would be helpful to reveal the facts about the reliability, trustworthiness, and to know about which method of promotion is most popular for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study have been undertaken to achieve the following objectives:-

- To assess the popularity of selected promotional tools for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.
- To assess the reliability and trustworthiness of selected promotional tools for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a descriptive study, conducted in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh in which responses were taken from 100 tourists which included 35 foreign and 65 Indian tourists through convenience non probability sampling method with the help of a well-designed questionnaire. The attitude of the respondents was analyzed with the Likert Scale. In order to analyze the data statistical tools such as simple percentage method, average, standard deviation are used.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The demographical characteristics of the respondents was collected keeping in view the six variables such as residential status, gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, and income level. The sample units were selected on the basis of convenience sampling methods. Out of 100 tourists, 35% are foreigners and 65% are Indian tourists, male were 71% and female were 29 % in the age group of 15 - 30 (55%), 31 - 45 (18%), 46 - 60 (19%), and 60 year and above (8%) tourists were. If we talk about the marital status of tourist, 45% tourists were married and 55 %

tourists were unmarried. The educational status of these tourists no one was illiterate and under - metric, matriculate (5%), higher secondary (8%), graduate (47%), post graduate (36%) and any other (4%) were. And occupational status of these tourists were, that out of 100 tourists, unemployed (22%), govt. employee (20%), private employee (43%), self - employed (13%), and other (2%) were. If we talk about the income level of these tourists, between the income level of 0 - 2 lakh (21%), 2.1 - 6 lakh (28%), 6.1 - 15 lakh (29%), 15.1 and above (29%) tourists were among all tourist.

Table-2: Selected Medias for the promotion of tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh

Sr. No.	Statement	A	I	WOM	EE	AO	TWS	WAS	St. Dev.
1.	Through which source of information you came to know about Himachal Pradesh Tourism.	4	27	46	9	14	302	3.02	1.044
2.	Through which source of information you got attracted towards Himachal Pradesh Tourism most.	3	32	46	14	5	286	2.86	0.876
3.	Which method of promotion for Himachal Pradesh Tourism has provided you the most reliable information?	3	43	39	11	4	270	2.70	0.859
4.	Which method of promotion for Himachal Pradesh Tourism has provided you the most trustworthy information?	4	12	30	52	2	336	3.36	0.871
5.	According to you which method of promotion is best for providing information about Himachal Pradesh tourism?	15	35	30	18	2	257	2.57	1.018

Note: - Figures under the heads A, I, WOM, EE, AO shows the percentage as well as the number of respondents. The total weighted score was calculated by giving score 1 for A - Advertisement, 2 for I - Internet, 3 for WOM - Word of Mouth, 4 for EE - Events and Experiences, 5 for AO - Any Other method for promotion, TWS - Total Weighted Score, and WAS - Weighted Average Score, and St. Dev. - Standard Deviation

Statement 1 in Table 1 makes clear that out of 100 tourists, majority of tourist about 46 % came to know about Himachal Pradesh tourism and its related information through the word of mouth they received from others people, 27% tourist came to know through information available on internet, 4% through the advertisement of Himachal Pradesh tourism, 9% came to know about Himachal Pradesh tourism through various events and experiences that takes place in Himachal Pradesh. And 14% tourists came to know about Himachal Pradesh tourism through any other method of promotion. On the basis of WAS or mean i.e. 3.02 it can be stated that word of mouth is the major source of providing information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

Statement 2 in Table 1 makes clear that out of 100 tourists, majority of tourists about 46 % are attracted towards Himachal Pradesh tourism through the word of mouth they

received from others people, 32% tourist are attracted through the information available on internet about Himachal Pradesh Tourism, 14% tourist attracted through various events and experiences that takes place in Himachal Pradesh, 3% tourist attracted through the advertisement of Himachal Pradesh tourism. And 5% tourists are attracted towards Himachal Pradesh tourism through any other method of promotion. On the basis of WAS or mean i.e. 2.86 it can be stated that word of mouth is the major source of providing information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh due that majority of the tourist are got attracted towards Himachal Pradesh Tourism.

Statement 3 in Table 1 makes clear that out of 100 tourists, majority of tourists that is 43 % are in favor that internet is the most reliable source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism, 39% are in favor that word of mouth is the most reliable source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism and 11% are in favor of events and experiences, 3% are in favor that advertising is the most reliable source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism. While 4% are in opinion of other promotional methods are more reliable as compare to internet, word of mouth, events and experiences and advertising. On the basis of WAS or mean i.e. 2.70 it can be stated that internet is the major source of providing most reliable information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

Statement 4 in Table 1 makes clear that out of 100 tourists, majority of tourists that is 52% are in favor that events and experiences are the most trustworthy source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism, 30% are in favor that word of mouth is the most trustworthy source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism and 12% are in favor of internet as the most trustworthy source of information, 4% are in favor that advertising is the most trustworthy source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism. While 2% are in opinion of other promotional methods are more reliable as compare to internet, word of mouth, events and experiences and advertising. On the basis of WAS or mean i.e. 3.36 it can be stated that word of mouth is the major source of providing most trustworthy information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

Statement 5 in Table 1 makes clear that out of 100 tourists, majority of tourists that is 35% are in favor that internet is the best source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism, 30% are in favor that word of mouth is the best source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism and 18% are in favor of events and experiences are the best source of information, 15% are in favor that advertising is the best source of information for the promotion of Himachal Pradesh tourism. While 2% are in opinion of other promotional methods are more reliable as

compare to internet, word of mouth, events and experiences and advertising. On the basis of WAS or mean i.e. 2.57 it can be stated that internet and word of mouth are the best source of providing information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion it can be stated that the word of mouth and internet are the most popular and reliable sources of information as a promotional tool to communicate about the tourism products and to promote the tourism destinations. According to the study, majority of the tourists considers the word of mouth of others persons and internet as a major source of information for getting information about tourism destinations. Hence it is recommended to the tourism authorities that they must provide accurate and real information on the various sources of information about the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh. It will promote and communicate the real picture of tourism destinations and tourist will get true and accurate information as well as real life experience while visit to that particular tourism destination. The information provided through various media of promotion must match with the reality so the perceived reality of the tourist must be maximum.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has following limitations:

- The study is conducted in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh wherein the city areas are covered only.
- Only one Shimla city is selected for sample selection whereas other famous tourism destinations are not considered.
- Only 100 tourists taken as sample which is a very small sample size.
- The study concentrates only some selected promotional tools

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study highlights very few dimensions of the problem taken under consideration. The following areas of improvements are suggested for future researches:

- The study could reflect more concrete results if few more tourism destinations are added in the existing scope of the study.
- The more respondents interviewed could reveal other facts also which are left hidden.

- The study concentrates only some selected promotional tools whereas few other promotional tools also have a great influence in promotion of tourism.

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