

**THE CELEBRITY EXPOSURE IN DIFFERENT MEDIA AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON DESTINATION AWARENESS AND PURCHASE DECISION**

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Dedicate this dissertation, first and foremost, to my late father; Allahyarham Haji Ismail bin Elias and my late mom; Allahyarhamah Hajah Amah binti Said who do not understand the language of higher education, do not understand intellectually but often remind that knowledge is important and powerful.

To my beloved Abah and Emak, Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

This study examines celebrity exposure in different media and their effects on destination image. The concept is considered as a measure of influencing the level towards different media channels such as general media exposure, travel-specific media exposure and celebrity endorsement that promotes a destination. The major considerations in this study are to unravel the variables considered in selecting a celebrity, the extent to which media exposure that influences people. A conceptual framework for the analysis of celebrities' potential influence on destination image and the consequences for destination awareness and choice were established. Three critical areas of research are highlighted in understanding the role of celebrities: celebrity exposure indifferent media, celebrity's effect on destination awareness, as well as purchase decision. The reviewed literature and the data were collected from 216 respondents who visited the MATTA Fair held in Kota Bharu, Kelantan from 30th October until 31st October 2014. The results show different level of influences by the celebrity from different media channel.

ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini mengkaji pendedahan selebriti dalam media yang berbeza dan kesannyaterhadapimej destinasi. Konsep tersebut dianggap sebagai satu ukuran tahap pengaruh terhadap saluran media yang berbeza seperti pendedahan media umum, pendedahan media pelancongan tertentu dan pengendorsan selebriti yang mempromosikan sesuatu destinasi. Pertimbangan utama dalam kertas kerja ini adalah untuk menguraikan ciri-ciri yang dipertimbangkan dalam memilih selebriti, sejauh mana pendedahan media yang mempengaruhi manusia. Satu kerangka konsep bagi menganalisis pengaruh potensi selebriti terhadapimej destinasi, dan kesan bagi kesedaran dan pilihan destinasi telah dihasilkan. Tiga bidang penyelidikan yang kritikal diketengahkan dalam memahami peranan selebriti: pendedahan selebriti dalam media yang berbeza dan kesan selebriti terhadap kesedaran destinasi dan keputusan pembelian. Sorotan kajian terdahulu dan data diperoleh daripada 216 responden yang hadir ke MATTA Fair yang diadakan di Kota Bharu, Kelantan dari 30 Oktober sehingga 31 Oktober 2014. Hasil kajian menunjukkan tahap pengaruh yang berbeza oleh selebriti daripada saluran media yang berbeza.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Recently, there are many organizations using celebrity endorsement in promoting their destinations. The essence of celebrity lies in the public interest on the person, which leads to their high visibility in the media. A study examining *The Cult of Celebrity* identified that 55% women and 39% men were interested in hearing about celebrities in the news or media (Future Foundation, 2007). For many years, advertisers have made use of the public fascination with celebrities and employed them as endorsers or spokespersons for a wide range of products (Pringle, 2004) including for the promotion of tourism destinations. Common sense tells us that the same words uttered or written by different people can have very different effects.

According to Boorstin (1992), a celebrity is ‘a person who is well known for their well knownness. Although high performance in their profession may be the celebrity’s initial claim to fame (Amos et al., 2008), often their private life attracts greater attention than their professional achievements (Turner, 2004). Celebrities are given special attention because they are perceived to be different from the rest of the

population. Yet, they are also considered to be like everyone else, a person with whom the public can identify and with whom they can form a parasocial relationship (Gamson, 2001). As a result, a celebrity's appearance in the media may influence the public's perception of tourism destinations. There appear to be three major ways in which this is possible; through general media coverage of celebrities at a destination, travel-specific media exposure such as TV travel shows and celebrity endorsement in advertising. While these three areas can be linked, the main way in which destinations can specifically exploit the public's perceived connection with celebrities is by using them as endorsers and spokespersons for products, brands and destinations.

Given the lack of literature regarding the use of celebrities in tourism advertising, this study aims to provide an understanding of the role that celebrities may play as an influencer for tourism destinations by using different media channels. It offers a conceptual framework that connects the celebrity with destination awareness and purchase decision. Morgan and Pritchard (2001) suggested that celebrity endorsement has become a significant element of promoting, and film or sports stars and fashion models tend to be used because they are able to penetrate the commercial clutter of advertising and get consumer's attention. Dyer (1988) suggested that the use of a celebrity is one of the most successful ways of gaining consumer's attention and getting him or her to infer the right message in a limited amount of space and time.

In support of this practice, research indicates that celebrity endorsements can result in more favourable advertisement ratings and product evaluations (Dean and Biswas, 2001), and can have a substantial positive impact on financial returns for the companies that use them (Erdogan, 2001). Freiden (1984) concluded that celebrities are particularly effective endorsers because they are viewed as highly trustworthy, believable, persuasive, and likeable. Although these results unequivocally support the use of celebrity endorsers, other research suggests that

celebrity endorsements might vary in effectiveness depending on other factors like the “fit” between the celebrity and the advertised product (Till and Shimp, 1998).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A problem statement is a concise description of the issues that need to be addressed by a problem solving team and should be presented or created before trying to solve the problem. Nowadays, most of the destinations have very attractive physical attributes, uniqueness and good image, but some have failed to promote the destination. Therefore, it is very difficult to get visitors and even awareness about the tourism destination without good promotion. According to Fill (2002), promotion is a sure way of increasing volume and also the number of people who become loyal to the company. In the case of tourism, destination loyalty depends on tourism promotion. People are less aware of many tourism destinations, and one of the reasons is the lack of promotion. Many strategies are used to promote and create destination awareness among tourism marketers. The barrier to strategic destination image and awareness is the “booster” or “advocate” that focuses on destination promotion, negating destination management (Pike, 2004, Beeton, 2006). Since destination image plays a crucial role in travel decision-making (Gallarza et al., 2002; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lyonski, 1989), this study examines how celebrity exposure in different media may affect different elements of destination awareness and purchase decision.

Some destination such as Phi Phi Island in Krabi, Thailand is famous or known as the location for James Bond’s film. People are aware of this tourism attraction after watching the film. However, some people are only aware of the tourism destination after watching a documentary or travel channel in any media

channel. Hong Kong received increased number of tourists after they had assigned Jackie Chan as an ambassador for the country. These trends are growing and people are attracted to celebrity that they like.

Celebrity exposure in a different channel may influence people to go to the destinations that are endorsed by them. For example, a few studies identified that in Japan and Hong Kong, the influence of widely popular Korean television dramas, *Winter Sonata* and *Daejanggeum*, boost consumers' intentions to visit Korea as well as images of Korea as a desirable destination (Han et al., 2011; Su et al., 2011; Kim and Kim, 2009). To get the most effective marketing tool by using celebrity, the tourism marketer must identify which channel of celebrity exposure will influence most people to travel or give destination awareness. This research examines celebrity exposure in different media and their effects on destination awareness and purchase decision.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) What is the most influencing medium of celebrity exposure to create destination awareness and purchase decision?
- b) How to determine an effective media channel that uses celebrity towards destination awareness?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To analyse the extent of celebrity exposure by different media channels towards destination awareness and the most effective media channel that uses celebrity towards destination awareness.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Both celebrity and media play an important role to the public. Without celebrity, the media cannot get the attention from people. Freiden (1984) concluded that celebrities are particularly effective endorsers because they are viewed as highly trustworthy, believable, persuasive, and likeable. The correlation of the study is also similar for celebrity; without media, people do not know the story about the celebrity. This research is aimed purposely to examine celebrity exposure in different media and their effects on destination awareness and purchase decision. The findings of this study are beneficial to the tourism's key players such as marketers to strategize their marketing. Besides, it may help marketers to enhance the promotion in the best way.

By providing the findings of this research to all parties it can help key players to improve and strengthen the strategy. Celebrities and media also may use this finding to know suitable media that may enhance their careers and bring the highest rating impact to the media. Finally, this research may also be publicized, and more research and studies can be implemented in the future.

1.6 FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

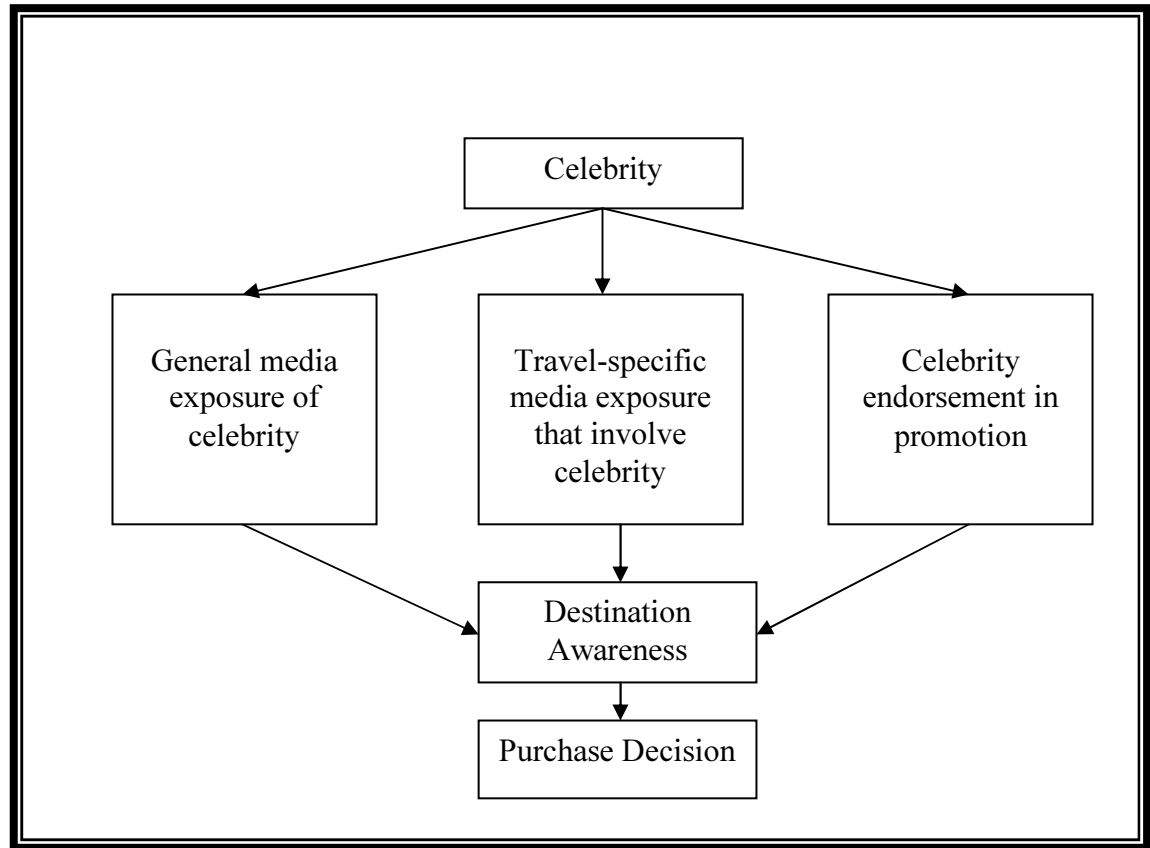


Figure 1.1: Potential influence of celebrity on destination awareness and purchase decision

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research only considers people or tourists who visited the MATTA Fair in KB Mall in Kota Bharu, Kelantan in the period of 30th October until 31st October 2014. The respondents include both male and female, either married or single. The respondents consist of Malaysian and foreigners from any occupation

background. The questionnaires were only distributed at the MATTA exhibition area.

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