

PERCEIVED IMAGE OF INDIA BY U.S. BUSINESS TRAVELERS

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Destination image refers to the mental ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively regarding a destination. Past research has focused primarily on leisure travelers' perceived images of a destination and how this affected destination choice and behavior. The purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of segmenting business travelers by using destination image variables as the segmenting criteria. A survey was conducted to carry out this study. The sample consisted of 322 business travelers to India. Data were collected at the international terminal of the San Francisco International Airport. Results of factor analysis indicated the images of India comprised of culture and heritage, natural resources, general infrastructure, night life, social environment, and lodging services. Cluster analysis procedures were performed to segment the sample by using these six factors along with measures of affective and overall images. The results revealed a three-cluster solution, named as veterans, enthusiasts, and novices. The effectiveness of using destination image as the segmenting criteria was supported by comparing perceived destination images, demographics, and travel patterns of these three clusters. Findings of this study provide insight into the ways business travelers perceive a destination, contributing new knowledge in destination marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic activities in the world. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) estimates that over 800 million people traveled and spent over \$700 billion (WTO Tourism Highlights 2006). As a result, many countries are promoting international tourism, as a means of bolstering job creation and foreign exchange earnings, while at the same time enhancing their national image in the global marketplace. Tourism literature suggests that perceived image of a destination has a strong influence on traveler's destination selection process in a manner similar to how a product's perception influences the consumer's purchase behavior (Beerli and Martin 2004; Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez 2001; Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002). Furthermore, literature has shown that traveler's destination choice decision is partially determined by the favorableness of the perceived image of a destination (Baloglu and

McCleary 1999b; Chon 1991; Woodside and Lysonski 1989). Thus, one of the major objectives of any destination promotion strategy is to reinforce positive images held by target audience, correct negative images, and/or create new ones (Pike and Ryan 2004).

Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) defined destination image as the sum of belief, ideas, and impressions of a place. Most of the research on destination image has focused on the leisure travel segment, with other segments including business travel being excluded (Alhemoud and Armstrong 1996; Baloglu and McCleary 1999a; Beerli and Martin 2004; Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002). Since business travel accounted for a significant percentage of world wide travel (WTO Tourism Highlights 2006), a study on how business travelers perceive a destination and how this perception affects travel behavior will address this knowledge gap.

Though travel decisions for business travelers may be based on business obligations, many business travelers can and do extend their

business trips for pleasure whenever possible. This is particularly true when it comes to international long haul travel. Moreover, the positive image of a destination may draw business travelers to re-visit that destination. They may bring family with them while revisiting or may also recommend the destination to friends, which has the potential to generate additional revenues to the local economy. Therefore, the willingness to spend extra time and money visiting attractions, extending the trip for leisure purpose, and revisiting the destination, may be determined by other non-business related factors including destination image (Woodside and Lysonski 1989).

While international travel has been growing in recent years, the escalating competition among tourism businesses has compelled tourism marketers not to treat travelers as one homogeneous group but to tailor their services to the needs of specific market segment (Bowen 1998; Janga, Morrison and O'Leary 2002). A commonly used practice to achieve this goal is market segmentation. Market segmentation refers to the process of identifying and partitioning the target market into several homogeneous groups with similar characteristics, allowing marketers to design products or services to satisfy the special needs of those groups (Wedel and Kamakura 2000). It is imperative that marketers put together resources and develop strategies and promotional campaigns which focus on a particular group of customers (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 2006). Past research has identified the utility of using demographic and psychographic variables in segmenting travel markets (Bowen 1998; Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel 1999; Janga, Morrison and O'Leary 2002). However, scant research has focused on utilizing destination image variables as criteria in international business travel market segmentation studies. Consequently, the purpose of the current study was to determine effectiveness of using destination image variables as segmenting criteria for business travelers. It was hypothesized that business travelers could be categorized into several

segments and their perceptions of a destination and travel patterns were different.

India as a destination was selected because previous research has found that the image of India as a travel destination was unappealing to international tourists (Chaudhary 1996, 2000). However, due to recent economic growth, especially in the technology sector, business travel to India has grown at a rapid pace (Hamm 2007). The World Travel and Tourism Council (2007) predicted that India will be the fifth fastest growing country for business travelers between 2007 and 2016. The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (2006) also indicated that India ranked 15th in tourists from the U.S. Moreover, data from the California Travel and Tourism Commission (2004) pointed out that India ranked eighth in California's overseas market, and most business travelers were from the San Francisco Bay Area where the major technology companies are located. Due to recent growth of business travelers from the United States, India needs to position itself not only as a country for technology out sourcing, but also as a tourism destination with rich cultural and heritage attractions and quality tourism services and facilities. Accordingly, this study intended to answer three research questions: how do travelers from the U.S. perceive India as a tourism destination? Are there groups of travelers who perceive India differently? Do those groups of travelers demonstrate different travel patterns?

BACKGROUND

Destination image refers to the mental ideas or conceptions that are held individually or collectively regarding a destination (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002; Stabler 1988). Images of a place represent a simplification of fragmented perceptions, comprised of several aspects of a place. They are the products of a process that is undertaken by the mind in attempts to process and break down vast amounts of data (Kotler, Haider and Rein 1993). Destination image, according to Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) is the expression of all

knowledge, impressions, prejudices, and emotional thoughts that an individual or a group has of a particular object or place. In sum, destination image is a personal perception of a place which can vary from one person to another. Individuals may have images of a destination whether or not they have traveled there based on a few impressions taken shape from the enormous amount of available information (Kotler, Haider and Rein 1993).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) proposed that the image of a destination consists of three major determinants that influence the destination image: cognitive or perceptual evaluations (beliefs or knowledge of destination attributes), affective evaluations (feelings or attachments towards the destination attributes), and overall or global image (formed as a result of both cognitive and affective evaluations of the destination). Furthermore, a traveler's images of a destination are influenced by both personal factors and stimulus factors (Beerli and Martin 2004; Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002; Grosspietsch 2006). Personal factors refer to the characteristics of the traveler and include both psychological and social elements. The stimulus factors denote the external factors, for example, previous travel experience, and information sources put forth by marketers to develop, promote, and advertise a particular destination (Walmsley and Young 1998).

Beerli and Martin (2004) extended Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) model and empirically tested the model by studying the destination image of Lanzarote, Spain. Their findings confirmed that perceived image was formed from the image projected by the destination in consort with the individual's own needs, motivations, prior knowledge, preferences, and other personal characteristics. The authors contended that the images of a destination encompass natural resources, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, tourist leisure and recreation services, culture, history and art, political and economic factors, natural environment, social environment, and atmosphere of the place.

Destination image has emerged as a crucial destination-marketing concept in the tourism industry, since it impacts consumers' decision making (Kim and Richardson 2003). Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez (2001) stated that the destination image was a key factor for destination managers, as it provided travel information on the perceived quality and satisfaction (evaluation of stay), the intention to return, and overall recommendation of the destination (future behavior). Hence, the process of image creation is important to determine the target market, branding, and positioning of a destination. Pike and Ryan (2004) further proclaimed that one of the major objectives of any destination promotion strategy is to reinforce positive images held by the target audience, and to correct negative images or create a new one. In order to ensure the long term success of a destination, it is vital to create a competitive position which will be helpful to marketers, developers, and planners in developing strategies (Chen and Uysal 2002). Given the very personal nature of travel decision-making, it is imperative to understand the influence of destination image in this process, i.e., the need for the current study.

METHODS

A survey was conducted to carry out this study. Target population of this study was defined as travelers visiting India, who were residing in the U.S. A convenience sampling method was employed due to difficulty in identifying and locating potential travelers. Participants were randomly selected from the travelers going to India on the survey days. A total of 322 travelers voluntarily participated in this study. The sample consisted of 237 males (74 percent) and 85 females (26 percent); 81 percent of the sample were between 30 to 55 years old; 69 percent were U.S. citizens and 31 percent were non-U.S. citizens but residing in the U.S. In terms of travel patterns; 57 percent indicated that India was their final destination and 43 percent had also traveled to other countries; 70 percent of them had visited India one or more times before; and, 30 percent had never visited

India before. The purpose of travel to India for 60 percent of the participants was business, while 43 percent of the participants engaged in vacation travel; and the main cities planned to visit were Delhi (52 percent), Bangalore (42 percent), and Mumbai (29 percent).

A questionnaire with 27 destination image items was developed for collecting the data. These items were revised from Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) study of destination image formation to accommodate India as a travel destination. This questionnaire measured the three constructs of destination image, i.e., cognitive image (24 items), affective image (2 items), and overall image (1 item). Cognitive image was defined as beliefs or knowledge of destination attributes. Operationally, it measured the perceived image of natural resources, attractions, culture and art, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, atmosphere, social and economic setting, and environment. The affective image was defined as feelings or attachments towards the destination attributes appraised by two variables: relaxing place and boring and unattractive place. One item was used to measure the overall image of India. Each item was assessed by a five-point Likert type scale (strongly disagree = 1 point to strongly agree = 5 points) to determine level of agreement. Scores of each dimension and construct were calculated by summing up the corresponding items and dividing them by the number of items in that dimension. A higher score represented a favorable image, and a lower score represented an unfavorable image. In addition, participants' demographic and travel information, for example, gender, age, nationality, city to visit, purpose of travel, length of stay, and number of prior visit to India were also collected.

Ten travelers were recruited to pilot test the research instrument at the San Francisco International Airport. The purpose was to ensure ease of understanding of the items in the questionnaire and the validity of the instrument. Based on the feedback and suggestions from the pilot test participants, the questionnaire was finalized.

Data collections were conducted at the international terminal of the San Francisco International Airport because of its strategic proximity to the Silicon Valley technology sector as well as majority of flights from the U.S. to India depart from here. Data were collected by personal interview around the check-in counters of five major airlines with travel routes to India. The completed questionnaires were coded and entered into the computer for analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 24 cognitive image variables were factor analyzed by using principal component analysis with varimax rotation to examine the dimensionality of the cognitive image construct. Image variables with factor loadings of 0.5 and above were retained. The results showed a six-factor solution which explained 66.69 percent of the variance (Table 1). The first factor has the highest Eigen value ($EV = 2.37$) and explains 14.84 percent of the total variance (reliability $\alpha = 0.77$). It was named culture and heritage because it consists of variables measuring art and handicrafts, cultural heritage, museums, historical sites, and hospitable nature of Indians. The second factor was labeled as nature resources. It explains 12.30 percent of the total variance ($EV = 1.97$, $\alpha = 0.64$), and was assessed by India's scenic beauty, beaches, exotic destination, and adventure activities. The third factor consists of variables evaluating transportation system, health services, and telecommunication services. Since these services are offered to the general public as well as business travelers, it was named as general infrastructure ($EV = 1.71$, $\alpha = 0.62$). The fourth factor, night life ($EV = 1.68$, $\alpha = 0.64$), comprises of two variables, night life and bar, clubs, and discotheques. These services are important for business travelers who need places to relax or meet and network with their clients. The fifth factor was labeled as social environment ($EV = 1.57$, $\alpha = 0.69$). Respondents perceived poverty, overcrowding, and pollution as important variables to represent the social environment of India. Variables, such as safe destination,

language barrier, and places for shopping, were not perceived as significant image variables of India. The last factor was named as lodging service ($EV = 1.37$). Although only one variable was loaded into this factor, it represents a very important service to the business travelers, i.e., hotels and restaurants, and explained 8.55 percent of the total variance.

Examining those variables retained from factor analysis, it was concluded that business travelers perceived that India has very rich cultural heritage ($m = 4.54$), arts and handicrafts ($m = 4.34$), and is an exotic destination ($m = 4.12$). However, they indicated that India needed to improve services to travelers, e.g., transportation ($m = 2.60$), health services ($m = 2.85$), and nightlife ($m = 2.94$). The travelers moderately regarded India as associated with poverty ($m = 3.75$) and being overcrowded ($m = 3.81$).

To examine the effectiveness of segmenting travelers by using destination image variables, this study used a post-hoc descriptive segmentation approach to segment the research participants (Wedel and Kamakura 2000). In this phase of data analysis, cluster analysis procedures recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) were performed by using the six factors comprising cognitive image, the affective image, and the overall image as clustering variables. Because of the large sample size, a hierarchical clustering procedure was first performed. It was found that a three-cluster solution was the most appropriate for this study. Next, the K-means nonhierarchical clustering procedure was conducted to divide the total sample into three clusters. The results showed that the first cluster had 62 members representing 19 percent of the total sample; the second cluster had 161 members, 50 percent; and, the third cluster had 99 members, 31 percent.

To further examine if these three clusters perceived India differently, mean scores of every destination image dimension for the three clusters were calculated and one-way ANOVA and Scheffe's pair comparisons were

performed. Means and standard deviations of each dimension for the three clusters and the whole sample are presented in Table 2. As indicated by the results of ANOVA, these three clusters perceived India in a significantly different manner. Contingency table was constructed to compare demographic profiles and travel patterns among the three clusters (Table 3).

The first cluster was named *veteran* because 77 percent of the members in this cluster had visited India at least once and 32 percent had visited more than three times which is the highest among the three clusters (Table 3). Members in this cluster consisted of 71 percent male and 29 percent female, and 84 percent of them were between 30 to 55 years old.

Sixty percent of the veteran group indicated that India was their final destination, and 50 percent of them would stay longer than ten days. The majority of them traveled for business purpose (81 percent), with vacation coming in as second (29 percent). The cities they would visit included Bangalore (58 percent), Delhi (45 percent), Chennai (31 percent), and Mumbai (34 percent). These findings reveal two important points. First, it is common for international long-haul travelers to visit several places in a destination to fulfill their business purposes. Second, comparing to the other two clusters, there are higher percentage of members in this group to visit Bangalore and Chennai, which serve as technology hubs in India. A possible interpretation might be that members in this cluster tend to work in the technology sector.

In general, the veterans expressed favorable images of India. The ratings for overall image (3.48) and affective image (3.74) were the most favorable among the three clusters (Table 2). They concurred that India has a rich culture and heritage resources (4.26) and good lodging services (4.06). The low score of social environment (2.79) indicates that they didn't perceive India as being poor and overcrowded. This may be attributed to the fact that they visited major cities which are rapidly growing

TABLE 1
Results of Factor Analysis of Cognitive Image Items.

	Mean	S.D.	CH	NR	GI	NL	SE
India has art and handicrafts	4.34	0.69	0.82				
India has rich cultural heritage	4.54	0.67	0.80				
India offers museums, historical sites	4.27	0.70	0.77				
Indians are friendly and hospitable	4.09	0.78	0.58				
India has got lots of scenic beauty	4.02	0.82		0.79			
India has good beaches	3.39	0.84		0.67			
India is an exotic destination	4.12	0.80		0.59			
India has adventure activities	3.18	0.75		0.57			
India has good transportation system	2.60	1.05			0.82		
India has quality health services	2.85	0.78			0.73		
India has good telecommunications	3.40	0.86			0.54		
India has good nightlife	2.94	0.66				0.83	
India has bars, clubs and discotheques.	3.14	0.61				0.78	
India is associated with poverty	3.75	0.78					0.86
India is overcrowded and polluted	3.81	0.82					0.85
India has good deluxe hotels and restaurants	3.78	0.78					0.84
Eigen value	2.37	1.97	1.71	1.68	1.57	1.37	
Percent of Variance Explained	14.84	12.30	10.69	10.47	9.84	8.55	
Alpha	0.77	0.64	0.62	0.64	0.69	n.a.	

Note: S.D.—Standard deviation, CH—Culture and heritage, NR—Natural resources, GI—General infrastructure, NL—Night life, SE—Social environment, LS—Lodging services

TABLE 2
Comparisons of Destination Images among the Three Clusters.

	All Sample n = 322		Veteran n = 62 (19 %)		Enthusiast n = 161 (50 %)		Novice n = 99 (31 %)		ANOVA
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	F
Cognitive image									
Culture and heritage	4.31	0.55	4.26 ^a	0.57	4.49 ^{ab}	0.40	4.06 ^b	0.63	22.02 ^{**}
Natural resources	3.68	0.56	3.59	0.55	3.75	0.59	3.61	0.50	3.09 [*]
General infrastructures	2.95	0.68	2.94 ^a	0.73	2.71 ^b	0.58	3.34 ^{ab}	0.64	30.29 ^{**}
Night life	3.04	0.55	3.04	0.55	2.92 ^a	0.57	3.24 ^a	0.44	11.38 ^{**}
Social environment	3.78	0.70	2.79 ^{ab}	0.59	4.16 ^{ac}	0.40	3.77 ^{bc}	0.51	184.00 ^{**}
Lodging services	3.78	0.78	4.06 ^a	0.60	3.89 ^b	0.77	3.43 ^{ab}	0.78	16.78 ^{**}
Affective image	3.54	0.70	3.74 ^a	0.58	3.42 ^{ab}	0.72	3.64 ^b	0.71	6.24 ^{**}
Overall image	3.25	0.85	3.48 ^a	0.86	3.11 ^a	0.89	3.32	0.74	4.91 ^{**}

Note: S.D.—Standard Deviation

Means with the same superscripts denote significant difference resulting from Scheffe's test.

*--p < .05

**--p < .01

TABLE 3
Comparisons of demographics and travel patterns among the three clusters.

	All Sample n = 322		Veteran n = 62 (19 %)		Enthusiast n = 161 (50%)		Novice n = 99 (31%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender								
Male	237	73.60	44	70.97	116	72.05	77	77.78
Female	85	26.40	18	29.03	45	27.95	22	22.22
Age								
Under 30	18	5.64	5	8.06	7	4.35	6	6.06
30 - 55	257	80.56	52	83.87	125	77.64	80	80.81
Above 55	44	13.79	5	8.06	27	16.77	12	12.12
Nationality/Citizenship								
USA	223	69.25	40	64.52	116	72.05	67	67.68
Non-USA	98	30.75	62	35.48	45	27.95	32	32.32
Number of prior visit								
0 visit	99	30.75	14	22.58	45	27.95	40	40.40
1 - 2 visits	145	45.03	28	45.16	81	50.31	36	36.36
3 - 4 visits	29	9.01	10	16.13	12	7.45	7	7.07
More than 4 visits	49	15.22	10	16.13	23	14.29	16	16.16
Final destination								
India	185	57.45	37	59.68	61	37.89	39	39.39
Other	137	42.55	25	40.32	100	62.11	60	60.61
Purpose of travel ¹								
Business	194	60.25	50	80.65	79	49.07	65	65.66
Vacation	138	42.86	18	29.03	87	54.04	33	33.33
Visiting friends	30	9.32	6	9.68	15	9.32	9	9.09
Visiting attraction	51	15.84	6	9.68	21	13.04	24	24.24
Education	9	2.80	0	-	3	1.86	6	6.06
Others	7	2.17	1	1.61	5	3.11	1	1.01
City to visit ¹								
Bangalore	135	41.93	36	58.06	53	32.92	46	46.46
Delhi	169	52.48	28	45.16	92	57.14	49	49.49
Chennai	60	18.63	19	30.65	28	17.39	13	13.13
Hyderabad	65	20.19	12	19.35	30	18.63	23	23.23
Kolkata	31	9.63	7	11.29	17	10.56	7	7.07
Mumbai	94	29.19	21	33.87	49	30.43	24	24.24
Others	138	42.86	19	30.65	86	53.42	33	33.33
Length of stay								
Under 5 days	27	8.39	8	12.90	9	5.59	10	10.10
5 - 10 days	135	41.93	23	37.10	68	42.24	44	44.44
11 - 20 days	117	36.34	28	45.16	58	36.02	31	31.31
More than 20 days	43	13.35	3	4.84	26	16.15	14	14.14

Note: 1—Since it is common for long haul travelers to fulfill multiple purposes and visiting more than one cities, both purpose of travel and city to visit are multiple responses items. Hence, the total of n's of purpose of travel and city to visit were greater than the sample size.

and transforming into modernized cities with higher per capita income. However, their perception of general infrastructure (2.94) was unfavorable. The reason may be that this group experienced the perceived problematic transportation connecting most of the country.

The second cluster is labeled as *enthusiast*, because 73 percent of the members in this cluster had visited India at least once before; they traveled for different purposes and they stayed longer. Members in this cluster consisted of 72 percent of males and 28 percent females. They tended to be older when compared to the other two clusters with more members (17 percent) being over 55 years old.

In terms of travel pattern, only 38 percent of the members indicated that India was their final destination. They visited India for business (49 percent) as well as vacation (54 percent) purposes. The cities to visit included Delhi (57 percent), Bangalore (33 percent), Mumbai (30 percent), and others (53 percent). Since Delhi and Mumbai are commercial centers, the majority of the members in this cluster might engage in businesses other than the technology industry.

The enthusiasts demonstrated mixed perceptions of India. They had the most favorable perceptions of India as a country which has rich culture and heritage (4.49) and natural resources (3.75). However, their overall perception (3.11) and affective perception (3.42) of India was the most unfavorable among the three clusters. In addition, their perceptions of general infrastructures (2.71) and night life (2.92) were also unfavorable. They also perceived India as being associated with poverty and overcrowding (social environment = 4.16). One possible interpretation of these findings might be that their perceptions were influenced by the cities they were visiting. Delhi and Mumbai are among the most populated cities in India (Census of India 2001), where public transportation, social services, and environment are major challenges for living and traveling in these two cities (Hamm 2007).

The third cluster is named as *novice* because 40 percent of the members in this cluster had never visited India. The members comprised of 78 percent of males and 22 percent of females, with majority of the participants were between 30 to 55 years old. About 39 percent of the members indicated that India was their final destination. Although business was their main purpose to visit India, members also indicated they would take vacation (33 percent) or visit attractions (24 percent) while on their trip. Although 46 percent of them would visit the "tech city" of Bangalore, they also would visit commercial and industrial cities such as Delhi (49 percent), Mumbai (24 percent), and Hyderabad (23 percent).

Because a large percentage of the novice group had never visited India before, they possessed limited knowledge of India. This was evident in their neutral overall and affective perceptions of India. Although they favored the rich culture and heritage of India, the score (4.06) was the lowest among the three clusters. However, they had favorable perceptions of general infrastructures and night life than the other clusters. These findings might denote the novel nature of novice travelers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the possibility of segmenting business travelers using destination image variables as the segmentation criteria. Data analyses were based on 322 departing travelers to India from the San Francisco International Airport. Although generalization of the study's findings are constrained due to the convenience sampling method employed as well as sampling from a single airport, the cluster analyses indicated that the three segments of travelers perceived India differently. In addition, the three segments demonstrated different travel patterns.

With the current trend of globalization, there has been an increasing interest in marketing a destination to business travelers. The spending coupled with the business opportunities afforded by this segment has the

potential of making significant contributions to the host economy of the host destination. This, however, is predicated on how a destination is perceived by the traveler. In the past, the overall image of India was depicted as largely negative (Chaudhury 1996, 2000). The findings in the current study suggest that the overall image of India has improved. More experienced business travelers (veterans) perceived India positively when compared to less experienced traveler (novices).

The implications of this study are two fold. First, the findings provide insight into ways that business travelers perceive a destination. This addresses a gap in literature where a majority of previous studies on destination image focused on leisure travelers. Findings of this study indicate that business travelers' perception of India is shaped by its culture and heritage, natural resources, general infrastructures, night life, social environment, and lodging services. India's rich culture and heritage has been recognized by all three groups of travelers. They have different concerns about social environment and travel services, e.g., transportations, health care, communication services, night life and lodging services. As Hamm (2007) suggested that as the number of business travelers coming to visit India increases, there should be a priority placed on improving general infrastructures and services to accommodate their needs. In particular, special considerations should also be given to the identified needs of business travelers, e.g., night life and lodging services. This would serve as an incentive to promote re-visitation, thereby encouraging them to spend more time and money.

The second implication of this study involves marketing India as a destination. This study revealed that tourism marketers in India should not treat business travelers as a homogeneous group, as the results indicate that the business traveler market segment is characterized by different sub-segments based on their unique needs and desires. Three sub-groups were identified in this study. Destination marketers should consider differences in their target

markets and tailor marketing efforts to specific sub-segments.

Marketing campaigns should consider utilizing multiple appeals and channels to address the needs of different target groups. For example, one of the successful campaigns in recent years has been the *Incredible India* (www.incredibleindia.org) campaign launched by the Department of Tourism of India in 2002. It is an integrated worldwide marketing campaign for branding India as an attractive tourism destination of choice for discerning travelers. The campaign utilizes websites, television commercials, radio broadcasting, and printed materials to publicize travel information in India. Although the success of this campaign has been recognized, additional campaign efforts are needed to further promote India in the international tourism market.

Further more, tourism marketers should also keep in mind that word-of-mouth recommendations from colleagues or friends are recognized as the most important source in forming a destination's image. Providing a pleasant travel experience to visitors will help spread the word and thus contribute to the formation of destination image of potential visitors.

In conclusion, this study provides new insights into how business travelers from the U.S. perceive India as a travel destination. More research is needed to expand both the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of the findings. Due to limited resources, this study sample was drawn at a single airport. Future studies need to include more travelers and departing airports for improved external validity. Second, the differences between travelers and non-travelers regarding ways that destination image affected willingness to travel could not be determined in this study. Future research should include both travelers and non-travelers to India. Finally, further research should focus on how destination image influences tourist spending in the host destination.

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