INTERNAL DESTINATION MARKETING: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Because marketing of destinations requires a collaborative approach based on a destination's complex and nested nature, Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) aim to facilitate this notion. A DMO that is a non-party organisation and represents the tourism industry acts as a glue in terms of creating a favourable destination experience that attracts both tourists and investors. That glue among the stakeholders requires internal destination marketing (IDM) as a strategic tool to generate established support and a powerful synergy at the same time. This study will outline the dimensions of IDM by conducting qualitative analysis through a case study.

Keywords: *Internal Marketing, Destination Marketing, Destination Marketing Organizations.*

İÇSEL DESTİNASYON PAZARLAMASI: BİR ÖRNEK OLAY ÇALIŞMASI

Özet

Destinasyonun içiçe geçmiş karmaşık yapısı dolayısıyla pazarlanması işbirliği gerektirdiğinden, Destinasyon Pazarlama Örgütleri bu amacı gerçekleştirmeye yarayan üst yapıyı temsil etmektedir. Tarafsız bir örgüt olarak destinasyon pazarlama örgütleri turistleri ve yatırımcıları destinasyona çekecek, aynı zamanda doğru bir destinasyon tecrübesi yaratacak işbirliği çalışmalarını yürütmektedir. Bu çalışmaları yürütürken paydaşların desteklerini almak ve güçlü bir sinerji yaratabilmek için içsel pazarlamaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çalışma, içsel destinasyon pazarlama kavramını bir örnek olay çalışması ile açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İçsel Pazarlama, Destinasyon Pazarlaması, Destinasyon Pazarlama Örgütleri.*

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Introduction

As acknowledged by Buhalis (2000: 98), the destination experience essentially comprises regions, resources, and amalgams of tourism facilities and services where destinations are arguably the travel industry's biggest brands (Pike, 2005:259). A destination is an open-social system of interdependent and multiple stakeholders (d'Angella and Go, 2009: 429), and non-competitive relations between stakeholders play a crucial role in the process of building competitive advantage (Żemła, 2014:241). Likewise, Pike (2005:259) argues that this complexity makes destinations far more multidimensional than consumer goods and other types of services. As destinations evolve over time, the roles and importance of stakeholders also evolves despite the emergence of new challenges and problems (Beritelli, Buffa and Martini, 2016:3). The challenges faced by the destination lead DMOs to cooperate and collaborate with the stakeholders to create a positive, powerful, and fruitful synergy for a favorable destination brand experience. To overcome the challenge of destination complexity, it is essential to have an umbrella entity, namely a DMO, which would serve as a facilitator in the network of tourism enterprises. As Zehrer and Hallman (2015:124) conclude, it is the DMO which is supposed to coordinate and lead the destination strategically and create value by coordinating the efforts of the stakeholders (Line and Runyan, 2014:92). Subsequently, destination success and the success of DMOs appear to be closely linked to each other (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014:72). According to the authors the networking capability of a DMO increases its power and acceptance as an actor within the destination, which in turn may increase a DMO's success.

Similarly, Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan (2010:573) point out the necessity for the coordination of tourism stakeholders (including local, political, civic, business, and visitor industry representatives) to achieve a single voice for tourism. In fact, this coordination does not restrain competition, but rather develops tourism business and creates a more competitive destination environment. Beritelli (2011:623) describes this cooperative behaviour among actors and stakeholder groups in tourism destinations as an interpersonal business. Ritchie and Crouch (2003:23) clearly argue that in addition to many other factors, the destination that has a tourism vision and shares this vision among all stakeholders may be more competitive than destinations that lack this vision. Because the tourism environment is composed of fragments and highly complex in nature (Werner, Dickson and Hyde, 2016:228), destination marketing is dependent on different stakeholders' collaboration. According to Wahab, Crampon and Rothfield (1976, p.24), destination marketing is:

> "*the management process through which the National Tourist Organisations and /or tourism enterprises identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of optimal tourist's satisfaction and thereby fulfilling their objectives.*"

In this regard, increasing competition in the tourism arena has given rise to significant efforts of DMOs to stay competitive and apply destination marketing, internal marketing (IM) in particular, as a strategic tool. IM was first coined in literature by Berry, Hensel and Burke (1976:10) as a solution to deliver high quality of service based on communication with employees. In the destination context, employees are replaced by stakeholders. Destination marketers have little control over the other sectors, and yet this diverse range of agencies and companies are all stakeholders in the destination brand (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott, 2003:287). Therefore, DMOs should provide inspiration and motivation through IM that encourage stakeholders to contribute to the marketing efforts of the destination and become destination focused. Hence a DMO should facilitate the destination to meet the needs of tourists (external customers) while meeting the needs of stakeholders (internal customers) at the same time.

Like Vrontis, Thrassou and Zin (2010), who emphasise the necessity for service industries to adopt IM, previous research in the field of IM has been mostly limited to service organisations such as banks (Ballantyne, 1997; Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2003; Kelemen and Papasolomou, 2007), hospitals (Mosahab, Mahamad and Ramayah, 2011), five-star hotels (Turkoz and Akyol, 2008), airlines (Vrontis et al. 2010), and exotic restaurants (Lin and Lin, 2010). Despite the growing amount of published research about IM in the service industry, there has been little research on IM in particular at the destination level. External marketing is the core function of a DMO

(Pike and Page, 2014:205), whereas IM makes DMOs more powerful and effective. In fact, lack of IM may result in problematic outcomes.

As Fu (2013: 49) points out, many studies on the implementation of marketing remain dominated by their external focus. By recognising that gap in the literature, this study aims to explain IM in the destination context. Therefore, the purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to provide an IM framework through dimensions of IDM for DMOs and 2) to discuss the contribution of IM to management and marketing of destinations. In this regard, a qualitative research methodology was adapted. Interviews focusing on IM application of DMOs were conducted and then transcribed, and the resulting data was content analysed. This paper is structured as follows: the following section introduces a theoretical framework of IM and outlines DMOs as well as tourism stakeholders. The last two sections include the research methodology and the case study, respectively. This research is original due to its examination of IDMs focused on stakeholders and the insights it provides into the concept of IM for DMOs.

1.Internal Marketing

According to the IM approach, marketing tools and concepts might be used just as effectively with employees as internal customers of the organisation (Foreman and Money, 1995: 756). In other words, IM is concerned with conceptualising available jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs of employees as a vital internal market as well as the objectives of the organisation (Berry et al., 1976:8). As is noted by several authors (Saad, Ahmed and Rafiq, 2002; Papasolomou, 2003; Turkoz and Akyol, 2005), the notion of IM requires using a marketing-like approach within the organisation. According to Rafiq and Ahmed (1993:221), it is the best way to get employees motivated. In this sense, the term IM reveals an emphasis on viewing employees as partners in achieving organisational success, rather than a cost (Papasolomou, 2003:198). In addition, Palmer (1996:58) indicates that internal and external relationship building should not be viewed as isolated activities, but should support each other. Furthermore, Kotler (1991:29) highlights IM as more important than external marketing.

Sainaghi (2006:1059) considers IM along with training and research to make main processes more effective and efficient via 'indirect' actions. However, Foreman and Money (1995:764) identify these indirect actions as vision, reward, and development, actions which managers need to consider in the pursuit of their IM objectives. Thereby, IM also assists in the achievement of the objectives required by strategic decision-making (Varey, 1995:49). Nevertheless, internal communication in addition to external communication make an organisation more powerful as well as effective. Furthermore, IM involves an organisational vision for managers, training and development for employees, enhancement of motivation, and inspiration to retain employees (Tsai and Wu, 2011:2602).

Hence, IM has a stronger influence, especially in service organisations, in enhancing service quality and the overall service experience. As Kang, James and Alexandris (2002:278) imply, it is an effective approach for fostering a service- and customer-oriented organisational culture. As a matter of fact, IM is adopted by many service organisations that target the satisfaction of external customers. Therefore, the objectives of service organisations can only be achieved through satisfied employees. Internal communication is a means to build relationships and create an accurate information flow between employees and management or stakeholders as in the case of destinations. In fact, destinations are political entities and serve multiple roles to various stakeholders, and the variety of contact points are hard to control (Költringer and Dickinger, 2015:1837).

2.Challenge of IM for DMOs

As explained in previous sections, DMOs take responsibility for fostering collaboration between destination stakeholders (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014:64), and they utilise informal as well as formal channels of communication. It's a fact that informal communication via more personalised subnetworks facilitate knowledge sharing and brand attitude (Cox, Hyrd-Jones and Gardine, 2014:85). Consequently, information dissemination is regarded as a significant responsibility of the DMO in many ways such as stimulating stakeholders' commitment to marketing goals, facilitating retention and motivation of these stakeholders, and aligning them with the marketing and branding strategy of the DMO. Yet, to achieve an exchange of information, creation of synergies,

and coordination of action, Sainaghi (2006:1059) emphasises that communication should also be continuous over time.

Palmer (1996:52) points out that two or more organisations may cooperate in some subsystems of a network, while competing in other subsystems. Thus, Buhalis (2000:112) claims that destination promotion requires a coordinated campaign and message for all stakeholders. According to Garcia, Gómez and Molina (2012:649), the communication of values to employees and the involved stakeholders is quite difficult. Since destinations are in a high competitive market, Morgan and Pritchard (2000:273) claim that the need for destinations to project a unique identity is more critical than ever. According to Grangsjö (2003:438), the public and private sectors seek to satisfy tourists by keeping DMO's promises regarding the destination. Cox, et al. (2014:85) also mention that destination network brands are manifested through interactions of multiple independent, internal stakeholders. As stated by UNWTO (2007:51), for the brand to be authentic and deliver on its promises, stakeholders should believe in it and live it. Consequently, IDM is based on the assumption that, if the host population appreciates and benefits from tourism, then the host population will welcome it (Crick, 2002:161). According to Pike (2005:260), a host population that interacts with visitors should feel that the destination brand represents their sense of place, too. If the suggestion of King and Grace (2005:280) is adapted to destinations, then for host population to be tourist conscious, they need to exhibit behaviours and actions that support the destination's brand. However, implications of IDM for destinations should be extended to all tourism stakeholders, not just to the host population.

Confusion regarding ownership of the destination brand is due to the existence of various stakeholders (Pereira, Correia and Schutz, 2015:58). In this sense, management of the brands is considerably harder in network brands like destination brand which is the association of multiple internal, but independent, stakeholders (Cox, et al. 2014:85). Haven-Tang and Sedgley (2014:59) outline the challenges of destination branding in particularly rural destinations in formulating a product brand which is coherent, asset-based, and community-led. There are several advantages of IM for destinations discussed in the literature such as 1) maintaining a consistent single brand image that all stakeholders are motivated and geared, 2) re-branding to gain stakeholder acceptance of the new 'brand' (Finney and Scherrebeck–Hansen, 2010:325), 3) managing change derived from major shifts in the leisure and tourism environment (Dwyer, Mistilis, Roman and Scott, 2009:63), 4) informing tourism stakeholders about the significance of the tourism industry (Bornhorst et al. 2010: 573), and 5) ensuring a destination's competitiveness (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014:64).

3. Collaboration of Tourism Stakeholders through IDM

In Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie (2005:8), a tourism stakeholder is defined as any entity that is influenced by, or that may influence, the achievement of the destination management activities as performed by the DMO. In fact, DMOs recognise stakeholders as being substantial, because they provide funding, the tourism superstructure and product, participate in or generally support their programmes, or influence governance (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005:729). According to Fyall, Callod and Edwards (2003:657), that's why DMOs need to be encouraged and supported by the stakeholders. Although the market interest of this diverse group of active stakeholders is heterogeneous (Pike, 2005:260), relationship development between stakeholders and DMO begins with exchanges of mutual value (Ballantyne, 2003:1257). Consequently, the management of stakeholders has to be proactive, and particular attention has to be given to the creation and development of partnerships (Morgan et al. 2003:291). So, as it is emphasised in Kylänen and Rusko (2011:199), the strategy for the stakeholders should be first to cooperate to get the tourists into the destination, and second, to start competing as soon as the tourist arrives at the destination.

Pike and Page (2014:210) state that both the design and implementation of DMO strategies require strong collaboration. DMOs, including multifaceted networks, provide several opportunities for different forms for a combination of co-operation and competition Kylänen and Rusko (2011:201). In this sense, strategies to manage the complexity of coordination across multiple network stakeholders should be taken seriously (Cox, et al., 2014:85). Pearce (2015:2) identifies destination management as a process which involves the collaboration, cooperation, and interrelationship of relevant stakeholders. Likewise, Line and Runyan (2014:91) explain that

stakeholder management is an essential facet of strategic destination marketing. Significantly, Fyall, Garrod and Wang (2012:11) point out that collaboration among individual components within the destination can be attempted with or without the facilitation of a DMO. In this regard, Wang and Fesenmaier (2007:873) claim that DMOs are expected to provide leadership in initiating, managing, and maintaining the destination marketing networks in order to stay competitive.

Because of the structure of DMOs explained above, DMOs undertake the duty of communication and coordination amongst destination stakeholders as though it is mandatory even though each stakeholder has its own business marketing strategy and activities that they undertake independently. This coordinating role of DMOs often occurs naturally when it carries out a facilitating strategy for destination marketing (Elbe, Hallen and Axelsson, 2009:287). Building place experiences and consistent projection of the brand essence requires the co-operation of these stakeholders, and finally, consistent communication (Govers and Go, 2009:255). Thus, effective and inclusive communication between all stakeholders helps to chart a destination's course (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003:24). The collaboration among these entities requires the commitment of all in developing, managing, and marketing of the destination experience.

According to Bornhorst et al. (2010:14), stakeholders comprehend the DMO as a focal point in terms of keeping suppliers abreast of important information, ensuring stakeholder needs are met, and developing an atmosphere of collaboration through communication. Garrod, Fyall, Leask and Reid (2012:1160) mention that success of the organisation depends critically on its ability to address the particular requirements and aspirations of individual tourism entities. Thereby, DMOs lead the network to coordinate decision making on which the economic performance of both DMO and its stakeholders depends (d'Angella and Go, 2009:429). Żemła (2014:241) also states that destination stakeholder cooperation is regarded as an unquestionable aspect enhancing destination competitiveness. Thus, having modest resources is a significant challenge for DMOs in terms of both their marketing activities and their achievement of an outcome that benefits both the individual stakeholder and the destination (Elbe et al., 2009:283). As a consequence, much of the DMOs' activities are focused on securing stakeholder support to meet short term financial objectives (Hankinson, 2009:109). On the other hand, according to Elbe and Emmoth (2014:210), the role of the DMO is to act on behalf of the destination, so it needs to obtain legitimacy for the destination it represents.

4. Methodology

This study is based on a case study of the İzmir Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to address what IM is and should be in the destination context. Principally, the terms DMO and CVB are interchangeable, but when the official name of the organisation is mentioned, CVB will be used. The case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989: 534). According to Yin (2013:38), the single-case study is an appropriate design in several circumstances, one of which is the revelatory case. On the other hand, Yin (2013:40) proposes that single-case designs impose careful examination of the case to minimise the probabilities of misrepresentation. Therefore, following the approach of Yin (2013:38), the single case is examined to determine whether the theory's propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more appropriate.

The qualitative approach is adopted to understand the notion of IM from the destination perspective through insightful comments (Bryman and Bell, 2011: 68). In point of fact, qualitative research allows participants to elaborate on core themes and concepts, which is not possible in quantitative research due to its descriptive nature (Neuman, 2011:412). Directed qualitative content analysis as a methodology is applied because it validates or extends conceptually a theoretical framework or theory (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1281). In accordance with this approach, data are collected primarily through interviews. The interviews employ a list of open-ended questions about predetermined categories that are explained in the findings section as branding, communication, collaboration, financial support in which the existing theory is supported or extended. The analytical process of Miles and Huberman (1994) is applied through data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification.

4.1. Sampling

Homogeneous sampling is used in this study. Homogeneous sampling, a form of purposive sampling, is based on choosing settings, groups, and/or individuals based on similar or specific characteristics (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007:285). Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007:84). The primary data was collected via face-to-face interviews conducted with the board of directors of İzmir CVB, who are also the owners or managers of tourism establishments that represent all the members in the organisation from different sub-sectors at that specific destination. The perspective of the board of directors regarding IM is crucial to designing communication channels with the public, stakeholders, and members.

İzmir CVB's board of directors consists of a president, vice president, general secretary, treasurer, and nine members. One of the members in the board was assigned during the research process; therefore, he was not included in the interviews. Additionally, it was not possible to interview another member nor the president of İzmir CVB due to their busy schedule. Therefore, 10 members of the board are interviewed from 45 members in total who represent hotels, travel agencies, destination marketing companies, and municipalities. Kuzel's (1999:42) sample size recommendations of five to eight interviews for a homogeneous sample was taken into consideration; as a result, the sample size of 10 is regarded as adequate.

4.2.Qualitative Data Collection

The data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews as this method allows interviewees to express their ideas freely, but within a certain framework during the conversations. Based on a preliminary literature review about IM, DMOs and destinations, open-ended questions were developed to gather data from İzmir CVB as a case study. These interviews with the board of directors enabled the researcher to analyse the perspectives as well as the implications of a DMO. The participants were asked to explain their opinions and experiences about the concept of IDM and its dimensions throughout the list of 17 open-ended questions. Related questions for the interview contained questions such as "what are the marketing activities of İzmir CVB to attract stakeholders as members?" and "what is the significance of financial support of members on the success of İzmir CVB?"

Each representative on the board of directors was reached by the author through a phone call for an appointment at the interviewees' office. The interviews took two months to arrange, primarily because of the difficulty in getting appointments with members of the board due to their busy schedules. The interviews were conducted in January and February for two months. The duration of interviews ranged from 25 min to more than 120 minutes with an average of 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted in a formal way by the author and were manually recorded for data analysis. This two-way communication also enabled the interviewees to discuss the relevant issue with the interviewer rather than give short answers. As a result, the IM point of view and practices in a DMO is explored.

4.3.Qualitative Data Analysis

The interviews conducted with the board of directors were decoded right after each interview and then analysed to create a basis for the IM in destinations. Krippendorf (2004:18) explains content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." To that end, adductive inferences were drawn to proceed systematically. Content analytic inferences based on standards were made during the process of coding (Krippendorf, 2004:27). In a directed approach, analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guide for initial codes (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1277). The initial codes are derived from the literature review. After the transcription of interviews, they are coded accordingly.

The concepts credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability created by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were performed following Bengtsson (2016)'s and Decrop (2004)'s guidelines. First, a systematic construct was established based on how the data and the analysis procedures were carried out in terms of credibility. Second, to achieve dependability, coding decisions were kept track of, and the researcher used memos to track changes. Third, transferability refers to the degree to which the results may be applicable to other settings or groups and to the number of informants or study objects; this was achieved by detailing the context of the study and

integrating these findings with the existing literature. Finally, confirmability was assessed by tracing back the findings in the interviews upon which they were based.

5.Findings

İzmir CVB is an organisation founded in 2007 by the Izmir Promotion Foundation which is the third private entrepreneurial attempt of a DMO in Turkey. İzmir CVB is a non-profit and non-party organisation working in co-operation with other tourism industry authorities. The purpose of Izmir CVB is to enhance its international reputation in the convention and meeting industry to make İzmir stand out from its competitors in tourism. To achieve this aim, Izmir CVB arranges familiarisation tours, coordinates site visits, recommends venues, produces promotional materials, bids presentation materials, and represents İzmir successfully at national and international conventions and meeting fairs. Although İzmir CVB aims to attract visitors to the city mainly based on MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) tourism, it does not overlook leisure tourism. Nevertheless, İzmir CVB favours all members of the organisation based on the idea that if the city wins a convention, then every stakeholder wins in İzmir. In this present research, IDM perspectives of the board and also practices in İzmir CVB are examined as a case study to reflect IDM implications. In this regard, elements of IDM are discussed as follows:

Attracting Financial or Operational Support

Interviews with each member of the board of directors reveal that the relationship between members and the organisation is of the utmost importance in ensuring the success of a DMO. All members and also other stakeholders should be clearly informed of the impacts of DMO's destination marketing activities on their business. This relationship, whether based on formal or informal communications, allows the members to provide financial and operational input. Yet, all the interviewees agree regarding the significance of creating substantial co-operations between a DMO and the destination stakeholders in the network. It is evident that the board of directors is also aware of the importance of financial power in achieving the objectives of a DMO. In this sense, although a DMO lacks financial resources, the ability to work together towards a common goal may help them assure success to some extent. In this regard, İzmir CVB demonstrates that a DMO can have considerable influence in terms of destination marketing even with a small budget.

Collaborating with the Public Sector

Analysis of the data gathered from the interviews indicates there is consensus concerning the need for more support by the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. In light of economic and social benefits resulting from high demand for tourism, DMOs also need to collaborate with public organisations, such as local governments, for the provision of effective marketing and management implications. It is crucial that each stakeholder realise the strong connection between such collaboration and its positive effects on the destination development.

Building their Reputation

DMOs should strive to build up their reputation among destination stakeholders, but this process is not without its challenges. For instance, most of the participants admit that İzmir CVB hasn't clearly proven itself to be effective in attracting more stakeholders, a result due to their lack of financial resources. It then becomes a vicious cycle: a DMO cannot succeed without the financial support of its stakeholders, but the DMO cannot attract stakeholders unless it has solid financial resources to perform effective destination marketing. In order for DMOs to avoid this vicious cycle, gaining the support of main and powerful stakeholders such as a governmental or public organisations seems to be a requisite. So, the aim of IDM is to ensure that members of a DMO feel the organisation is worth their support and that they experience a positive outcome in return.

Creating Effective Communication

Since IM is a must for successful external marketing management, it should be considered an ongoing communication process. Unfortunately, the formal IDM plan implemented by İzmir CVB is limited to an activity report disseminated to the members of the organisation, non-routine visits to the stakeholders' offices, and educational programmes for entrepreneurs in MICE businesses that focus on travel agencies. The board

of directors realised informal IDMs based on personal relationships in order to motivate and convince the stakeholders about the benefits of being a member of such an organisation. In fact, many of the members on the board put so much energy and non-monetary support into building a great organisational structure. Therefore, IM should not be left to the personal and voluntary attempts of individual members, but rather it should be professionally and systematically handled by the management of the organisation in many aspects.

Building a Strong Brand

Although the initial aim of a DMO is to increase the number of visitors and tourism revenue that the destination generates, it cannot be attained unless the IM concept is adopted. As a matter of fact, development of the destination brand depends on IDM practices that are designed and applied by the DMO. In this sense, the brand message needs to be communicated not only externally, but also internally so that it is widely implemented by the stakeholders. Therefore, internal communications should target the stakeholders in the network so that it leads to greater support for the destination brand.

6. Discussion

The outcome of the present study supports the significance of IDM within DMOs by focusing on some major topics. It's evident that İzmir CVB does not practice or implement IM related communication. IM should be widely adopted as a priority of the organisation to accomplish a strong brand. In fact, IM in DMOs mainly depend on two entities: destination stakeholders that are members of the organisation and non-members including residents. Kemp et al. (2012:128) stress that tourism development is essential for not only hospitality and tourism stakeholders, but also for the expanded host community, including local government and businesses. In this manner, efforts should also guide and train residents to welcome tourists and be a part of the destination brand by creating a unique and distinctive destination experience. Keeping in mind the significance of interaction between locals and tourists with respect to destination quality, IDM should be performed effectively.

Eventually, a DMO's performance is evaluated by the stakeholders and correspondingly supported by their monetary and non-monetary contributions. Therefore, IDM plays a vital role in inspiring the members of the organisation to contribute willingly and thus, to maintain continuity of the organisation. In that sense, internal communication between members and the management of DMOs requires publicizing the present activities and future plans of the organisation through formal and informal communication channels and in a way that is consistent with their vision. In addition, information and knowledge dissemination to the stakeholders creates a sense of belonging and commitment. Brainstorming meetings, internal newsletters, conferences, training seminars are appropriate formal communication channels to inform as well as to motivate the members to collaborate. Media is also regarded as an essential IM tool when used appropriately. A DMO also benefits from Internet technology to improve communication with the stakeholders in a way that will keep their energy and commitment alive and continuous. Thus, IM not only contribute to the communication process, but also help DMOs achieve a better performance by realising its objectives within the organisation's vision. As Sainaghi (2006:1059) implies, to effectively manage IM processes, subjects to involve, contents to communicate, and channels to utilise must first be identified. The Internet also allows a fast and low-cost medium for the DMOs. But DMO web sites which contain information that is relevant to all the stakeholders must be frequently updated (Daniel, Bogdan and Daniel, 2012: 5363). Today, social media is an important medium in new communication technology. Social media permits the use of forums, chats that allow real time interactions, and the posting of announcements or a discussion subjects that can be debated by those who are interested (Daniel et al., 2012:5364).

Bornhorst et al. (2010:588) also agrees that the stakeholder confidence in the DMO will improve the DMO's capability to draw secure sources of funding, partnerships, and collaborations that lead to greater resources to fulfil its mandate. As Elbe et al. (2009:288) imply, to take initiatives to develop more substantial co-operation within the destination, the DMO has to create a situation where business actors perceive that they can gain something for themselves from working with the DMO in co-operation. Yet, this can only be achieved by IDM. The conflict is that, as Pike (2004:49) stresses, many DMOs work with modest budgets and with little or no opportunity to generate income by themselves. Since this budget mainly consists of the fees of the members

collected routinely, it's crucial for the DMOs to increase the number of their members within the organisation or to find sponsors for some of the activities. It should be noted that DMOs manage mutual relationships through IM among many stakeholders result in the improvement of the tourism product and also enhancement of the destination image. For instance, DMOs wish to develop a destination's accessibility, and it is common that various forms of financial aid are offered to airlines to support new routes (Hvass, 2014:173).

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to provide insights into the IM approach for destinations that enriches the management and marketing implications of DMOs. From a managerial point of view, the findings indicate that DMOs need to structure their IM approach by stimulating formal internal communication as to maintain integrity, continuity and control in management and marketing of destinations. This is principally vital when to attract more members for the DMOs to gain a financial and administrative power as well as to maintain the interest and support of stakeholders in the decision-making process. This paper also highlights the role that communication among stakeholders can play in achieving the objectives of a DMO, and in creating a competitive destination. The literature review on IM and the findings of this study reveal the positive outcomes of treating stakeholders- the current and potential members of the organisation- as internal customers with a marketing-like approach. In addition, DMOs should provide a constant training of stakeholders, including particularly residents as it is significant for the destination to demonstrate a single brand in every sense. In this regard, to attain financial consistency of the organisation and a competitive destination brand, maintaining commitment and collaboration of stakeholders is vital. Hence, stakeholders are more likely to support DMOs if they are informed about the objectives and actions of the organization by assuring the trustworthiness through transparency. To this end, a DMO should create a consistent communication system within the stakeholder network and convince them to cooperate and collaborate with their counterparts on a DMO level. Therefore, the value of this research lies in the integration of two concepts: destination marketing and IM. Consequently, what this paper reveals is building formal as well as informal internal communication of DMOs through regular meetings, newsletters, briefings, seminars, and also traditional and social media creates a valuable and effective outcome which facilitates successful marketing of a destination.

8. Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of the study indicate possible directions for further research. First, the study was carried out in a DMO, but research in multiple DMOs may provide more thorough findings. Second, the study covered only the board of directors which consisted of managers of hotels, travel agencies, or NGOs; however, including stakeholders such as universities, residents, governmental agencies etc. could have provided even deeper insight into the concept of IDM.

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