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ABSTRACT

This study examined the visiting intentions of those who identify the value of a national park as a "Zest for Living" and those who identify it as a "Sense of familiarity with nature." Even in the case of the same picture, visiting intentions varied with taste and values. Based on this finding, a suggestion was obtained for the effective promotion of destinations.

Keywords: *visual image, visiting intention, promotion of DMOs*

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recently, the expectation has emerged that DMOs will build destination brands and promote tourist activity (Blain et al., 2005). This study clarifies perceptions of destinations and fosters the motivation to visit them in a competitive environment. One effective method is marketing with visual images. Gunn (1972) suggests that tourist images are organic and induced. Based on this study, Gartner (1993) classifies information sources into eight categories and considers the promotion of DMOs as "Overt Induced I." Brochures and billboards are promotional mediums, and many of them use visual images.

When DMOs convey a message through a visual image, they must indicate the market segments that they target. Generally, the market can be divided into demographic, geographic, psychological/lifestyle, and behavioral segments. According to a United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2007) analysis of NTOs, the forward (demographic and geographic) and backward (psychological/lifestyle and behavioral) segments are often used in combination. For the visual promotion of DMOs, however, the visual images of many destinations tend to be uniform. This study concentrates on psychological motivation; if DMOs offer the same message, the visiting intentions, tastes, and values of tourists differ. Thus, invariable visual messages are not most effective for each market segment. Focusing on a national park, this study raises two issues. First, it determines the visiting intentions and received benefits of those at the national park. Second, it indicates the relationship of these intentions and perceived benefits with visual images, three of which were employed. The following are the hypotheses of this study:

- H0a: Visual image evaluation is the same, regardless of the visiting intentions of those who frequented a national park.
- H0b: Visual image evaluation is the same, regardless of the perceived benefits of national park visits.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire

consisted of three sections: the intention to visit a national park (7-point scale); the benefits of such visits (adapted from Gokita et al. [2012]; 12 items, each measured by a 7-point scale); and the visiting intention of pictures ABC in Figure 1 (7-point scale) and socio-demographic information. Data were collected in December 2012. Of 2409 questionnaires, a total of 449 usable responses were obtained for a response rate of 18.6%. The 449 respondents were composed of males (69.3%) and females (30.7%). Their percentages by age groups were as follows: under 20, 0.4%; those in their 20s, 6.9%; those in their 30s, 18.9%; those in their 40s, 29.2%; those in their 50s, 26.9%; and those over 60, 17.6%.

Figure1
Pictures

Picture A (BBQ)   Picture B (Trekking)   Picture C (Photography)

RESULTS

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses of this study. All analyses were conducted using the R version 2.15.2 and the package "sem." An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to establish the scale of benefits of visiting national parks.

The principle axis factor method was used to extract the underlying factors among 12 attributes. As a result, the scree plot indicated a two-factor solution (see Table 1). The two factors were the same as those of Gokita et al. (2012). They were labeled "Zest for living" and "Sense of familiarity with nature"; a varimax rotation revealed that all items had factor loadings of 0.40 or greater. The Cronbach alphas for the two factors were then calculated to assess the reliability of the scale. The alpha values ranged from 0.92 to 0.94 and thus exceeded the minimum required level of 0.60 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The composite reliability of each construct surpassed the recommendation level of 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded the recommendation level of 0.5, and the AVE for all constructs was higher than the square of the correlation between two constructs. Given these results, both convergent and discriminant validity were confirmed. Finally, the structural model was estimated using the maximum-likelihood method (see Figure 2).

Although the chi-square statistic was significant ($\chi 2 = 870$, df = 15, $p < 0.01$), the goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the model adequately fit the data (GFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, NFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.07). As a result, H0a and H0b were rejected. In addition, the visiting intention of each picture was 4.19 (Picture A), 3.50 (Picture B), and 3.10 (Picture C).

Table1
The Results of EFA

	Factor 1 Zest for living	Factor 2 Sense of familiarity with nature	Communalities
self-confidence	.755	.198	.610
positive change in mood	.828	.335	.798
keep trying	.817	.339	.782
increased compassion for family/friend	.800	.222	.690
self-actualization	.770	.351	.717
creativity enhancement	.681	.384	.611
challenge	.843	.227	.763
greater appreciation of beauty	.243	.751	.623
feeling closer to nature	.219	.854	.778
enriching the mind	.412	.739	.715
increased love for nature	.294	.824	.765
nature appreciation/ environmental awareness	.289	.813	.745
factor contribution	4.779	3.817	8.596
cumulative contribution ratio (%)	39.824	71.635	

Extraction Method: Principal axis factoring; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Figure2
The structural model
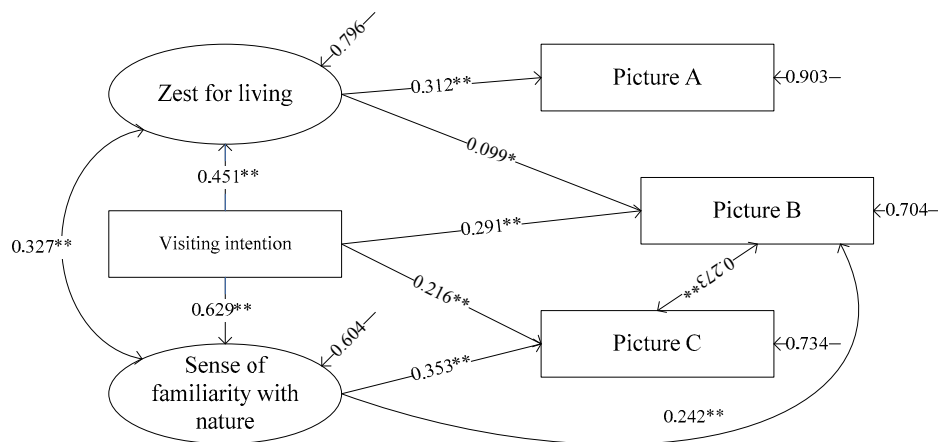
CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis revealed two points: First, the photographs for the mass market and those for people with specific values (a sense of familiarity with nature) differed. Second, each picture influenced not only the values placed on the national park but also the visiting intention to frequent it.

It is important that DMOs know the tastes and values of tourists; for effective promotion, they must understand the messages that visual images convey and to whom they convey them. DMOs have to consider what images are best suited for each segment of the market.

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