

HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN VID GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

## **Photographic Messages in Tourism Advertising**

*Advertisers' Planning for the Production of as well as  
Potential Tourists' Interpretation of Photographic  
Messages in Tourist Brochures*

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## Abstract

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### Photographic Messages in Tourism Advertising

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Photographic Messages in Tourist Brochures*

The overall aim is to further the understanding of photographic message communication in tourism print advertising. The primary aim is to describe how the production of photographic messages is planned by tourism organisations, and to describe the intended photographic messages of tourism organisations communicated through tourist brochures. The secondary aim is to describe and analyse how potential tourists interpret tourism organisations' photographic messages in tourist brochures. The tertiary aim is to analyse what factors associated with market segmentation such as age, gender and nationality influence the fit between the intended photographic messages of tourism organisations in their brochures and potential tourists' interpretation of the same photographic messages. The factors tested are age, dominating travel motive, gender, nationality and travel frequency.

Two Swedish tourism organisations and one international tourism organisation were studied to describe the planning process. Interviews with six advertisers responsible for the planning for the production of photographic messages were conducted. Seven potential tourists from Germany, Great Britain, Serbia-Montenegro, Sweden and Switzerland were asked in an interview to describe and analyse their interpretations of photographic messages. In the third study, 740 potential tourists from Germany, Great Britain, Serbia-Montenegro, Sweden and Switzerland were studied to analyse what factors associated with market segmentation influence the fit between their interpretations of photographic messages and tourism organisations' intentions when using them. The quantitative data was analysed using chi square tests.

Tourism organisations plan and produce informational and transformational photographic messages. Informational photographic messages aim to inform potential tourists of the attractions destinations have to offer (e.g. nature). Transformational photographic messages aim to appeal to potential tourists' travel motives (e.g. relaxation). Informational photographic messages are interpreted by potential tourists in the way that tourism organisations intend them to be, more often than transformational photographic messages are. Potential tourists' interpretation of photographic messages is influenced by past experience. The following factors: gender, nationality and travel frequency significantly influence the fit between potential tourists' interpretation of photographic messages and the intention of tourism organisations.

Advertisers may consider producing informational photographic messages intended to inform potential tourists that a destination offers interaction. They may also produce transformational photographic messages with the purpose of enticing in the potential tourists' ideas of relaxation, the enhancement of kinship relationships and the facilitation of social interaction. Photographic illustrations of beaches evoke thoughts of nature and activity, as well as reasons for travel such as relaxation and enhancement of kinship relationships. Boats and people illustrated in photographs have connotations of activity and interaction, as well as the travel motives such as the escape from a perceived mundane environment, relaxation and enhancement of kinship relationships.

*Key words:* Advertising, Communication, Informational and transformational advertising, Message, Photograph, Semiotics, Strategy, Travel Motivation, Tourism