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Practice of Internet Marketing in Destination Branding

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Abstract

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Abstract

This study provides information about destination branding and the effect of Internet marketing on tourism. Tourism branding generates interest in a destination as well as, investments and reputation. Destination branding with the support of Internet marketing is a new way of maximizing profit. The advantages of Internet marketing include speed and efficiency due to sharing and contributing functions.

The aims of the research were to figure out the importance of destination branding strategy and the outlook of the combination of tourism branding and Internet marketing. The research applied both qualitative and quantitative methods, consisting of the data from an interview and a survey.

The research result indicates that destination branding is essential to the development of tourism, and confirms the positive correlation between destination branding and Internet marketing activities. Based on the research, the writer suggests that market analysis should be done in order to establish a successful tourism brand. Moreover, the branding process should include Internet tools to increase a destination's recognition.

Keywords
Destination branding, tourism, Internet marketing

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1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry, in the global economy, obtains the rapid growth and diversification as the result of internationalization phenomenon. Since international communications and relationships are now vital in destinations' economic and political strategy, tourism development changes from domestic or regional target to global target groups. Tourism is accounted as a leading service industry and contributed a sharp position in destinations' economic growth. As a consequence, countries, cities and places join the competition in developing quality and attracting more visitors. As in any marketplace, brand image and identity become crucial, which lead to the creation of destination branding strategy. Destination branding planning and strategy to establish and promote destinations' appealing is fundamental in tourism development nowadays. The goals of destination branding is to differentiate destinations with unique charms, service quality and other factors, provide tourist information to visitors and promote the brand image worldwide.

By the end of 2011, Internet users account for 32, 7 per cent of the world population (Internet Word Stats 2011). In fact, Internet has developed tremendously not only in technology field but also in many other sectors, especially economic related areas. Internet applications have been applying in marketing, networks, distribution system, online services and investments. Internet users now obtain active standing, meaning they do not receive information from online world as before, but they are allowed to involve in developing brand names by sharing their experience and interest. In tourism development, Internet plays an important role in information providing and feedback receiving. We are engaged and interacted with social virtual communities; wide range gateways from social medium, e-mail subscription; and travelling related applications for new technologies without any borderlines.

Destination branding and Internet marketing, these two issues are synchronized as a result of digital revolution, and the impact of Internet marketing in destination branding is enormous in tourism industry today. Online activities with the help of social media, social networks, website launching, online distribution channels, e-mail marketing and search engine optimization are able to enhance the tourism promotion. In this study, the author will give some general knowledge about destination branding and Internet marketing, such as definitions, importance and challenges of destination branding and Internet marketing basics, as well as online marketing types that support destinations' growth. It then continues with how Internet marketing accompanies destination strategy by social media marketing, website marketing and search marketing.

Moreover, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) realize valuable opportunities in capturing new target groups, promoting the brand image and visualizing destination's marketing message. Therefore, the study gives examples of online marketing campaign of some destinations in order to explain how they transform destination branding goals into reality by website establishment and development, social media connecting and increase visitors' engagement in destination strategy.

So as to fulfill the synergy of destination branding and Internet marketing, the author also conducts a research on the importance of destination branding and the impact of Internet in it. The research is done by gathering questionnaire's responses and an interview of a case company. The research gives certain results in evaluating how essential destination branding in tourism industry in detail, and in countries' economy in general; how strong Internet affects destination branding factors and from these, give some conclusion and outlook on the relationship of destination branding and online marketing.

2 DESTINATION BRANDING

2.1 The fundamentals of branding

Brand is a familiar term not only in business field, but also in everyday life. Branding now becomes the fundamental part of the company's strategy in order to confirm, enhance and strengthen their core values. A good brand will boost the company's position in the marketplace, as well as attract impressions. Reversely, a brand with inappropriate branding strategy leads to unsuccessful image and uncertainty in consumers buying decision. Brand has been a popular concept since 19th century after the Industrial Revolution (Moilainen 2008, 35). According to Kotler (2000), brand is '*the name associated with one or more items in the product line that is used to identify the source of character of the item*'.

However, in current time, the view and understanding of brand have become more developed and complex. Today, with the help of integrated marketing communication, advertising, public relations and the influence of Internet marketing, a powerful brand contains various elements. *'A brand is not a logo. A brand is not a slogan. A brand is not an identity, corporate or otherwise. A brand is not a symbol or a shape'* (Hammond 2008, 13). Brand, in this statement, is proved to be more than just what we normally think of it, such as logos or slogans. Brand development lies on the three levels of products: core value, actual product and augmented product features. In short, brand is the combination of tangible and intangible unique features in a product, service or even a person.

2.1.1 Brand identity

Moilainen and Rainisto (2009) give a definition of brand, which explains brand as '*an impression perceived in a client's mind of a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique'.* In other words, a brand is created by marketers but it is contributed by the customers, therefore, customers' memorable view towards the brand is essential in branding's strategy. This explains why many companies apply customer-driven marketing strategy in order to build and manage strong brands. Similarly, they aim to obtain a high brand identity. Brand identity is the process of managing the brand's assets, which marketers use to differentiate the brand to make it strongly alive in customers'

impression, and how to send good message to target customers. It's a measure of the brand's ability to capture consumer preference and loyalty.

2.1.2 Brand equity

The brand equity covers concepts that related to brand, that are: brand identity, image and communication. Above all, more than a strong brand, what really important is a profitable brand, referring to both financial profit and customer relationships' profit. The idea of brand equity is to make the distinction between the brand value's from customers' side and the value it has from the company (European Institute for Brand Management 2012).

Among brand equity models, Aaker's model was said to be useful in nation branding. The model includes five factors: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary assets. In each factor, he pointed out the main responsibilities as well as benefits of each factor, which lead to the biggest aims of branding: satisfy customers and create firm's competitive advantages.

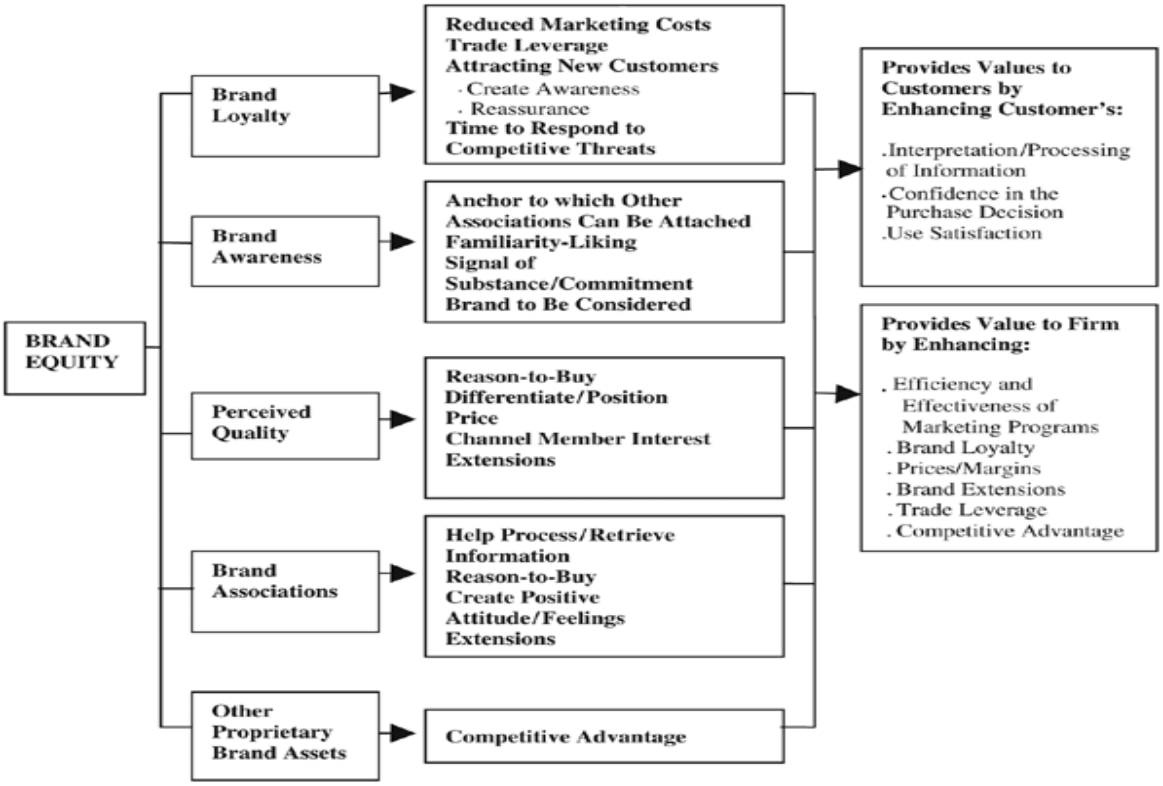

FIGURE 1. Aaker's brand equity model (European Institute for Brand Management 2012)

In general, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) can consult Aaker model, or part(s) of the model in place branding. Among the model's elements, perceived quality relates most to destination branding as it focuses on analyzing customer's orientation. Perceived quality contents with price, differentiate position, reason to buy and channel member interest are closed to the point of being unique and satisfy customers, which is vital in tourism industry. Perceived quality is a major driver of customer satisfaction, and is the key dimension for a corporate brand. Place brands, to some extent, is similar to corporate umbrella branding strategy, which means perceived quality also plays a big role in place branding. (Moilainen and Rainisto 2009, 12.)

2.2 Destination branding

The concept of destination branding emerges from place branding. Although many indicate these two terms are similar, there are researches points out that place branding and destination branding, in some aspects, are not identical. However, the origin of destination branding is undoubtedly developed from place's characters. Place managers and destination managers would work together to create and develop the place's image as they foresee various benefits the place gets in return. The power of a strong destination brand is beyond just the place's holistic attraction to tourists, in short, increase tourism development. It as well gives the destination a competitive economic position (Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding 2010, 53).

Promoting a place by using its uniqueness, has been an innovative way of doing tourism; and it was the born of place branding definition. It does not mean the place's promoted image is different from the real image; rather than that, the touristic image has to be realistic yet attractive in many ways in order to gain attraction and curiosity from tourists. Spain can be viewed as one of the countries that has made the successful destination branding campaign, changing the image of Spain from its past image of lacking of liberty and democracy to a dynamic destination which satisfy tourists diversely (Gilmore 2002). Some other countries have succeeded in building strong destination brands are: Australia – Australia. A different light. We can't wait to say G'day; Malaysia - Truly Asia; and New Zealand – 100% Pure New Zealand (List of Tourism Slogans of Countries around the World 2012).

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2004, 2005) give a wide-range definition for place branding, which states that *'place branding is merely the application of product branding to places'.* Specifically, according to Anholt (2007), place branding is the

combination of creating, managing and maintaining place's image through strategic marketing and advertising campaigns. The help of social, cultural factors and government policy are necessary in taking part of place identity establishment and management.

Risitano (2005) with his research "The role of destination branding in the tourism stakeholders system. The Campi Flegrei case" gathered a couple of definitions from different destination branding experts. Destination branding's explanation from Cai (2002) said that destination branding is the action of selecting consistent elements to identify and differentiate a place and promote it through a positive image. Buhalis (2000) gave the definition of destination branding as a remark in tourists' view according to the place's geographical region by tourism planning and marketing in the framework of that place's political situation and legislation. Similarly, Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003) consider that destination branding is '*how consumers perceive the destination in their minds'.*

Even though the concept of place branding had been created a long time ago, it did not receive much attention from countries, pointedly, due to the lack of destination choices in the past, together with an inadequate view of place branding concept. Very few marketing specialists have given much thought to place branding application. Even if they do, merely, they understood the importance of place branding, and thoroughly research destination branding process (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005, 507). Nevertheless, with the dramatic change in international economic relation and influence, political policies, international trades and infrastructure development, the idea of branding a destination is raised again, and this time, it becomes a favourable idea in doing tourism and being applied to many locations. With the vast growth of changing in political policies, economic openness, international trades and all, the idea of identifying a country, a city, or a place as brands is raised again, and this time, it becomes an active topic and is increasingly being applied to locations (Hankinson 2001, 129).

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) state that branding a destination is different from branding a product because a place does not need to be created, it has been alive and created by nature, and marketers just need to make them memorable according to its original characters such as history's stories, culture, image and more. Promoting a place can be viewed to be easy at times because every place embraces multiple of stories, landscapes, special customs, etc. In fact, it is warned and proved that branding a destination is far more difficult than a product, plus it is a long term project. Once it is done in a wrong way, either with the brand image, landscape mistreatment or any other reason, it is hard to reposition a destination's brand. Subsequently, destination branding involves multiple elements and planning.

In summary, destination branding, or place branding, is the selection and combination of essential and attractive features of a place to create a long term destination strategy. Its aim is to describe to the world a positive picture of the destination. Marketing communication and promotion, together with customer's understanding, SWOT analysis and establishment of place image, are vital factors in destination branding.

2.2.1 The importance of destination branding to a nations and cities

The idea of transforming a place into an identified brand increases fast in recent years due to different reasons. The question is that whether it is necessary to identify the country or not? In other words, what a country, a city or a place, receives from destination branding?

Branding allows places to show distinctive strengths, to send clear message to visitors and attract domestic and international investors in tourism or other sectors' plans (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 4). A country, or in smaller units, a city or a place, needs to be branded for its own goodness and benefits from tourism and country's public image.

First of all, destination branding will be able to help nations/cities to form a long term developing structure based on the country's characteristics, and how they can reach their aims. Moreover, it helps cities to reflect on its core values and characteristics (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 4). Destination organizers need to obtain core values and characteristics of the place before they want to make it become a promising destination.

Secondly, destination branding encourages places to think beyond their current situation and brings future opportunities to places (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 4). It is beneficial for countries at any stages within many economic sectors. Developing countries are especially benefited from destination branding as it gets more spotlights from global brands. It is a part of a sustainable wealth-creation process that can help them to develop to another. Tourism branding brings opportunities for developing countries with positive brand image, inward investments, foreign direct funds investments and all. For instance, Brazil is one of the strongest destination brands, as once we hear the name "Brazil", it refers us to a place with extraordinary characteristics, such as: samba, Carnival, Latin, generosity, openness, energy, etc. From economic view, Brazil is well-known for agricultural exporting products: coffee, tea, pepper, etc. And with the influence of an infinite place brand, the country's economic situation is pushed up and received attention from investors.

In long-run, a positive brand will give the place inward investment chances and attract talents from many sources which properly lead to the renewal of inhabitants' identity of the place. (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2004, 28 – 31.)

Besides, it is obvious that destination branding has a vital role in shaping a country's image and long term tourism strategic planning. America, Italy and France both have a powerful public image, while Japan, Ireland, Spain, Germany and Scotland are countries represent for countries whose their public perception has significantly changed over time (Morgan et al. 2004, 29.) It is possible to reposition a place brand, yet it definitely takes much more effort, communications, promotions and finance than when places first establish their brands. According to Gilmore's research (2002), Spain's success in repositioning the nation's brand relies on the combination of advertising; promotion through media, movies, events; and marketing communication. The planning was careful and inspirationally. This modernization program was made with advertising promotions on both national and regional level, with the support of economic change in privatization and rapid global expansion of Spanish. (Gilmore 2002, 282.)

Lastly, tourism branding means to encourage destinations to create a dynamic environment which will attract and retain collective of tourists, investors and individual talents (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 4). Assuredly, destination organizations need to understand the place's characteristics, both positive and negative, because these are the differences which, with the help of strategic marketing, can boost up the destination brand. Also, through communication, a destination can create a distinctive image and value to attract customers.

The conclusion of this section can be briefly described by the sense of place characteristics from the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding, released by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and European Travel Commission (ETC) (2010, 47). The chart below illustrates the characteristics of sense of place, in other words, what kind of information people have in mind about a certain destination. It concludes the analysis of how important destination branding is. The feel of place includes the quality of life, tourism, immigration, diplomacy, inward investment and export, all issues that have been mentioned in this part as impact of destination in society and economy.

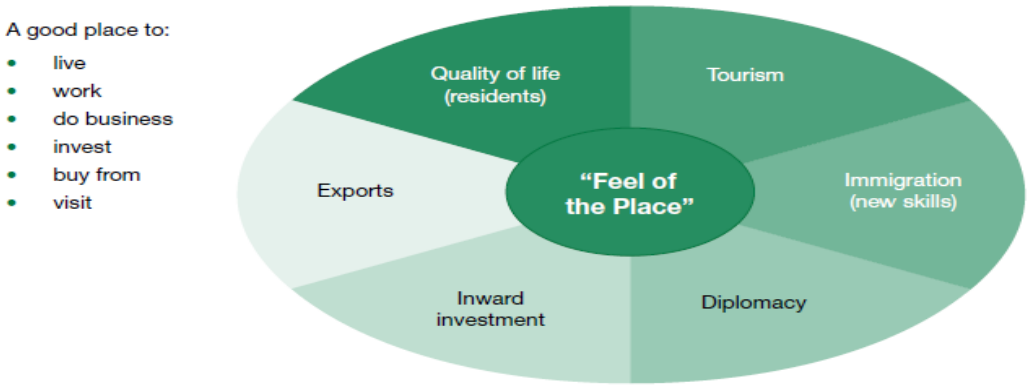

FIGURE 2. Sense of place (Yellow Railroad)

2.2.2 Types of destination branding and destination branding strategies

Destinations' planners need to define the appropriate branding strategy. Each region, city, country has its own characteristics and the difference in culture variety, thus destination branding plan has to carry out with certain missions, visions and needs to be a long term path. Therefore, definition of destination branding's types is mandatory. This sub-category gives an overview of branding's types and strategies in general, and in destination especially. This part concentrates mostly on destination's branding choice, not giving a general picture of destination branding models and destination branding's involving parts.

A shared vision on city branding in Europe (2010), an analysis towards various European cities' destination, has given us descriptions about destination branding strategies as well as examples from European cities. Destinations can choose more than one type of branding options, though the concentration should focus on a particular type. According to this article, some of the types of destination branding are:

- **The fully architecture brand:** the brand has a logo and a slogan with a precise meaning that creates an image and is highly memorable. This branding option is more likely applied more for countries and big cities than smaller regions or cities since it is possible to generalize the image of the destination. For instance, Singapore with YourSingapore, Vietnam with Vietnam – Timeless Charm, Spain with I Need Spain and the concept of Spain Addicts (List of Tourism Slogans of Countries around the World 2012). For cities, we have, for example, Amsterdam with Iamsterdam and Barcelona with Barcelona es mucho más! - Barcelona is much more!

With this selection, destinations need to apply the combination of marketing tools and advertising types in order to gain customers' awareness of the slogan and logo. The logo and slogan is general, however, has to reflect certain meanings, such as: the welcome or hospitality, gain the imaginary in tourists of what they can explore, and its special intangible charm. The slogan changes after a period of time, depending on the decision of stakeholders, the national tourism department and more. (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 8.) For example, Barcelona chooses "Barcelona es mucho más!" – "Barcelona is much more!" as a branding slogan for 2012, replacing for its previous slogan Barcelona es Teva!" which is Catalan and means "Barcelona belongs to you!" (Barcelona Yellow 2012).

- **The propositional branding:** the brand is a statement of, and a proof of, the positioning of the city. The positioning of the destination depends on decision makers based on the destination's characteristics. One issue of positioning your destination in customers' mind is that whether to choose focused brand or broader brand in a specific period of time during branding development. Therefore, decision makers need to take care of all the elements of destination brands in order to have a right decision. (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 8.)
- **The naked brand:** the brand is the destination itself, and the marketer has to change people's perception of the city. Manchester is a pioneer in naked branding. Manchester, unlikely to other destinations, transforms the idea of Manchester – a creative, mature city into an advanced colorful logo which describes an energetic, creative and lively city. (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 8.)

IMAGE 1. Manchester city's logo (A shared vision of city branding in Europe 2010)

2.2.3 Advantages of destination branding

With the development of hotels and resorts constructions, together with the involvement of marketing and communications, tourism management is not as simple as it was before. The competition has become fiercer, and organizations also tend to build a long term branding strategy. As a consequence, countries and regions have been starting the process of branding and promotion in order to manage their position in tourists' impression. To have an effective branding strategy, it is essential to understand the functions of destination branding.

First and foremost, undoubtedly, destination branding brings benefits to tourism industry. It helps to create and manage the destination image differentiation. Place branding is the development of place promotion in order to differentiate a place from other locations to gain advantage for its firms, organizations, people, products and services (Hall 2009, 4). A place which can set up its own image, and more than that, can maintain the good image is able to attract more tourists and travel service businesses so as to establish an active national tourism industry.

Besides, places which initially had got the trademark, the brand, always have the dominant positions in customers' view. Why do more tourists visit Greece than Turkey? The Turkish claims to have longer coasts, less polluted waters and as many superb archaeological sites. Still, an overwhelmingly larger number of vacationers seeking the sun, the sandy beach and antiquities pick Greece instead of its neighbor, Mediterranean country – Turkey. It is an example of the fast approaching and effective strategy in defining country's brand. Greece, for years, has contributed the image of a summer vacation destination for tourists, especially European tourists. Even though Turkey has more or less the same geographical location and attractive characteristics, as it is late in defining and managing its brand image, Turkey has to try repositioning the country, which takes time and finance to promote its brand image. (Morgan et al. 2004, 46.) The example confirms the advantage of destination brand image. Destinations with a strong image positioning always can attract more tourists, do less work to position or reposition the destination and also spend less money on promotion because tourists already know and believe the brand's value.

Another advantage of destination branding is to gain interest for country, region or city's investment, both from local and international businesses. Anholt (2010) declares that '*The tourist board needs to 'sell the country' to a vast international audience of ordinary consumers as well a highly informed professional cadre of tour operators and other influences'.* For that reason, if the country appeals enough to attract investors and businesses, in long term, not only tourism receives profit from

destination brand but also the whole national economy. In other words, the country's macroeconomic situation intervenes with destination branding as well. The investments do not only go to tourism, but countries have opportunities to receive investments in various markets, including constructions, infrastructure development, import – export partnership, international tourist distribution cooperation and culture knowledge.

Besides the tangible advantages, destination branding does bring intangible value to countries and regions. It is the destination's reputation. Together with the brand image, in a more proficient level, destination brand affects the country or region's reputation. Citizens of countries with a reputation of being poor, backward, dangerous, corrupt or unstable find themselves in a harder situation while they are outside their own neighborhood, while citizens in countries that have strong and positive reputation find everything easier. A country's reputation determines how strong and reliable the place's message is, whether the message will be understood positively by tourists and investors. Anholt (2010, 10.)

All in all, destination branding formulates tangible and intangible values to destinations. It brings commerce and culture values together as a force for generating prosperity (Anholt 2004, 5). Furthermore, tourism branding strategy helps to bridge the gaps between a destination's vitality and visitors' perceptions and expectations (Morgan et al. 2004, 65).

2.3 The complexity of destination branding

No matter how effective, useful and powerful destination branding can benefit the destination, destination organizations face various challenges. In fact, destination brand is built from history, arts, culture, proclamations, geography with the help of government and stakeholders to sharpen the brand, however, its complexity rise exactly from these sources. Even though the destination branding becomes a part of tourism long term strategy, it is still considered as a new definition. Tourism organizations can be familiar with doing and developing tourism activities, yet, they do not have a whole picture of building a significant destination brand. So, destination branding, according to Moilainen and Rainisto (2009), is a new concept, a new range of usage.

The challenges of destination branding not only lie on the excuse of being a new range of usage but they are also the peculiar factors, such as: geographical conditions, politics closeness, budget and service quality. Hereby, I divide the complex into four categories named Natural condition, Politics, Money and People. In

each of the group, there are multiple of issues which, although they are different, together they create the complex of destination branding. The model is based on the theory of Morgan et al. (2004, 62) and Moilainen & Risto (2009). The picture below describes four complex factors within destination branding.

Geography	History	Architecture	Government policies	Internal & external situations
Customs & Culture	Weather condition	**Natural Condition**	**Politics**	Terrorism

Budget	**Money**	**People**	Stakeholders
Resources	Investment	Decision makers	Customers

FIGURE 3. Destination branding complexity (Morgan et al. 2004; Moilainen & Rainisto 2009)

- **Natural condition**

Natural condition factor contains elements that create the original uniqueness, the charm of the destination. They generate the difference between lands and branding organizations choose the characters, the branding plan based on this natural condition factor. Geographical region, weather condition, the place's history, customs, culture, and attractions can be called as the basics of natural condition factor. On a higher level, natural condition also includes destination architecture, seasonal change and gastronomy. Basically, these are reasons why people have desires for travelling. So, to establish a good destination brand image and attract more people visiting the place, any stakeholders involve in the branding strategy need to understand and analyze how to dig in the place's nature for creating a remarkable brand. (Moilainen & Rainisto 2009.)

For example, many world cities claim to be a romantic destination, but many of them rarely can beat Paris when people have the image of romantic place in their mind with Seine River, the old style French architecture or French cuisine. Or Barcelona is remarkably famous with Gaudi's masterpieces, such as Sagrada Familia, Casa Batlló and Park Guel, which attract millions of visitors every year, come to the city (Morgan et al. 2004, 65.)

Seasonal changing can be used as a chance, yet at some time, a risk for branding makers. Because as the season changes, it creates changes in the atmosphere, traveling activities, food, and seasonal culture, that in some ways, produce interest or suspicion and uncertainty from tourists. Furthermore, natural disasters sure have

remarkable impact on tourism and the destination's economic situation. (Morgan et al. 2004; Moilainen & Rainisto 2009.)

- **Politics**

This factor relates to the governmental regulations towards tourism particularly, and other policies from different departments, fields but at some point, connects with tourism, or with the destination branding. Also, government policies tend to use for applying for a short term while the destination branding is a long term process, as Moilainen and Rainisto (2009) implies political decision-making is based on the short time governments' term of office.

Furthermore, Morgan et al. (2004) claim that tourism is especially vulnerable to political and social issues such as strikes, riots, economic downswings, crisis, terrorism and environmental disasters. It is clear that tourism branding is a complex procedure. A place can shine as a recommended brand or not, beside its potentiality, depends much on its politics situation, both internal and external factors.

Nepal is a good example of a destination that tourism was influenced by terrorism. Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world, with over 40 percent of its population living below the poverty line. However, as home to eight of the world's ten highest peaks (including Mount Everest), tourism has become a significant earning source for the country and its citizens during the 1990s. Its tourism sector continually increased with international arrivals peaking at 492 000 in 1999. During 2001 – 2002, the country faced hard time in tourism slump as the result of airline hijacking incident, which directed to the five-month suspension of flights to Nepal. Together with the September 11 terrorist incident, people were scared at the terrorism and governments refused Nepal. To make it worse, internal political conflict and violence had raised inside the country led a country to a state of emergency. Only after Nepal had successfully held the celebrations of 50th anniversary of the Everest in 2003 that they regained their image, and international tourism emerged again. (Morgan et al. 2004, 62.)

- **Economy**

Without the investors, budget from government and tourism department, and investments, the brand purpose cannot be reached. Destination brand value involves participation, investment and combination of many parties, so the benefit, whether it is tangible profit (meaning money) or intangible profit (such as reputation, trust and good image) are split out to smaller amount for every side. Namely, the financial sources for tourism is divided into parts, and the benefits of tourism branding that stakeholders receive is not the total benefit but part of the whole benefits. (Moilainen & Rainisto 2009.)

Additionally, destination branding is a long term plan with continuing actions concerning the strategy. Therefore, the result cannot be seen in just one day which causes the hesitancy and suspicion from investors. Furthermore, richer countries have a better condition and are able to spend more budgets on tourism branding, and undoubtedly, have more advantages over other countries. As a consequence, their destination brand is more strongly supportive, well-built and less risky. (Morgan et al 2004, 62.)

- **People**

This factor is really important because after above challenges, it is people who make decision on which plan is potential to focus on and how much budget needed in branding building process. The representative of people is the stakeholders. Stakeholders are people, organizations, or any party that involve in the decision, in this case, destination branding direction. The main issues are: how to involve stakeholders or requirements for stakeholders to be a part of the team, and how stakeholders make right decisions. (Morgan et al. 2004, 61.)

Stakeholders are fundamental in building and maintaining good brands. Other factors are connected together to complete a picture. To be involved in as a part of the team, stakeholder needs to have partnership to work together; strong leadership to overcome internal differences to ensure progress and effective decision making; continuality to carry out a long term brand strategy; shared vision with together and action-based implementation (A shared vision on city branding in Europe 2010, 9). Stakeholders need to work and make decision based on good will towards anticipating branding strategy result. If stakeholders do not work well together, the effect to tourism, society and the economy is devastating. It is why stakeholders' involvement and combination in destination branding, even though they are vital to, they generate risk.

As a result, the carefulness of stakeholders when working together, updated and deep understanding about the destination's characters and partnership need to be considered thoroughly during the strategy of branding.

2.4 Destination branding models

One of the main purposes of destination branding comprehension is to know and understand different models of destination branding, or how to transfer brand's value or identity into reality and success. Here I choose two models created by two destination brand experts. One model is Cai's model (2002) expresses the process of communicating the destination's value (or identity) to tourists; another one is from

Hankinson (2004) which considers about the role of all business local players and stakeholders in creating and managing the place's value (or identity) in destination branding strategy (Risitano 2005, 5).

With Cai's theory, the model's core value is to connect and bring the destination brand's elements, brand identity and image to tourists through communication and marketing. The process starts with the careful choice of destination characteristics, both natural and built features of the place. Those distinct elements have to strongly attach with the place, describe the place well and help to form a consistent brand. In short, the factors have to reflect the attributes, affective and attitudes components of brand's image and identity (3A of the model). (Risitano 2005, 6.)

The assessment then continues with marketing programs, marketing communication and managing secondary associations (3M in the model) to build the desired and established image and message in tourists and travelers' mind. This theory is logical and applied with almost every place in their tourism branding strategy. Additionally, Cai's model has the outer circle of other related elements in building brand image and values, which are: existing induced image, destination size and composition, positioning and target market, and existing organic image. In summary, the model focuses on building destination image identity, value and reputation to customers through marketing and communication campaign. (Risitano 2005, 6.)

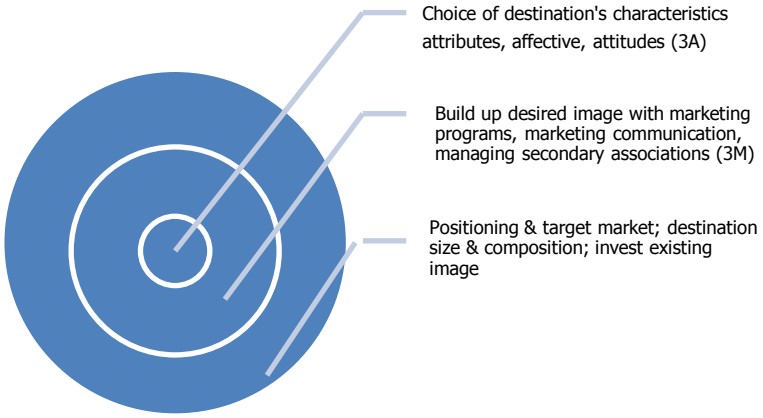

FIGURE 4. Cai's destination branding model (Risitano 2005)

Hankinson's model, on the other hand, concentrates on brand core and the stakeholders' involvement and relationship. The theory is referred as **"Relational network brand"** with brand core and four categories of brand relationships.

Brand core in Hankinson's model is the destination's identity which represents in three elements: brand personality, brand's positioning and brand reality. Brand personality is the brand's elements represent the place's uniqueness, while brand positioning '*defines the brand's point of reference with respect to the competitive set*

by identifying the attributes which make it similar to other places and then identifying the attributes which make it unique within that set'. Lastly, brand reality describes the real position of destination brand as a consequence of marketing communication. Besides, relationships with stakeholders play an active role to emphasize and support the brand's core value in Hankinson's model. The stakeholders mainly belong to four groups, which are: primary services, the infrastructure services providers, the media and communications players and the consumers (Risitano 2005, 6).

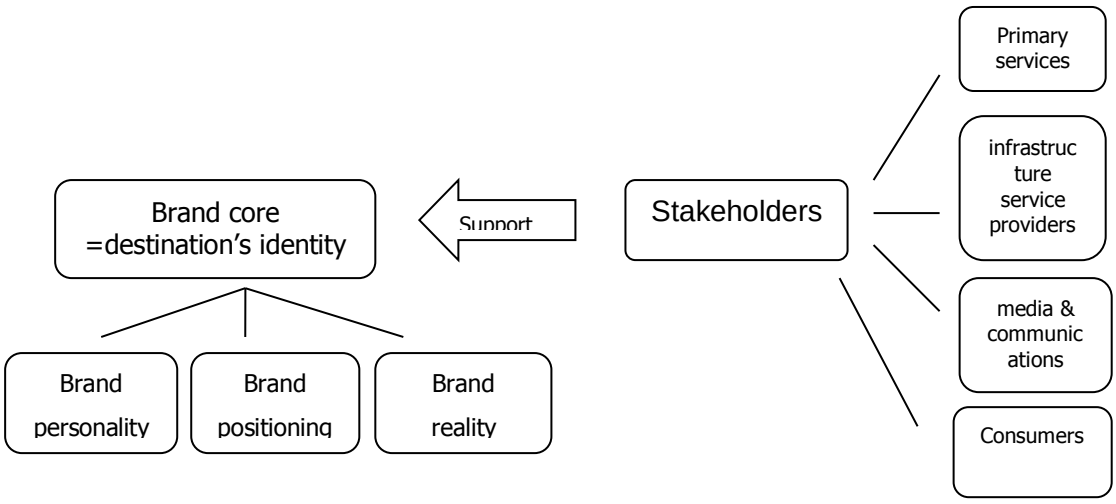

FIGURE 5. Hankinson's relational network brand's model (Risitano 2005)

The two models, one concentrates on transferring the brand's elements, image and identity to tourists, and another one considers more about managing stakeholders' relationships in order extend brand core values. However, they both lead to the aim of building and maintaining a good destination brand image in tourists, travelers and investors' mind. A successful brand strategy is to extend brand core elements through marketing communication, stakeholders' decision and partnership, as well as appropriate promotion tools to send realistic but catching brand identity.

2.5 The process of destination branding

All brands can show signs of age, boredom or show the need to change or reposition the brand. Whenever destination organizations want to build up or refresh their brand, they have five phases to go through. First of all, prior to the phases in destination branding, brand makers also need to consider the S - curve, or destination brand fashion curve, which charts a brand's life. In destination branding, instead of tracking sales volume, they have to analyze and understand deeply actions in each stage of

brand's life. The stages of destination fashion curve match the five phases of destination branding process. (Morgan et al. 2004, 69.)

2.5.1 Destination branding fashion curve

At first, the market is new and served for a small amount of target group, hence, it becomes fresh, exclusive and here, it is at the fashionable stage. At this stage, as Morgan et al. (2004) states, visitors are trendsetters for the place and brand organizations consider their initial interest and features as advice. Organizations then direct brand's strategy following tourists' favor. If the brand is potential enough, as well as advertising and promotions are doing well, the brand enters its second and third stage, which means they become a famous and familiar brand. In the famous phase, destination brand's consumers are loyal and affluent, and the brand image has been attached to visitors. There are certain activities, expectations and even prejudices about the destination in visitors' mind. We can say that, in this phase, the brand has found its position in tourist attractions map. (Morgan et al. 2004, 69.)

However, at the same time, once the brand reaches the peak and is familiar to visitors, the destination is challenged to remain fresh and appealing to tourists and travelers. In addition, we have not mentioned about similarities between destinations, especially neighboring countries, which cause difficulties for being special. Becoming a familiar brand can lead to a fatigue, which is the fourth phase of destination brand fashion curve. If it becomes very badly managed, the brand will need to reflect its image and strategy. In other words, if a destination wants to reposition their brand, they have to reassess the core values and identity, redefine the target markets and target groups. (Morgan et al. 2004, 69.)

While the fashion curve shows stages in the brand's relationship with its consumers, the five phases in destination branding process describes activities needed to do in each phase. The five phases in destination branding building includes:

Phase one Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations
Phase two Brand identity development
Phase three Brand launch and introduction; communication the vision
Phase four Brand implementation
Phase five Monitoring, evaluation and review
(Morgan et al. 2004, 69).

FIGURE 6. Destination brand fashion curve (Morgan et al. 2004)

The first step is to establish core values for the brand by deciding on the destination image's message to potential customers. The identity should include the place's nature and specialty, at the same time, should be relevant, communicable and flexible. Once it is done, the next phase is to develop the brand identity.

As the brand's core values have been set, details in advertising and promoting the brand, or strategic recommendations, are discussed and planned. Every component of the brand identity, from brand design style guide such as photography, brand design color, shape and typography to promotion campaign and marketing tools, are essential in branding building (Charlesworth 2009, 79.) Therefore, they have to be taken care of and being controlled. When the brand is introduced, launched and developed to consumers, the vision, which is agree and shared among the stakeholders, needs to continuously be reflected from time to time.

It is no doubt that the first three stages are the most important ones, because if stakeholders choose wrong brand's core values which leads to an imprecise tourism strategy, the brand is sooner or later damaged. Critical to the success of choosing brand's core values and identify the brand, the brand's personality understanding is vital. It is said that brand's personality needs to interact with the target markets, or needs to combine its specialties with consumers' interest and consumers' relationship. A brand's personality has both rational (head) features and emotional (heart) benefits and associations. Head communications convey a brand's rational values, while heart communications reveal its values and associations (Morgan et al. 2004, 70).

2.5.2 Destination brand benefit pyramid

In order to help to display the essence of destination brand advertising proposition, the brand benefit pyramid is introduced. Brand benefit pyramid is the bridge to

connect brand's personality, consumers' wants and destination's benefits. The brand pyramid reveals the consumers' relationships with a brand. Following the pyramid, destinations will know the consumers' thoughts about the brand, whether the brand's personality is understood right from consumers' perspective. It assists brand makers in the essence of brand's development and advertising. If the tourists have seen and felt the destination in a wrong way than its personality, then the destination organizations have the urge to reflect what have been doing wrong. Otherwise, they can reflect which level they are at and how to reach higher goals with appropriate marketing communications. (Morgan et al. 2004, 71.)

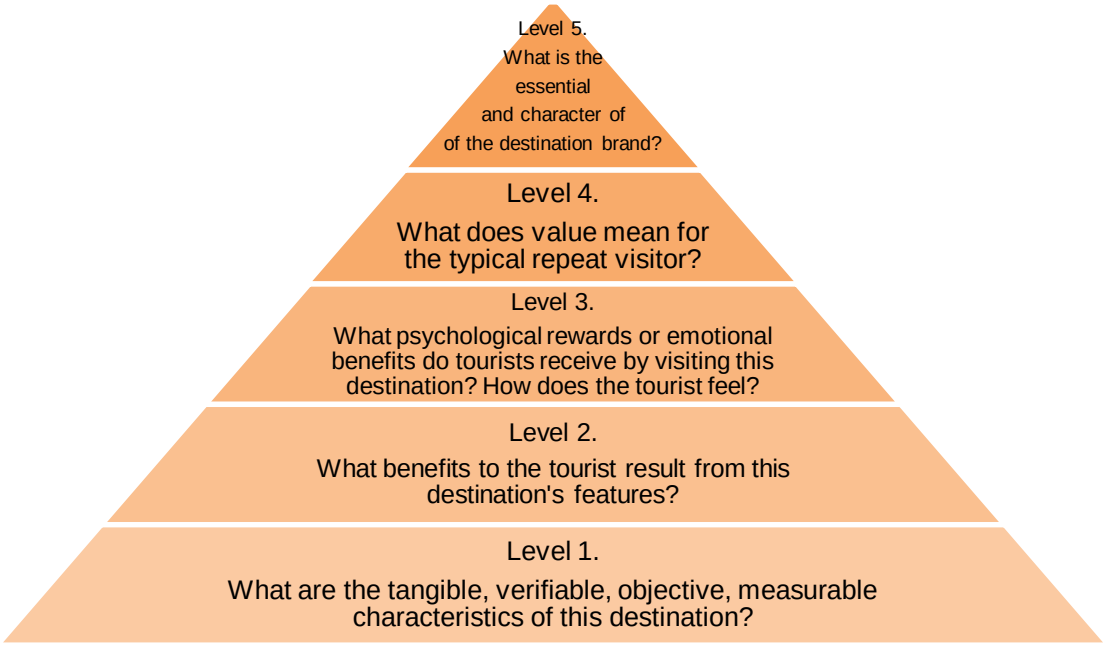

FIGURE 7. Destination brand benefit pyramid (Morgan et al. 2004)

2.5.3 Destination brand's architecture

Additionally, despite analysis and investigation, destination brand sometimes still fall in fatigue, decay phase and lead to the brand's damage. As a result, more and more tourism destinations are looking for establish brand's architecture. A brand's architecture is when stakeholders construct and put the brand's values, brand's benefits (both its rational and emotional benefits) and brand identity together in order to have a comprehensive overview of the place's identity for correct decisions. Furthermore, brand architecture enables marketers to see clearly the elements and contributions of brand's personality so as to reflect the advantages and disadvantages of the destinations to put it ahead the competitors. It is a critical device in developing country's suprabrand and its sub – brands. Subprabrand can be

understood as the national or regional covering brand, and sub – brands describe cities, specific locations or attractions, etc.

In conclusion, the brand life cycle, brand's pyramid and brand's architecture are essential steps destinations need to go through and analyze carefully to define and establish good brands. In addition, long term vision about economic, political, social and cultural factors, stakeholders partnership, research and investments, marketing and advertising, as well as consumers' relationships are all critical in destination branding's strategy. Throughout the developing and famous stage of the brand, careful monitoring and evaluation assist the brand's position. (Morgan et al. 2004, 74.)

Lastly, any brand needs to change at times, or at least refresh their image, therefore, brand's strategy always has to think ahead to future and predict the trend of the market so as to have a smooth change for the brand. Yet, the change needs to stick to brand's characteristics since they are what made up the brand. (Morgan et al. 2004, 74.)

3 INTERNET MARKETING

Online marketing is not a very separate part from the business strategy. In fact, internet marketing, or online marketing is an element of marketing efforts. The general objectives of internet marketing are described as:

- Online activities can enhance and boost up offline effort in brand development.
- Revenue generation. Online channels do not only save advertising or promoting cost, but they also increase revenue for businesses through generating sales and supporting direct marketing campaign.
- Customer service/support. With online marketing, company has more channels to communicate with customers, understand customers' interest and the product or service development strategy can be done more correct.

(Charlesworth 2009, 28.)

3.1 Basics of Internet marketing

Within our world nowadays, Internet plays a vital role to the society. This part gives a brief introduction of different tools of Internet. Furthermore, it also introduces main types of Internet marketing used in business today.

3.1.1 Website

Website is for sure the most common thing when discussing about Internet and Internet marketing. Some parts of website and website management that are essential to marketers and brand makers are: domain names, website design and management and the real important matters in website management in marketers' point of view.

'*Every essence on the Internet is identified by a series of numbers – called the Internet Protocol, or IP, address'* (Charlesworth 2009, 37). The primary of a domain name is the suffix. When a name is registered, it will take the suffix of the registered naming authority. The most popular suffix is dot com, or .com. When indicating their use as the URL (Uniform Resource Locator), it had become accepted to use the prefix 'www' on the primary domain name. The case of second, third, fourth and more

level domain basically is because there are so many names are already registered, so to prevent the identical domain name, there is a need for second, third or fourth level domain. Moreover, domain names needs to be at least three and less than sixty three characters (Charlesworth 2009, 38).

In website design and management, simplicity is the key. If a website is full of text and hard to access, visitors do not find creativity, or easiness, to approach information and interest, they will not come again. Usages of website are to generate return on investment (ROI), brand development and support online sales and marketing. Hence, it is vital to take care of website development. Today, flash technology is well-known in website designing. It is used a powerful tool to make the websites become more user-friendly, easy to access and surf. (Charlesworth 2009, 81 – 88.)

Besides, key issues in designing a website are: download time, make things easy on the eye, font size, page width, subject of page width, respect the conventions of the web, avoid non – standard, ensure the design features of the site are appropriate to its objectives, be aware of using images on website and grammar and spelling. (Charlesworth 2009, 81 – 88.)

3.1.2 Search engines

Search engines, for example Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc., are used by millions of users every day to look for information they need. Search engine operates by providing services (searching, matching results, showing relevant results, etc) to users and leading users to a website or multiple websites relevant to their search. The search engine works by assessing websites for suitability in matching the search and presenting the results of its assessment. When searching on a search engine, the result page will show two types of results: organic result and paid result. Organic result, or natural result, is free results chosen by search engines by relevance, visitors' statistics, trusty level of the website, etc., while paid result is sponsored links and is paid by companies to promote their product. Both organic and paid results are presented on the same result page and relied on keywords selection. Paid result, however, appears on top, or on one side of the search engine result page to get users' attraction (Charlesworth 2009, 181).

Companies see search engine as a chance to promote their product or service to wide-range users. As a result, the definition of search engine optimization and keyword bidding were born. Search was the largest single advertising revenue generator on the Web. It accounted for 47% of all online advertising revenue, as

opposed to 22% for online display advertising and 10% of classified ads. And also, over 90% of people use search to launch websites, whether they know the URL address or not (Sheehan 2010, 34).

Keyword selection is vital in search engine optimization (SEO) as well as search marketing. Keyword is the bridge to connect searchers with the businesses that have services that searchers are looking for. In order to get higher ranking on searching result service pages, website developers should figure out and then concentrate on the right keywords. It is claimed that English gives no big help in SEO because the search localization is more developed now, so local people tend to use their mother tongue for search. In some cases, foreigners use local language to search, especially for destinations' names, such as: Munich/Muchen. Also, some languages have similarities, consequently, people have the tendency to search based on what they are mostly used to and not to use English in search. (Charlesworth 2009, 181.)

Search Marketing

As mentioned above, results from search engine result pages are shown with organic results and paid results; thus, search marketing can be made on both of them. First of all, for organic results, or natural results, the process of search engine optimization (SEO) is vital. Because organic results are free links, there is a harsh competition to gain your site's appearance on the search engines. SEO includes: choosing the right keywords and phrases that are potential, unique yet necessary; focus specific keywords for specific parts of the page; name your website with relevance and submit your sites to as many directories as possible to gain the ability to get into your site (Sheehan 2010, 37). On the other hand, for paid results, it is certainly that your link will appear on top of the search engine result page. Paid search has been one of the most growth sections among online advertising types.

For branding destination, search is a filter that gives analysts a better knowing about customers' trend and interest which will lead the business to the right direction. Naturally, places that pay more attention on building a strong base of service websites would conduct a strong brand. Consequently, they have more advantages than other destinations. (Pritchard et al. 2004, 128.)

3.1.3 Social networks

Not long before, people were not so aware of what social media is and how it appears to be a part of our lives. Years have passed since the development of Web 2.0, the pre-stage of tremendous advance of social media and social networks, but

the implementation of social media in marketing and branding is popular just few years recently. Some common kinds of tourism development tools implemented by social media are: blog, vlog, public videos, social forums and social networks (Sheehan 2010, 10).

Sheehan (2010) claims that social media marketing is competitive because, first of all, they save time and cost. Second of all, they change the way consumers hear and learn about and decide about the products and services, which shows the synergy of social media with viral marketing. Customer relationship is tightened through social networks. Lastly, it contains the ability to gather larger groups of people to have idea about the services and the brand and get them to give suggestions to develop (Sheehan 2010, 100 - 106).

The important feature of social media is that everything is a two-way communications (Charlesworth 2009, 301). Also, the reason why social media marketing is more favored nowadays is that people are fed up with brochures, posters, billboards and advertising because they do not provide trusted and helpful necessary information. Social travel forums offer handy, useful and updated tips, experience and information on the destinations. (Social media on Destination Branding 2010.)

Social media marketing

The cooperation of social media and traditional way of doing marketing and advertising can create a much bigger influence from viewers, tourists and travelers. It is mentioned that even though the use of social media in tourism branding is increasing now, it is necessary not to forget the destination's slogan and marketing message. In short, the application of social media enhances tourism strategy in many aspects, plus, it is wise to make use of the advantages of social media in the brand marketing strategy in order to spread out the brand's image, message and information. (Social media on Destination Branding 2010.)

3.1.4 E-mail

E-mail marketing

E-mail marketing is a basic marketing form when mentioning about Internet marketing. Almost any Internet user is familiar with this type of advertising because, everyday, uncountable number of e-mails is sent to end-customers, to potential partners, to communicate with customers, etc. with different meanings, purposes and all in order to update information for customers. Using e-mail for business improvement, expansion and updating is not new, yet it is still a supportive and

efficient tool in marketing. In total, e-mail marketing can be divided into two categories lies on its aim: E-mail as a medium for direct marketing and E-mail as a medium for marketing message. (Charlesworth 2009, 255).

E-mail direct marketing represents by email subscription, announcement e-mail sending after a period of time and all. However, in order to avoid spam and junk e-mails, also confuse the customers and decrease the business's image, development the '*email campaigns that request the permission of the consumer'* (Sheehan 2010, 84) is a wise choice. This campaign needs the understanding of two ways of getting the customer's permission which are: opt-in and opt-out.

Opt-in and op-out help marketing executives receive more precise email address database, target groups and customers' interest. '*Opt-in is where the receiver chooses to receive email by taking action'* (Charlesworth 2009, 258), or it is *'where the consumer requests to continue receiving the e-mailings*' (Sheehan 2010, 84). While on the other hand, '*opt-out is where the receiver must take an action to opt-out of receiving e-mail messages'* (Charlesworth 2009, 258), or '*where the consumer does not opt-in then they will receive nothing more*' (Sheehan 2010, 84).

E-mail marketing is used widely in tourism industry with the purpose of giving both direct and marketing message. E-mail marketing is chosen because it is fast, time-saving, cost effective and wide spread. By carrying out e-mail marketing campaign, together with offline advertising to bring out the better enhancement, tourism business is active, moving and updated all the time, and finally directs to the change, the development, the improvement of destination branding strategy. (Charlesworth 2009, 256.)

3.2 The necessity of Internet in business

Internet also has been having a certain impact on business environment. As the number of Internet users dramatically increase, also with the rise in consumer's buying behavior complexity, Internet gives a stronger impact on business. According to a survey published in 2007 from Nielsen/NetRatings (www.nielsen-netratings.com) about consumer behavior and attitude about online marketing, 81 per cent of respondents said that the Internet was *vital* to their life (Charlesworth 2009, 9). In more detail, it was stated that in 2008, the number of Internet users accounted for 20.3% of world estimated population. The new statistics in 2011 then showed that Internet users accounted for 32.7% the world population, which increases by 0.6 times from 2008 (Internet Word Stats 2011).

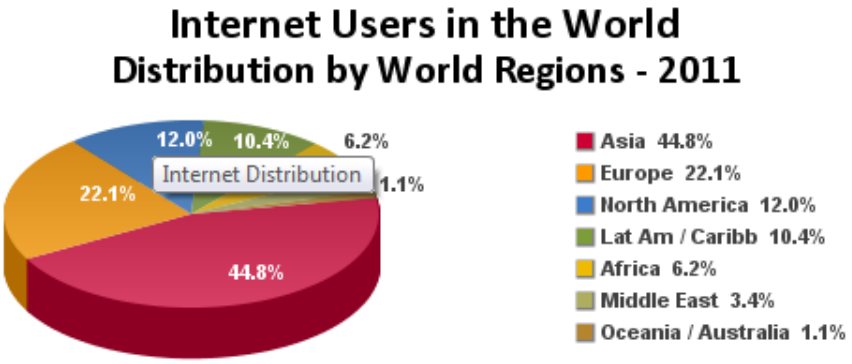

FIGURE 8. Internet users in the world distribution by world regions 2011 (Internet World Stats 2011)

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS December 31, 2011						
World Regions	Population (2011 Est.)	Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000	Internet Users Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	Growth 2000-2011	Users % of Table
Africa	1,037,524,058	4,514,400	139,875,242	13.5 %	2,988.4 %	6.2 %
Asia	3,879,740,877	114,304,000	1,016,799,076	26.2 %	789.6 %	44.8 %
Europe	816,426,346	105,096,093	500,723,686	61.3 %	376.4 %	22.1 %
Middle East	216,258,843	3,284,800	77,020,995	35.6 %	2,244.8 %	3.4 %
North America	347,394,870	108,096,800	273,067,546	78.6 %	152.6 %	12.0 %
Latin America / Carib.	597,283,165	18,068,919	235,819,740	39.5 %	1,205.1 %	10.4 %
Oceania / Australia	35,426,995	7,620,480	23,927,457	67.5 %	214.0 %	1.1 %
WORLD TOTAL	6,930,055,154	360,985,492	2,267,233,742	32.7 %	528.1 %	100.0 %

FIGURE 9. World Internet usage and population statistics 2011 (Internet World Stats 2011)

Precisely, the impact of Internet in business can be described with three significant points: understand consumers' buyer behaviour, give specific product's information to customers through Internet and using Internet as a part of business strategy. Charlesworth (2009) states that while other media push the marketing to consumers, Internet, in contrast, is a pull medium that gains curiosity and interest from consumers and lets them find out the product or service themselves. Because of this, companies, through the effect of Internet, get more accurate details concerning consumers' needs and wants.

4 IMPACT OF INTERNET MARKETING ON DESTINATION BRANDING

4.1 The application of Web 2.0 in tourism branding

Online marketing develops from the capability of Internet as the communications medium which has been growing up through stages. Overall, the notable stages are the development of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Web 1.0, unsurprisingly, was the technology that used before Web 2.0. For marketers, Web 1.0 is seen as a narrow and static communications medium. The appearance of Web 1.0, though contained some concrete information and interactivity, in reality, it still represented a linear communication, or one way communication. That was when the idea and application of Web 2.0 dominated online world. Web 2.0 was notable as it marked the emergence of two-way communications and the real interactivity between customers and businesses. Development in web exposure, consumer – friendly platforms and powerful search engine optimization actions are basic advancement of Web 2.0 at the beginning of its era. Moreover, Web 2.0 also represents for familiar applications, supported websites that working based on people's favorite activities, social networks, business support activities, and advertising and marketing campaigns. New programming technologies enable constant and continuous feedback. (Sheehan 2010, 10.)

There are four unique characteristics of Web 2.0 that make it and its applications become the new promising path for marketing and advertising. First of all, Web 2.0 has the ability to gather interest on networks. Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter and all kinds of networks are playing major role in Internet marketing strategy of many small and medium companies. Secondly, personalization is enhanced by the advancement of Web 2.0. It changed from Messenger and emails with small sized communications to one-stop websites, forums, and pages specialize in personal interests. Blog, social forums, use of widgets and RSS, tagging functions on social networks represent for personalization character. Users do not just only get information from Internet but also share and contribute information to online world. (How to brand a destination using Web 2.0 2009.)

Visualization is the next function of Internet marketing function. Youtube has millions of users and visitors every day, plus recently, it has been one of the promising marketing channels for various types of products, services and also people. Lastly, data/content targeting is showed as widgets, landing pages and applications for computers, smart phones, tablets, etc. In short, brand and revenue payoff are strongly supported by the new technology, and the introduction of Web 2.0 and its

advanced applications are doing well in brand development. (How to brand a destination using Web 2.0 2009.)

4.2 Web 2.0 in tourism branding

The use of Web 2.0 in tourism is profound as it includes direct and combined marketing. Social media marketing and website marketing can be seen as major tools for destination branding Internet marketing because nowadays they are showing many useful sides and helping destinations, as well as tourism organizations, a lot in brand enhancement.

Social media receives much affection from marketers because consumers are losing the trust with posters, brochures, advertising programs and television ads. They now look for trusted brands, and Internet seems to be the solution to gain curiosity and trust from customers. Internet has changed communications methods and thus changed the brand development strategy. Moreover, social media marketing is a bridge to bind the gap between other online marketing tools such as website development, email marketing and search engine marketing. With social networking marketing, customers have more ways to approach information and help to contribute the brand's image. Sharing can be viewed as the strong power of social media. People get tourism information from social networks. They also share their travelling experience on Internet. Videos, pictures, blog articles, entries, etc. are uploaded on Internet on Flickr, Facebook, Google plus, Youtube and so on. (Social Media on Destination Branding 2010.)

Social media has the strong ability to spread out information in such a short time. Nonetheless, at the same time, it is the flaw of social media marketing. Social media marketing shows off its advantages most when it is combined well with traditional marketing approaches. Even though social media marketing is a wise choice, the root of destination branding belongs to traditional branding strategy. For example, destinations' slogans cannot be too overused or provocative. Destinations' images also cannot be too old or be used wrong, otherwise, that wrong image will be spread out dramatically fast and will lead to a damage of destination branding strategy. (Social Media on Destination Branding 2010.)

All in all, tourism branding marketing strategy can be done more effective by applying integrated online marketing communications, or offline and online integration. Internet obtains the capability to bridge the gap between destination organizations and tourists, and offline marketing helps to decide appropriate slogans and image, control

and manage destination's reputation and monitor the online process to promote destinations' image. (Social Media on Destination Branding 2010.)

Besides, website and email marketing also take part in destination branding planning. Web 2.0 generation support web developers create websites with friendly appearance, better exposure, and leave places for customers' feedback in a more open way. Also, website development relates to the activities of search optimization because search optimization evolves the websites exposure, information and ranking. Moreover, not only tourism department or tourist businesses run websites about the destination but also individual hotels, travel agencies and tour operators. In terms of destination branding, each of the individual website of hotels, resorts, tour operators, etc. support building up the destination brand. However, website marketing cannot express its usefulness without the help of email marketing, search engine marketing and social media marketing. (Sheehan 2010, 29.)

In summary, destination branding strategy with the help of online marketing receives much attention from countries, cities and places. At the same time, the impact of Internet marketing in tourism industry today is profound as it reaches the stage where destination branding cannot be effective without the support of online promotion. This is the way to build up brands from bottom to up.(Social Media on Destination Branding 2010.)

4.3 Collaboration between destination branding and Internet marketing

The previous part has coherent information to prove that Internet marketing brings solutions to certain issues in destination branding, for instance, saving cost in promotion and getting world-wide recognition in a short time. From time to time, online marketing has not only taken part in branding strategy as a minor function to support main marketing program, but it also becomes the main marketing approach used belong-side other marketing techniques. This part concentrates on what Internet marketing in general can bring to destination branding process (Charlesworth 2009, 340).

4.3.1 Changing nature of tourism distribution

Global distribution system (GDS) and Computer Reservation System (CRS)

Global distribution systems (GDS) refer to the online reservation tool used for air ticket, accommodation, transportation, etc. booking. It is now applied widely in

tourism industry as an innovative way to develop booking system. GDS is contributed by each company's central reservation system (CRS). Travel agents work together with hotels and resorts, and tourism distributors to create online distribution system, or reservation pages, which travelers can easily find information, hotel's rating, facilities and updated room rates and availability at any times. GDS distribution and CRS system are intelligent innovation as it reduces the searching and booking routine, increases the distribution networks and develops the visualization of reservation system. Travel agents rely on GDS distribution because it contains multiple advantages over the old ways of reservation.

Unlike the old reservation ways which need much effort to enlarge the networks and markets and much time when something is needed to be fixed within the reservation process, GDS system deals with these issues really fast. Online distribution systems can broaden the market reach, widen distribution networks, create new distribution channels and afford an easy reservation process for users. In addition, the system provides synchronous information about the destinations or accommodation for every party that involves in the system who are hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators and any intermediaries in between, as well as customers. (GDS Distribtion 2012.)

4.3.2 Online marketing in Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

Most destination organizations are now familiar with the use of Internet in branding development. The Internet can benefit destinations to strengthen their image in the competitive marketplace. Internet sustains a more equal competition between destinations as any destination can post information to the online world. Furthermore, customers actively choose to find and read the information from Internet by themselves which show their voluntarily interest in the destination. Therefore, destination branding organizers take advantage of the benefits of Internet into their marketing strategy. In this study, there are two examples illustrating the presence of online marketing in tourism management (Practice of Online Marketing with Social Media in Tourism Destination Marketing 2011, 14).

Singapore Tourism Board

YourSingapore is a new tourist slogan and also a destination brand name. YourSingapore takes over the previous brand, which is "Uniquely Singapore". The focus is visitor-centricity, meaning the experiences are made wholesome and personal in opened and welcomed Singapore. YourSingapore.com website is an interactive platform where visitors are able to update and contribute information. The

goal of the brand is that Singapore receives a multitude of adventurous stories from travelers from all over the world, which will help to build up the reputation and objective brand image. All in all, YourSingapore destination brand strategy is an excellent example of integrated Internet marketing. (YourSingapore 2010.)

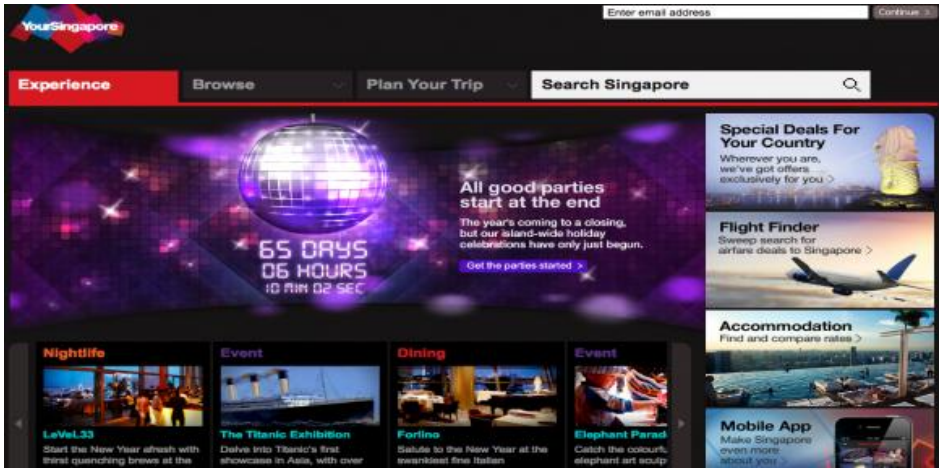

IMAGE 2. YourSingapore website's screen capture

The Turisme de Barcelona Consortium

The Turisme de Barcelona Consortium was set up in 1993 by Barcelona Municipal Council, the Barcelona Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping and the Barcelona Promotion Foundation. The Consortium works to promote the city as a tourist destination. The website barcelonaturisme.com has a creative and friendly platform. In short, everything travellers expect to find and consult for their Barcelona's trip is on the website. The page also has the link to connect the BCN shop online. The website is linked with Facebook, Twitter, Tripadvisor and Youtube. Specially, there is a link visitBarcelona where travellers, visitors and also local people can give their feedback, tips, guide and feelings about the city with their own journey's experience. The goal of DMO's online marketing strategy is to attract the desire to come to Barcelona of website's visitors. (Turisme de Barcelona 2012.)

IMAGE 3. Barcelona Turisme website's screen capture

4.4 Internet marketing strategy's opportunities and constraints

4.4.1 Opportunities

Over the past few years, online marketing develops tremendously. It brings a large variety of opportunities to destinations in terms of tourism and other economic sectors. Internet saves time and cost in spreading, sharing and sending relevant content to mass media, customers and investors. Destination organizations grab the opportunity to save promotion cost and time, plus the effect of advertising and promotion goes beyond expectation if it is done appropriately. People receive the marketing message at the same time through Internet regardless where they are, which means there is a big chance to hold attraction from travellers all over the world through effective internet tools. (Charlesworth 2009, 28.)

Furthermore, the appearance and impact of Internet creates a more equal competition between destinations (Morgan et al. 2004, 130 – 132). As mentioned above in this study, online marketing supports the brand image, opens more passageways to customers, becomes a communication medium and sends the brand identity to all suppliers and customers, therefore, any destination recognizes this usefulness and knows the ways to apply Internet into their destination strategy obtains a bigger chance to be successful. (Sheehan 2010, 29.)

4.4.2 Constraints

The first and foremost challenge when it comes to Internet strategy is technological problems. It is right that Internet marketing reduces the issues in maintenance because websites, links and distribution systems connect and work with each other in a concrete structure, thus the maintenance is easy to do. Nonetheless, it is unavoidable to face technological problems at times. Being hacked, lost customers' information and lost data are some common technological problems that DMOs should be aware and have backup plan to react with such issues. (Morgan et al. 2004, 136 – 139.)

Another significant challenge in using Internet for destination branding promotion belongs to governmental factor. This factor affects organizational activities in pushing the destination brand identity to media and also communications process. It relates to government policies in using Internet in certain areas, as well as destination governmental situation in Internet educating and connecting system. For instance, in

some countries, Facebook, Youtube and some other social networks are blocked for different reasons, and in some areas, Internet has not become popular. So, there is either that too little information is provided for customers and investors or the information is not reliable at all, which influences the destination's identity and reputation. (Morgan et al. 2004, 136 – 139.)

5 RESEARCH

5.1 Research objectives

Wilson (2010) indicates that business research is a process of collecting, eroding and analyzing data to interpret and show result according to the research objectives. The purpose of business research is to collect information to enhance the decision making. There are two main different approaches to the research that are: deductive approach and inductive approach. Inductive approach is *'a theory-building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalization about the phenomenon under investigation'* (Hyde 2000, 83). By this way of explanation, inductive approach is a building theory process through the research. Inductive followers will seek to make observations and then based on the observation results, they will contribute new theory.

The second type of research approaches is deductive approach. A deductive approach is a research with the aims to observe and prove a well-known theory. This approach is dominant in natural research to test operational hypotheses and examine the specific outcome (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2000, 87 - 89). In other words, a deductive approach is where researchers develop hypotheses based on existing theory and expect to have the appropriate conclusion. Then, they design the research to observe and test the theory (Wilson 2010, 7). Deductive approach is often related to quantitative research while inductive approach is more associated with qualitative research.

The objectives of this research are to figure out the importance of destination branding, how strong Internet marketing affects destination branding and the outlook of destination branding and Internet marketing. The research is conducted with the hope to confirm the need of tourism branding, as well as the synergy of tourism branding and online marketing activities. The conclusion is based on both business and customers' point of view.

Therefore, the research is made through a questionnaire for respondents (represent for customers or visitors) and an interview with a case-study company (represent for business side). The target group of this research is young people, mostly people from 18 to 30 years old. It is the potential group because they have high interest on travelling, are eager at social networks, have independence and contain enough risk in exploring destinations differently than traditional ways, and tend to express their comments truly. In short, this group is most related to this research topic.

5.2 Methodology

Research method has a strong effect to the result of the research. Basically, there are two research methods: qualitative and quantitative method. '*Quantitative research is about measuring a market and quantifying that measurement with data. Most often the data required relates to market size, market share, penetration, installed base and market growth rates'* (Tutor2u, market research – quantitative research 2012). Quantitative research needs reliable data to make reasoned decisions. There are various ways to collect data for quantitative research; the popular ones are by observation, questionnaire, phone interview, personal interview and postal survey. Among them, questionnaire is considered to be the most well-known approach for data collection. It is useful when you cannot use observation to gather data; moreover, the questionnaire helps to collect a larger sample size.

Conversely, a major problem with questionnaire is reliability because the answers at times are not precisely objective, not to mention sometimes the answers are affected by respondents' emotions (Waters 2011, 93).Qualitative research, unlikely, is conducted when prior insights about a phenomenon are modest, implying that qualitative research is flexible and exploratory. It is stated that while quantitative research is more inclined to structure and standard in empirical data collecting and analysing, qualitative research data collection and analysis are more sensitive to the context aiming at an understanding of the topic. Also, qualitative is more concerned about interpretation and understanding while quantitative research deals more with explanation, testing hypothesis and statistical analysis. (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008, 5.)

Within this research, considering that the research aims are to collect and analyze the views of business and respondents about the research hypotheses, the writer chooses to use both two qualitative and quantitative methods. Namely, the case company representative interview and the questionnaire to send out will be done in this research. The interview with the case-study brings concrete information of how online marketing generates the activities of the business. In a broader view, it might emphasize the destination brand's impact on local businesses where the company is located.

On the other hand, the questionnaire is a main quantitative research method strategy. Quantitative method aims at describing, explaining and finding possible correlations between variables. In this research, a survey is sent out to people from different demographic groups to acknowledge their idea about destination built image, and whether they support the connection of branding and online marketing.

5.3 Data collecting

Sampling technique

Sampling is a fundamental tool in research because it concentrates on a specific population according to the sample size. '*Sampling can be defined as the deliberate choice of a number of people, the sample, who are to provide you with data from which you will draw conclusions about some larger group, the population, whole these people represent'* (Jankowicz 2002, 192). Sampling is good to use in research because for some cases, it is impracticable and unnecessary to survey the whole population. Sampling also saves time, budget quick time results, which are suitable for projects or researches with tight schedule. (Saunders et al. 2000, 151 – 152.) The sampling technique is divided into two types: probability (or representative sampling) and non – probability (judgmental sampling).

Probability sampling is more common in survey method research. The process of probability sampling is divided into four steps: identify sampling frame base, decide on sample size, select the suitable sampling technique(s) and check whether the sample is representative of the population (Wilson 2010, 163). Probability sampling mainly includes simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling. Within this research, I choose simple random sampling as the technique for data collection. Simple random sampling is where you do not classify the population into subgroups. This is the simplest technique and it helps to have a diversified answers. The advantage with this arrangement is that there is no clear distinction, which is not so appropriate in some research cases. (Saunders et al. 2000, 193 – 198.)

Case study

The case study method is used when your thesis focuses on a set of issues of a certain topic or organization and you want to have in – depth understanding of the organization/company within the knowledge of the topic. The advantage of this method is that you can get comprehensive understanding of the issue by describing, analyzing and observation. The data of the case study are obtained through a review of the case, an analysis of the organization's situation and by means of interviews. The difficulty of this method is the interview design so that it is easy to generalize information from day – to – day activities to some greater extent. (Saunders et al. 2000, 218 – 220.)

This research primary data is collected from respondents' answers from the questionnaire based on sampling technique and the analysis of the case-study interview.

5.4 Questionnaire design

Designing a questionnaire is not easy and is a repeated process until the point that the questionnaire is ready to be sent out. Prior to designing the questionnaire, you should consider a certain factors that can affect the results. The factors are as follows:

- The objective of the questionnaire
- Demographic data of respondents
- Detailed questions regarding the research topic. In this case, questions related to the role of destination branding and its factors, and the effect of Internet in destination branding will be made to fulfill the research objectives.
- The question order and how long should the questionnaire should be
- The reliability and validity of the questionnaire

There are various types of questions that can be used in a questionnaire. Depending on how the researcher wants to get result analysis, different types of questions will be used. In this research, these are types of questions that are applied in the questionnaire:

- Open question: this question would not give respondents specific responses to choose, instead, the respondent will answer on the text field their opinion, experience, idea, etc. according to the question. Open question has the tendency to generate long answers and get the respondent's answer in detail
- Closed question: Conversely, closed questions is where options, choices of answers are provided for respondents. Usually this is a straightforward question with yes or no option. In other cases, this allows respondents to choose from multiple responses.
- Multiple choice questions: This type of question gives the respondent a number of options to choose; either you can choose one option or more options.
- Likert scale: a Likert scale question seeks to determine respondents' attitude or opinion about a particular subject. Likert scale is represented

usually by a five – point scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither disagree or agree, Agree and Strongly agree.

- Rank order questions: This is a question where the respondent needs to rank in order their preferences.

(Wilson 2010, 150 – 156.)

5.5 Data analysis

- Observation

Eriksson & Kovalainen（2008) asserted that observation could be used for collecting empirical data by human, mechanical and electronic approaches. The techniques applied in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The advantage of observation was that everything recorded in the actual time, which was different from describing afterwards or forwards. The content of observation was accurate and in detailed.

- SPSS analysis

SPSS is one of the most useful programs for analyzing data, especially with quantitative research. With SPSS program, results are deeply analyzed by collecting relevant data to give results based on hypotheses. Moreover, SPSS also can do cross tabulation to figure out the correlation between variables. It also has the report function with tables and charts to illustrate the results.

5.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability

All the questions on the questionnaire and the interview are inspired from academic sources about destination branding topic and Internet marketing. From this path, I created the questions to evaluate the research hypotheses and make the relationship between variables to approach the research objectives. The questionnaire was sent out to both direct and indirect acquaintances in order to reduce the threat of subject bias. The interview was made via Skype with the representative from the company who is familiar with the topic, so he gives reliable information and other opinions about the subject. Therefore, the research is reliable and able to reduce such threats: subject error, subject bias, observer error, and observer bias.

Validity

Validity is concerned with whether the findings are honest and relevant to the topic, whether the relationship between variables a casual relationship? (Saunders et al. 2000, 101). There are certain threats to the validity of a research, which are: history, effects of pre – testing and mortality. History refers to the time and social, economic or any kind of action that has or had happened to your research topic or field. Definitely, it then affects your research results. Effects of pre – testing threat describes the risk when you conduct pre-test study, it gives certain impacts on the actual results of the research. And lastly, the mortality threat refers to participants dropping out of the survey. (Wilson 2010, 119 – 121.)

6 RESEARCH RESULT

6.1 Survey results

The survey was sent out from 28 March 2012 to 15 April 2012 by e-mail messages, social forums postings and direct messages. The first three questions are basic information to ask about age, gender and respondents' travel frequency. The survey received 52 responses with 20 male respondents which count for 38%, and 32 female respondents which count for 62%. This survey is targeted to young people, most targeted to people from 18 to 30 years old, as they are the ones who use Internet most for all kinds of information. From all respondents, there are 10 people from 18 to 22 years old, 35 people from 23 to 26, 5 people from 27 to 30, and just 2 people are over 30.

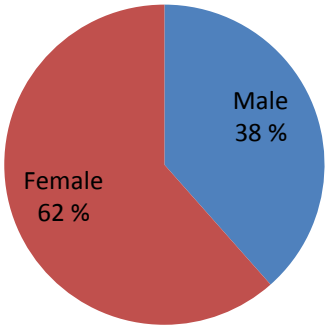

FIGURE 10. Respondents' gender

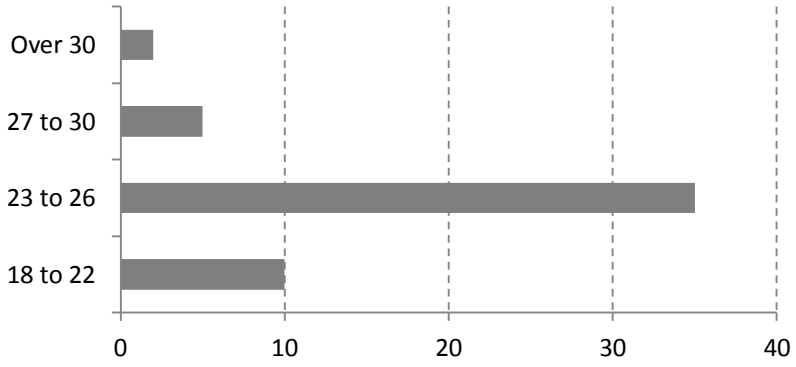

FIGURE 11. Respondents' age group

The third question "How often do you travel a year?" is to figure out respondents' travelling interest and habit. Within 52 respondents, 44% chooses that they travel one or two times per year, 31% says that they travel twice or three times a year and 25%

says that they travel more than three times in a year. It proves that travelling frequency of people is varied from people to people.

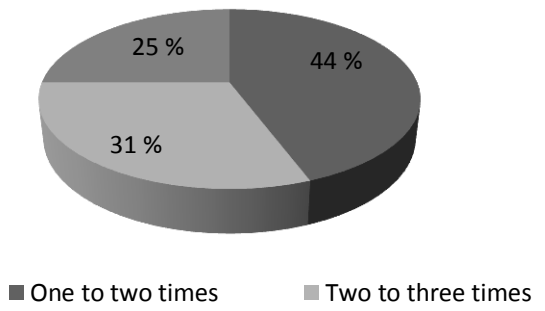

FIGURE 12. Respondents' travel frequency

6.1.1 Destination branding

The second part of the questionnaire concentrates on investigating respondents' impression on destinations and their view on destination brands in order to conclude about the necessity of destination branding. The first question in this section is to evaluate and confirm the importance of destination's image and identity by asking respondents' choice. There are 40 respondents in total strongly agree and agree with this choice, plus there is no negative point on this statement. The answer translates respondents' need in a destination: specialty.

According to the answers, between similar destinations, people strongly agree to choose destination that has a better image and identity are18 and 22 people agree with the statement. It proves that destinations with positive image from all aspects will attract many more visitors than other destinations. Relatively, people have positive response with places that are more cost – effective with 21 people strongly agree and 17 people agree, and 3 people disagree with the statement. There are 15 respondents strongly agree, 20 respondents agree on the point that a destination obtains more offerings will be more favored than other ones. Surprisingly, destination that is more famous on media receives least favorable votes with 33 people choose it, plus there are 6 people strongly disagree or disagree with this view, which is higher than the other statements.

In general, the result implements destination branding theory well. It proves that at first, a destination needs to find out their core identity to establish the image, plan the suitable promotion campaign which fits the destination's situation. Then a destination processes the strategy concentrating on destination image and identity with the help of marketing, advertisement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
I would choose a destination that provides various offers	2	1	14	20	15	3,8
I would choose a destination that is more famous on media	1	5	12	28	5	3,6
I would choose a destination that is more special and unique	0	0	11	22	18	4,1
I would choose a destination that has a better tourist image and identity	0	4	10	28	8	3,8
I would choose a destination which is more cost - effective	2	1	10	17	21	4,1

TABLE 1. Respondents' view on similar destinations

The fifth and sixth question focuses on investigating the destination branding complexity that has been mentioned above. With the question "Choose the three most important things that affect your impression on a destination", the factor that was chosen most from respondents is Nature. 25 people (61%) said that Nature is the first thing that affects their impression on a destination. Nature in this survey represents for natural condition factor, one of the destination branding complexity. As mentioned above, natural condition is the source to figure out destination's uniqueness which leads to the process of creating destination image. Service quality receives 8 (34,8%) votes as the first preference and 12 (52,2%) as the second preference. It represents for people factor of destination branding complexity. People factor regards to DMOs, stakeholders and any parties that directly or indirectly involve in tourism branding. Also, service quality partly symbolizes money factor as the more budget contributed for tourism, the higher quality is expected to approach. Entertainment is the next favourable choice for the first preference with 7 people (26,9%) vote. Food, on the other hand, was chosen widely from first to third preference from respondents with 40,9% for second preference and 36,4% for third preference. It affirms that in general, culinary culture is one of the most attractive factor for tourists, thus destinations should take advantage of gastronomy in the brand strategy. It is said that there are countries that are famous for their diversified and delicious culinary art, such as France, Japan, Vietnam, etc. Other factors, such as weather, local people and expenses also embody different elements of destination brand; however, they are not the dominant factors in respondents' view. Other point of view mentioned that history legacy is one of the influent factors concerning

destinations' impression. This question assists destination organizations in understanding visitors' view on a good destination brand so as to investigate budget, people and communications networks on the right points to build up a successful brand.

Destination factors ranking	**1**	**2**	**3**
Nature	25 61%	8 19,5%	8 19,5%
Service quality	8 34,8%	12 52,2%	3 13%
Entertainment	7 26,9%	8 30,8%	11 42,3%
Local people	3 18,8%	3 18,8%	10 62,5%
Food	5 22,7%	9 40,9%	8 36,4%
Weather	4 23,5%	8 47,1%	5 29,4%
Expenses	5 29,4%	8 47,1%	4 23,5%
Other, please specify	0	1 50%	1 50%
Total	57	57	50

TABLE 2. Destination's factors ranking

Following question 5, question number 6 asked people why they avoid certain destinations. The following chart displays possible reasons why people do not visit such destinations, as well as by what reason tourists are most afraid of from a destination's situation.

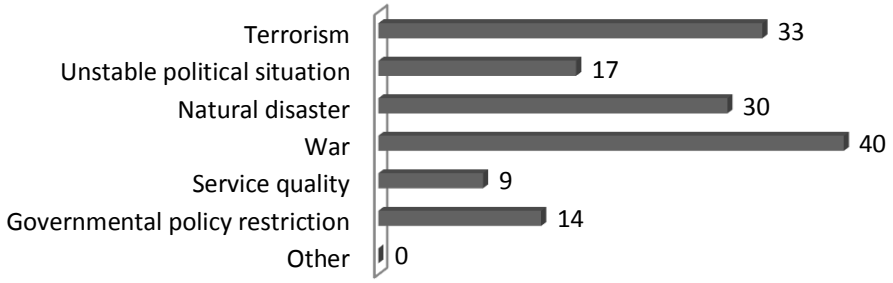

FIGURE 13. Factors restrict destination's attraction

According to the chart, war and terrorism are the difficulties that people are most afraid of with 40 people choose war and 33 people choose terrorism. Besides, unstable political situation reason is also selected by 17 respondents, and as being the fourth most chosen answer. Both of them are parts of political situation factor of destination branding challenges. Governmental policy restriction is also a part of politics factor.

Natural disaster received 30 votes from respondents, and is the third selected choice. It expresses natural condition feature, which shows that natural condition has some impact on destination choice. Surprisingly, service quality, which has been chosen by many respondents as one of the most impressive factor of a destination, is not a big difficulty that restricts people from going to a destination. It means that travelers do not take service quality into account in their destination decision. Nevertheless, service quality does have influence on how travelers evaluate destination's brand image.

Question 7 defines the correlation of destination branding influence on not only tourism sector but also in other areas, such as country economic situation, external investment, reputation and so on. From the pie chart below, out of 52 respondents, 51 people (98%) agree that once a destination succeeds in branding their image and identity, they would create their own destination brand. Plus, that brand will enhance other economic sector, as well as destination's reputation.

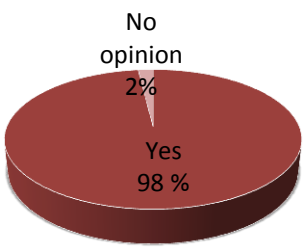

FIGURE 14. Respondents' opinion about the effect of destination brand other economic sectors and destination's reputation

Previously, there is a discussion about destination branding's importance and advantages, as well as destination branding process. All in all, the result reflects the theory positively. Firstly, both the research and the theory claim that the most favored destination among all the similar ones is a destination that can appeal more specialty or uniqueness. Every destination has to figure out the uniqueness of the place and uses it as the core of the branding process. Secondly, four main factors of destination branding, which are: natural condition, money, politics and people are proven to have concrete effect on destination branding strategy of creating and maintaining touristic image. They give specific effect on both destination organizations and travelers, so it is significantly essential to invest on these factors carefully during destination branding process. Lastly, it is proved from the survey that branding gain a destination's interest, reputation and future opportunities in a long term development.

6.1.2 The effect of Internet marketing on tourism

The next part of the questionnaire is made with the purpose of evaluating the influence of Internet marketing on tourism industry today. The results are shown together with question 8, 9 and 10. Question 8 asks respondents to rank the three most used sources they are using for trip consulting. The result is shown on the table below.

Tourism information sources				
	1	**2**	**3**	**Total**
Internet	42	6	4	52
Print media	2	9	14	25
Television	1	14	7	22
Travel agency	4	7	6	17
Word of mouth	5	17	13	35
Trade fairs/Exhibitions	0	2	7	9
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	54	55	51	160

TABLE 3. Tourism information source ranking

On the table, it clearly displays that Internet is the most used source for trip consulting with 42 people (81%) choose Internet as their first preference. It is understandable since Internet is widely used in our world today. The next helpful

source of information is word of mouth with 5 people choose it as the first preference, 17 people as second preference and 13 people as third preference.

Traditional ways of marketing, that are expressed through print media and television, does not receive much enthusiasm from respondents as there are only 3 people choose them as their primary source. However, the influence of print media and television is still enormous because they are picked by 44 respondents in total as their second and third preferred source for trip consulting. In addition, there are only 17 out of 52 respondents choose to consult travel agency, and only 9 people choose trade fairs/exhibitions.

This result strongly proves the necessity of Internet in destination branding strategy. Online marketing does not only mean as an additional communication and information channel, but it has become the mainstream of marketing and communication medium for tourism branding.

The role of search engines is examined in the next question. It asked respondents about their view on some statement regarding search actions. For the first statement which says that using search engine for information is fast and convenient, there are 27 respondents strongly agree, 19 agree, 4 say that it is fair and 2 people disagree with it. The second sentence states that respondents can get appropriate results from search engines has 17 people strongly agree, 22 people agree, 11 people have neutral vote and 1 person disagrees on it. The last statement which indicates that search optimization is necessary in online marketing campaign for destination branding strategy includes 8 people strongly agree, 34 people agree, 7 people with neutral attitude and 2 people strongly disagree on it.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly agree	Average
It is fast and convenient to use search engines for trip information consulting	0	2	4	19	27	4,4
You receive appropriate results you want from search engines	0	1	11	22	17	4,1
Searching optimization does help in destination branding campaigns	2	0	7	34	8	3,9

TABLE 4. Respondents' view on search engines in tourism

Lastly, question 10 measures the role of social media in destination branding online marketing. In total, there are three questions about the use of social media in tourism. 50 people answer “yes” with the question asked whether they find interesting information about tourism and destinations from social networks, tourism forums, websites, blogs, etc. There are two people answer “no” with this question. The second and third question asked about respondents’ habit of using social media. There are 41 people said they are familiar with travelling websites, and 50 people said they share their trips on social networks.

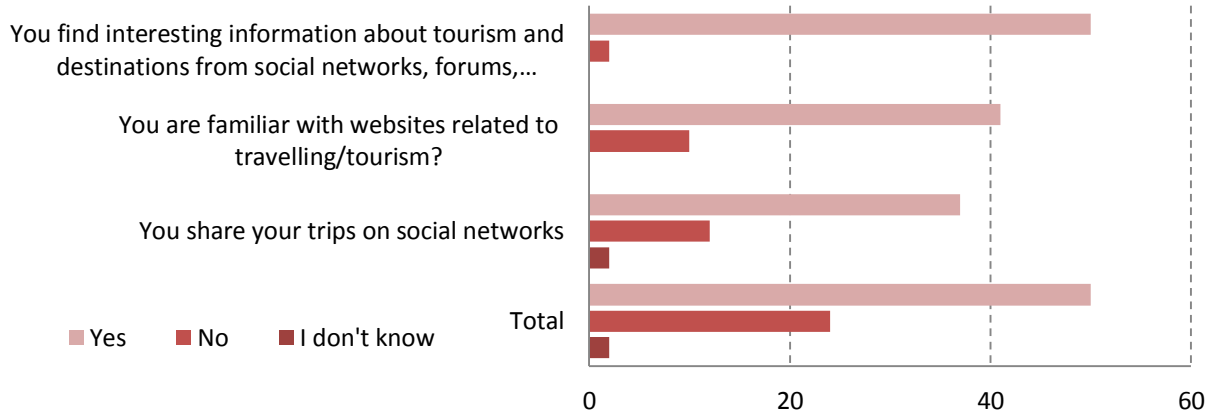

FIGURE 15. Evaluate the role of social media in destination marketing

In summary, people rely on Internet source a lot for trip information, thus SEO process is essential and needed to be taken care of as a part of online marketing. Internet is a main source of information with the ability allowing people to share limitless information all around the world. People favor the use of social media since they are able to gather much useful information from different types of sources in a short amount of time. In fact, the majority of respondents are familiar with social media. It confirms that social media marketing is helpful and supportive for destination marketing with its advantages.

6.1.3 Last trip information

The last part of the survey is about the respondents’ information on their last trip. They were asked about the time of last trip, length of the trip, destination of the trip, trip consulting sources and their impression on the destination. The answers are various according to respondents’ own experience. For instance, the destination of their last trip covers almost every part of the world, from South East Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, ect.), East Asia (South Korea, Japan, etc.), Europe (Hungary,

Poland, Spain, Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, ect.), The United Kingdom (Ireland, Britain), Mediterranean destinations (Greece, Turkey) to North and South America (The United States, Brazil, etc.).

The length of the trip also a diversified range from 1 day trip for family relaxing to long trip, such as a week or more to different destinations, or it was a long term staying in a destination for working. The shortest trip was 25 – 30 hours, and the longest trip was 6 months. The chart below describes the time of respondents' last trip, put into five groups: 1 – 3 months ago, 4 – 6 months ago, 7 – 11 months ago, last year and over last year and other answer. 56% (29 people) of respondents said that their last trip was 1 – 3 months ago.

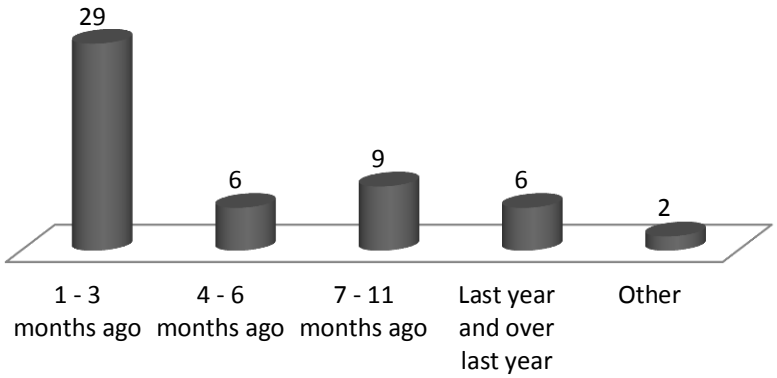

FIGURE 16. The time of respondents' last trip

When asked about their impression about the destination they had visited last time, 42 respondents (accounts for 81%) have said that they have positive impression about the destination. Only 10 respondents (accounts for 19%) answered that the destination had neither good nor bad impression in them.

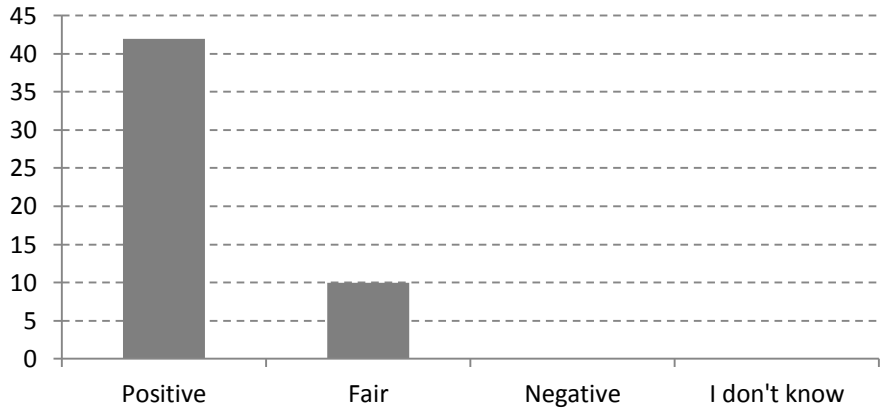

FIGURE 17. Respondents' impression on the destination of their last trip

Regarding to the question about trip information sources, the result is similar to previous question concerning about travelling sources. Internet result is dominant

with 48 people chose it as their source of information. Next is word of mouth with 25 people selected. Television and print media is the representatives of usual marketing ways. Television had 14 votes and print media had 11 votes. Travel agency received 12 votes. One respondent answered they use their previous trip as the source for the next trip.

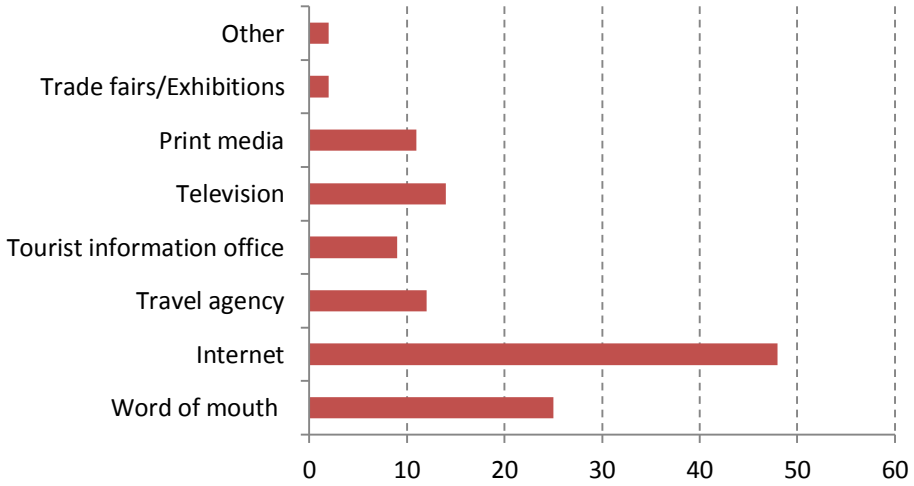

FIGURE 18. Respondents' trip information sources

In short, we can see the widespread power of Internet source and how people widely use it nowadays. Therefore, the effort of building up a good destination image cannot be done without the help of digital marketing. The result reassures the necessity of online marketing as Internet always displays its advantages of fast sharing and receiving information, together with other tools to optimize the search results and develop contacts or communications with customers.

6.1.4 Result summary

In summary, the result is totally matched with destination branding theory regarded the destination branding complexity, the process of branding and the branding models. Tourism branding brings a long term tangible and intangible profit for a destination. The core of branding a destination lies on the good use of its specialties. Moreover, the four main factors that can affect the result of branding process are needed to be taken care of. Among them, politics shows a dominant role in destination's development restriction. In fact, due to restricted policy of a country, or between countries and countries, many people find it hard to travel to certain destinations. It is also said that tourism can benefit the nation in other sectors as well.

Beside the core characteristics, extended features, such as service quality, culinary art, expenses and people, are in the outer circle of destination branding strategy, and able to enhance the effect of the branding effort.

Concerning the use of online marketing in tourism, it shows that Internet is the most used source when people need to gather information for their trip. It is claimed that search engines are fast and convenient to use. The rise of travel forums, guiding websites, as well as social networks, assist destination branding promotion campaign with the fast sharing and spreading images and information function. As a result, the combination of Internet marketing and destination branding process can bring out a better exposure and result.

In addition, social media seizes the attention of people with its open layout and options. It links people together to contribute and share information. In summary, it is advised to cooperate the traditional marketing ways with online marketing to bring out a more comprehensive result for branding process.

6.2 Case study analysis

The case study is a small sized company located in Barcelona working in the field of tourism. The company's official name is Catalonia Business Concept Group. The main sectors the company is involved with, IT sourcing and Tourism. In Tourism department, the company provides general tourist services, such as apartment, car, bicycle rental, tour guide, events information and hosting as well as basic information about Barcelona city.

The information was gathered by the website analysis; the author's working experience in working with this company and the interview/discussion with the company's manager, Mr. Emmanuel O Godwin. There were two discussion/interview session for the thesis author asking about the company's background, operations, marketing strategy and future plan. The interviews happened on 3 February 2012 and 1 March 2012 via Skype. Besides, from February to April, there were e-mail discussions to correct the Skype discussion information.

6.2.1 Business idea

The company's business idea was born in honor to the strong destination brand of Barcelona city. As discussed above, the business aims to cover all tourist necessities when they travel to Barcelona. It explains the synergy between the destination brand

and the development of the company. The case company near future's development will go along with the city's brand attraction. Clearly, it states that a strong destination brand is able to boost up destination's tourism sector, create opportunities for new businesses and leaves space for new marketing ideas. All in all, the destination's economic situation and reputation receive most benefit from a strong destination brand (Godwin 3 February 2012).

6.2.2 The company's operations

The firm has different websites to focus on tourism in Barcelona with information about the city, attractions, things to do, public transport information, apartment and transport rental offers and all. There are also services for students or people who need to stay in Barcelona for a longer term, with apartment rental, language class and all other basic necessities. The website is the bridge to connect tourist service companies and end customers, controlling and managing by Catalonia Business Concept Company. It is said that the company works as business to business (B2B) and also business to customer (B2C) enterprise. They find domestic tourist service companies, apartments at convenient locations and other service companies for collaboration and put the ads or introduce the services to end customers through the website (Godwin 3 February 2012).

Like other intermediary, the company earns money through commissions. According to the company's manager, they use online marketing to optimize the development of the company. Search engine optimization actions are applied in order to figure out key words for the articles and generate the company's website ranking on search result pages. The website is connected and promoted through social networks like Facebook and Twitter as it is the fast way to develop the brand. Part of the IT department of the company's role is to take care of online marketing activities and technical issues (Godwin 3 February 2012).

6.2.3 The application of Internet marketing

Godwin (3 February 2012) claims that the company grows very fast due to the new generation mode of marketing. It was said that unlike the past where people were used to traditional marketing, which becomes tedious now, Internet marketing brings much more crowd effect and develop brand in a shorter time. The case company uses online marketing with the purpose to expand their business. Their Internet

marketing strategy concentrates on online branding development, Google ads, search engine optimization, social media marketing link-building, blogging, newsletters, email marketing, website development, advertisement creating and publishing on different ads sites and so on.

With the help of social media forums, which they actually gathers up to 25 networks, the marketing message or any information concerning their tourist services are automatically sent to the users (both end customers and business partners). Google ad-words tool helps users to create their ads, choose the keywords and your website will be advertised on Google result searching pages. This advertising approach is efficient and cost saving because you can set your budget to spend for the appearing ads, plus, enterprises only pay when the ad is clicked, not for its display (Godwin 3 February 2012).

Besides, massive e-mail marketing campaign is held to attract more visitors. E-mail template was created, together with e-mail generator to send vocational offers and other services, discounts or newsletters to current visitors and customers, as well as to potential customers. Blogging and travel articles are written based on the high popular key words which stick to Barcelona image, attractions and services. This assists gathering more website visitors and understanding customers' current interest (Godwin 3 February 2012).

With all these online marketing activities, the company is able to gain popularity and generate good revenues and return of investment. It was said that around 80% of the company's revenue is earned through Internet marketing. Godwin (1 March 2012) emphasizes that online marketing is the solution for saving marketing cost and time and provide as much information as possible so as to gain curiosity and eagerness from visitors. Additionally, employment cost and advertising cost can be reduced as well. This is why the case study company can go through difficult time, earn profit and now plan to expand the business to other markets and build up a wide range target customer group.

6.2.4 Future plan

In the near future, the company plans to broaden the business to other markets. The aim is to cover all tourist necessities in Barcelona, and later on, extend the main market to other important cities in Spain, such as Madrid, Ibiza, Canarias and Mallorca. These destinations are both the sub-nation brands and have been famous as touristic destinations, so the expanding plan is reasonable and understandable. With the fast speed development of online marketing, the enterprise affirms that they

believe they can achieve this aim. Moreover, in order to score more customers, the Tourism department works to find more rooms and apartments for rent at good locations, more business partners and evaluate the service quality by customers' feedback. These days, the company owns couple of rental apartments to strengthen the company's brand and earn more profit (Godwin 3 February 2012).

IMAGE 4. Picture of one of the company's websites (reservetous.com)

6.2.5 Recommendations

When asked about the company's future outlook, Godwin (5 March 2012) said that they want to concentrate at this moment for Barcelona's market, then they will expand to other markets. The company's marketing strategy is still unchanged though, which means they will still stick to online marketing campaigns because it is cost and time-saving and it is suitable for a small and medium sized company.

Since the company has an advantage in technology as they have the IT department assistance, there is not so many recommendations about online marketing for them. However, my recommendation for getting an efficient online marketing while the company is still able to save marketing cost is that they can use Google tools for their Internet marketing. They are free tools which Google launches for a wholly online marketing campaign. They are Ad Planner, Google analytics system and Key-word tool, and once you have Google account, you simply take advantages of these useful tools. (CleverAds 2012.)

Ad Planner helps the company in finding the real statistics of web visitors. Through this statistics analysis, they have an overview about the target groups, as well as a

more precise decision in choosing marketing and advertising channels. Google Insight for search figures out the search trend of certain industry or sector at a specific period of time of definite regions or areas. Furthermore, it also forecasts for the business about the future search trend, which supports a lot for the company's future plan. Last but not least, with the harsh competition between different intermediary tourist companies, the case company needs to know the right key words to stand out. Hence, key word tool is really necessary since it assists defines the best effective and matched keywords, in order to avoid keyword failure. The goal is to avoid keywords that receive too high or too low search results, or too general keywords. With a small company, getting effective keywords representing their services is an advantage for them in online marketing. It is said that a good keyword should be the one who has around 10 000 to 20 000 searching results in a month. (CleverAds 2012.)

In general, in order to develop, the company needs to gain a strong brand with the background of an effective service company in a big brand destination (Barcelona), and step by step develops to be a trusting service company in Spain, and later on, in some parts of Europe.

Concerning Internet marketing strategy, they can apply helpful tools like above, or more programs, tools and applications to have a more effective online marketing that assists their services. Moreover, even in the future when they enlarge their business, Barcelona business should not be neglected as Barcelona is such a strong destination brand, so it is harmful to lose this main market.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This part of the writing sums up understanding from the theory and research part. It also discusses the summary of the research result reflection on the theory about destination branding.

7.1 The role of destination branding

Destination branding is not a new definition, yet many destinations do not fully understand destination brand's meaning and process. Theoretically, the study discusses all aspects of destination branding, from its definition and functions in tourism industry, branding factors and challenges to destination branding process with the hope to gain popularity in destination branding understanding. Destination branding brings benefits to the nation's tourism industry, economy's interest and future opportunities. It is stated that both tangible and intangible values are obtained by destination branding (Anholt 2004).

Besides, branding destination strategy assists destination's long term developing structure with inward and outward investments in different projects, individual talents gathering and the effort to create the dynamic environment. The companionship of stakeholders is said to be the prerequisite condition in branding strategy. Above all, the core matter of online marketing in destination branding is human factor (Morgan et al. 2004).

The survey research gives the correlated result to the theory. The survey shows that destination branding plays an important role in destination's tourism development. Destinations with good vision in branding process are able to think beyond the current situation. As a result, they become more well – known than the other similar destinations. The survey results assemble with the case company interview opens the reality of high potentiality of Internet marketing in tourism. Strong destination brand has more advantages in remaining the destination's attraction than infant destination brands.

Destination's characteristics, proved by both theory and research, are the core of branding strategy. In addition, various elements related to the destination should be considered as extended factors in branding process. There were certain mutual answers from the survey emphasizing the importance of destination branding, the supporting factors and restricted reason, which is the same with the theory providing before. In short, today, tourism industry cannot advance without the proper branding planning, processing and monitoring in every stage of the branding strategy.

7.2 Internet marketing application in destination marketing

Within tourism sector, Internet performs the ability in connecting, communicating and sharing information about destinations, customs and culture, accommodation, tips and guide. Internet marketing helps to create a fair competition between different destinations with different economic state. Online world has changed the nature of tourism in terms of distribution system and marketing and branding strategy. (Morgan et al. 2004, 136 – 139.)

In contrast, online marketing implementation contains various obstacles that needed to take after. Technical matters are indeed important to online marketing promotion. Useful and relevant links should be properly provided to visitors, otherwise, the marketing campaign is failed and leads to mistrust from customers. Finance is also a challenge for Internet marketing. Lastly, political situation and decision is not harmless to the development of Internet in general and Internet activities in tourism branding in detail. (Morgan et al. 2004, 136 – 139.)

The survey once again enhances the understanding of Internet marketing in tourism by respondents' relevant answers. Internet was chosen as the most used source for trip consulting. The majority of respondents rely on booking online system and Internet information. In other words, people have trust on search engine results. More than that, using search engines, getting information and offers through e-mail and websites, sharing and gathering information from social networks have become the habit when people prepare for their trips. People were said to find interesting tips and guide from Internet sources, and they believe that the use of Internet tools in tourism will continue and dramatically develop. With its advantages, Internet has the ability to enlighten the brand's appearance to customers as well as to advance the brand's identity.

7.3 Self- reflection

This thesis project began from January 2012 to May 2012. The topic idea based on my working experience and own interest in tourism branding management. Throughout the process, there were things I have achieved and there were some constraints as well.

It was not so hard to find academic references as the basic background for my thesis. However, it was difficult to approach the topic and built the thesis content, created concrete parts of the writing, and connected them together. About the topic, after this project, I gain much more knowledge about branding in general, and tourism

branding in detail. There were a lot of new issues and theories I had to read and consult from different sources in order to understand.

During the process, I have improved writing skills, time management skills, analyzing skills and research skills. On the other hand, there are limitations within this study, as well as the research. There are some other issues concerning this topic I would like to include, but I decided to deduct because it was hard to manage them into the study's content. Moreover, this study only provides general understanding about the topic. It would be better if I had prepared to choose the topic in a more detailed way. The research result might be clearer and reflects much more on the theories.

The research result and the theory shows mutual conclusion. During the process, making the survey was the difficult task. I improved the ability to choose relevant questions for a proper result. However, there were some limitations of the research which affect the results.

7.4 Conclusion

Based on my working experience, I realized the strong effect of online world in sales and marketing activities, especially in tourism sector. So, the research topic was found under my interest and experience in tourism and marketing. The research assists me a lot in giving the comprehensive conclusion about destination branding and the use of Internet marketing in destination branding strategy. The results are relevant to the theory and affirm the research hypotheses.

All in all, the research reflects the theoretical discussion in a positive way, which means that, in general, people are aware of the use of Internet in tourism branding, and they support it. It is always useful to comprehend the destination branding core theory in order to adapt the theory into reality in a smoother way. In summary, it is essential to apply online marketing in tourism branding since Internet has a strong effect on the society. In addition, as branding is a long term process, it needs to contain careful planning, the goals and vision so that the brand can captivate positive image.

7.5 Limitations

Like any other research, this research contains some constraints as well. First of all, time management is one of the key issues when conducting a research. This research was done in a short time, so time constraint is one of the problems. If there

was more time provided, there would be more respondents and therefore, the research would be more objective.

Furthermore, the survey includes a fault in a question about respondents' travel frequency. There was an option "one or two times", and then another option was "two or three times", which overlaps with each other. Therefore, the result cannot be totally correct. There should be more carefulness in survey making.

Last but not least, the case company interview includes some restrictions. The interview was done through Skype and e-mail discussions. As the company is at its starting phase, their market share is not big, and their activities are not so stable yet. Consequently, the information provided regarding destination branding and Internet marketing is, to some extent, not enough. If there was more time to hold more deeper discussion, as well as the company is at its mature stage now, the result could reflect and interpret the theories more.

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Appendix 1. The interview with Emmanuel O Godwin, the manager of Catalonia Business Concept Group

1. Introduction about the company.

   Answer

   Catalonia business concept group is a multi Business company, an SME with 15 employees. Our activities include I.T outsourcing and tourism.

   I.T outsourcing: we provide a direct I.T services to customers directly. **Tourism:** General tourist needs, essential tourist information about Barcelona city. From tourist apartments, cars, luxury cars, bici rentals and tour guide events etc. Our online service provider is the website reservetous.com which is developed by me. You can find information about attractions in Barcelona, transportation, part of history and culture, and many accommodation choices available.

2. What are the main activities does the company work with?

   Answer

   The company's activities include tourist services, which are: car and apartment rental, event hosting, basic tours in Barcelona, language classes, tourist needs in Barcelona, etc. In the tourist department, the company is more or less an online tourist agency that acts between tourist business owners and the end consumers. The company is an intermediary, or online agent, working with both B2B and B2C. The company earns money through commission with other businesses and directly from customers sometimes.

3. What is your company’s marketing strategy?

   Answer

   The marketing strategy based mostly on internet marketing. The company uses online marketing to develop brands, expand the business, generate revenue. 80% of the company's revenue comes from Internet marketing. Besides, the company also holds traditional marketing activities, mainly for certain events held by the company in Barcelona. Traditional marketing activities are such as: posters for tourism events, phone calls.

4. Specify the use of Internet marketing in your company's marketing strategy? How does Online marketing assist in generating brand image and revenue?

   Answer

   The internet marketing is used widely:

   - Social media forums/Social networks: facebook, twitter, 25 other networks to expand the business name and brand. Use software for automatically sending users in your networks your business activities, products, update status and things.

   - Google Adwords - Online advertising by Google: using organic ads/organic ranking which based on google ranking by making unique articles.

   - Website marketing: in order to attract more visitors, the website(s) has to be friendly users, easy to search and works smoothly.

   - E-mail marketing: We use email generator tool to generate emails and send to these emails good vacation offers.

   With all above the company gains popularity and generate good revenues and ROI return of investment.

5. What is/are the company's goal(s) for future?

   Answer

   The company is growing very fast due to the new generation mode of marketing: Online marketing. In the past generation, people are used to traditional marketing which is now tedious in today marketing. We use online marketing for the expansion of our business, like branding, search engine optimization (SEO), Google ads, social medial marketing (SMM), link-building, blogging, newsletters, email marketing, creating and publishing of ads on different ads sites.

   Our future aim is to cover all tourist necessities in Barcelona. Then, later on, we will extend to other important cities of Spain like Madrid, Ibiza, Canarias, Mallorca, etc. We strongly believe the fact that the globe has gone digital with good online marketing strategies we can achieve this aim.

6. Where did this business idea come from?

   Answer

   The business idea comes from the increase of tourist necessities in Barcelona. We are not the only company with this type of business in

Barcelona. For couple of years, service businesses are doing well in spite of unstable economic situation. As Spain in general, and Barcelona in detail, is both a strong destination brand, the business idea came to us quite natural. We provide essential information and services for tourists during their stay in Barcelona.

7. Barcelona proves to have a strong destination brand name, does the city's brand supports your company's development? If yes, how does it support your company?

   Answer

   Yes, it does, at least at the very first stage of the business. We relied on the city's brand name to find customers and earn profit. The city's brand name supports us in a way that it creates a strong background for us. It is helpful when we want to expand the business. We earn our company brand through the effective and profitable work we are doing in Barcelona. Also, as we work in Barcelona with many other competitors, we have experience in this field, so we are confident to explore other markets. Barcelona is still a powerful brand which attracts visitors from everywhere, so in future, we hope to be an expert in service area, and stabilize our business in Barcelona market as well.

Appendix 2. Research survey

Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

I am a student of Savonia University of Applied Sciences, undertaking the research on destination branding and the impact of Internet marketing on it. Destination branding is the process, the strategy to promote a destination (a country, city, place, tourist attraction, etc.) according to its specialties with the help of marketing campaigns, communications and promotions. Nowadays, Internet marketing develops so fast and affects many parts of the business. Therefore, this research is made to evaluate the importance of destination branding and how wide and strong Internet marketing affects on tourism.

The information you answer on this survey is relevant and helpful for my thesis research. Please kindly take sometime to answer the following questions to help me get the results and achieve the aims of the research.

Thank you for taking your time to assist me!

Linh Duong.

Section A. Basic information

1. You are *

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

2. You age *

- ○ 18 to 22
- ○ 22 to 26
- ○ 27 to 30
- ○ Over 30

3. How often do you travel a year? *

- ○ One to two times
- ○ Two to three times
- ○ More than three times

Section B. The role of destination branding

4. Between destinations that are similar, your opinion on why would you pick one destination out of the others *

	Strongly	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly

	disagree				agree
I would choose a destination that provides various offers (for example: seasonal offers, tourist service coupons, package promotion, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
I would choose a destination that is more famous on media	○	○	○	○	○
I would choose a destination that is more special and unique	○	○	○	○	○
I would choose a destination that has a better tourist image and identity	○	○	○	○	○
I would choose a destination which is more cost - effective	○	○	○	○	○

5. From the list below, choose the three most important things that affect your impression about a destination. Please rank your choice from 1 to 3. *

With 1 is the first preference, 2 is the second preference and 3 is the third preference. In case you want to cancel your choice, please double click on the answer you had made

	1	2	3
Nature	○	○	○
Service quality	○	○	○
Entertainment	○	○	○
Local people	○	○	○
Food	○	○	○
Weather	○	○	○
Expenses	○	○	○

Other, please specify

6. What affects you most from not going to a destination? *

Maximum three choices

- [ ] Terrorism
- [ ] Unstable political situation
- [ ] Natural disaster
- [ ] War
- [ ] Service quality
- [ ] Governmental policy restriction
- [ ] Other, please specify

7. Do you think a successful destination branding process will also help destinations develop other economic sectors and their reputation? *

- Yes
- No
- I have no opinion

Section C. Evaluate the usefulness of Internet marketing

8. From the list below, choose the three most important sources that you usually use for trip consulting. Please rank your

choice from 1 to 3. *

With 1 is the first preference, 2 is the second preference and 3 is the third preference. In case you want to cancel your choice, please double click on the answer you had made

	1	2	3
Internet	○	○	○
Print media	○	○	○
Television	○	○	○
Travel agency	○	○	○
Word of mouth	○	○	○
Trade fairs/Exhibitions	○	○	○
Other, please specify	○	○	○

9. Evaluate the role of search engines in destination promotion *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly agree
It is fast and convenient to use search engines for trip information consulting	○	○	○	○	○
You receive appropriate results you want from search engines	○	○	○	○	○
Searching optimization does help in destination branding campaigns	○	○	○	○	○

10. The importance of social media in destination branding *

	Yes	No	I don't know

You can find interesting information about tourism and destinations from social networks, forums, websites, blogs, etc.?	○	○	○
You are familiar with at least some websites related to travelling/tourism? (for example: hostelbookers.com, booking.com, lonelyplanet.com, etc)	○	○	○
You share your trips (information, pictures, places, etc.) on social networks	○	○	○

Section D. Information about your last trip

11. When was your last trip? *

- ○ 1 - 3 months ago
- ○ 4 - 6 months ago
- ○ 7 - 11 months ago
- ○ Last year and over last year
- ○ Other, please specify [ ]

12. What was the destination of your last trip? *

13. How long was the journey? *

14. What type of sources did you use to collect information? *

Maximum three choices

- ☐ Print media

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Travel agency
- ☐ Tourist information office
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Trade fairs/Exhibitions
- ☐ Other, please specify

15. In general, what is your impression about the destination? *

- ○ Positive
- ○ Fair
- ○ Negative
- ○ I don't know

SAVONIA