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# DESTINATION BRANDING REPRESENTATIONS USING SOCIAL MEDIA: EXPLORING KERALA AND TAMIL NADU

Olive Nerurkar

Associate Professor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), India

## ABSTRACT

*This paper is presented in two parts. A brief discussion on past research on destination branding which have used social media posts is followed by an exploratory study of content and images of Kerala and Tamil Nadu Tourism Corporations posted on their official Facebook pages. It aims at connecting with the destination branding representations of Kerala and Tamil Nadu Tourism Corporations as destinations of choice. The Facebook posts of these destinations were systematically analyzed using the content analysis technique. The analyses are presented under seven themes or categories which were derived from research articles published in the past. Analyses reveal that the posts focused on varying tourist attractions in each. Description of posts, hashtags used photos and videos in posts, activities, likes and comments and few others were analyzed. Kerala portrays the events of each season with photos, videos and leaflets such as boating championship among other attractions of the natural surroundings. Tamil Nadu on the other hand portrays a lot of temple tours offered as packages alongside historical places, natural surroundings and cultural aspects. These findings show that these posts present a lot of information on experiencing Kerala or Tamil Nadu and convey brand representations. Both destinations fair differently on the categories. Detailed information about transport, stay, best time to visit is not given on the tourism products and services for either destination. The information may be linked to providers of various services and packages so that it helps travelers plan their trip and translate into reality the experiences as depicted in the posts, photos and promotion videos.*

**Key words:** Kerala Tourism Corporation, Tamil Nadu Tourism Corporation, brand representations using social media, content analyses of destination branding, content analyses of social media posts.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The branding of tourism destinations known as destination branding has been a phenomenon of the 1990s. Many concepts to explain destination branding have been borrowed from consumer product branding. There are attempts in recent years to evolve concepts and frameworks for destination branding (Morgan, 2002; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998; and Buhalis, 2000). There are however no consensus definitions of destination branding and most definitions have tweaked the definition of a brand to explain destination branding. Often terms like destination “brand” and “branding” are also used interchangeably.

With the availability of social media, destination brands have been able to influence consumer decisions and purchase choices. These platforms serve an important role in communicating brand information from providers and influence consumer perceptions and images conveyed. With abundance of social media data available, the same can be used to gain insight into brand representations communicated and consumer responses elicited. Therefore, this study provides an insight into destination branding representations of two popular Indian tourist destinations Kerala and Tamil Nadu by using their official posts on Facebook.

This article provides definitions of destination branding and a review of a few research studies of destination branding that have used content analyses. Furthermore, an exploratory study was undertaken of a total set of 72 Facebook posts on the two destinations to examine destination branding representations in social media.

## 2. IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING DESTINATION BRANDING REPRESENTATIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Research on consumer decision making related to holidays and vacations reveals that a significant percent of travelers consult social media sources for information pertaining to holidays and vacations and book holidays based on social media content (“Understanding the journey”, 2018; and Nayak, 2019). Consequently, social media as a means of communicating destination branding representations becomes important.

The present research study has the following objectives:

1. To briefly review research on destination branding which have used social media posts.
2. To analyze destination branding representations in social media using content analyses of Facebook posts of two popular Indian tourist states namely Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Studies show that the number of Indian social media users were more than 320 million in 2018 and Facebook was a platform of choice (Diwanji, 2020).

Since social media plays an important role in influencing consumers in their purchasing decisions pertaining to travel and tourism, it is often used as a tool to create and build destination branding of tourist places. For the purpose of studying destination branding representations in social media, two tourist destinations in India were chosen for an exploratory study namely Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Kerala and Tamil Nadu enjoy the status of being popular destinations among Indian tourists and foreign tourists.

Kerala Tourism received the PATA award in 2018-19 for its advertising campaign and website. Its social media communication and presence is also noteworthy. It has effectively used Facebook to gain an edge over other tourist states (“Kerala tourism ranks fourth”, 2019).

Kerala is known for its scenic locations and natural resources: hills, backwaters, beaches, waterfalls and wildlife. The state also has a rich heritage and culture reflected in forts, palaces, museums, monuments and pilgrim centers. The state received more than 16 million Indian and foreign tourists in 2018 (“Kerala records 6% rise”, 2018).

Tamil Nadu on the other hand draws a larger number of tourists. In 2018 it had 38.59 crores domestic and 60.73 lakh foreign tourists (“TN sees highest tourist inflows”, 2019).

Tamil Nadu has a large number of ancient temples in the country like: Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai among many others. Tamil Nadu also has the best and the most visited hill stations and other attractions include waterfalls, wildlife and bird sanctuaries, national parks and beaches.

### **3. DESTINATION BRANDING AND SOCIAL MEDIA: RESEARCH STUDIES**

The concepts of destination “branding” or destination “brand” are often used interchangeably in research. Destination branding definitions proposed by researchers have been influenced by the AMA definition of a brand. “A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (cited in Wood, 2000).

Further to this definition, researchers have added features or characteristics of a destination such as “a promise of a memorable experience uniquely associated with a destination” (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998); “emotional connection, reduction of search cost and influences on destination choice” (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, (2005); “pertaining to a specific geographical region” “with a political and legal framework” and that “offers a mix of tourism products and services for an integrated experience” (Buhalis, 2000).

For the study “destination branding” is defined as the tangibles or intangibles associated with the destination that help identify and differentiate it as an experience and is associated with a defined geography.”

Studies recognize that brand identity and brand image is important for successful destination branding. Brand identity is shaped by the marketer whereas image is perceived by the consumer. For this study we cover destination branding representations used by marketers in their social media posts. Social media are online platforms that allow communities to share information. Marketers use these tools to promote their products and services. India has a large number of social media users that are growing each year (Diwanji, 2019) consequently the social media posts by marketers can be examined to develop an insight into destination branding representations.

### **4. RESEARCH STUDIES COVERING SOCIAL MEDIA AND DESTINATION BRANDING IN INDIA**

A few research studies covering destination branding are briefly described. Most of these cover content analyses of social media posts.

The article by Puja and Kumar, 2016 examines destination branding of Sikkim tourism. Facebook pages were analyzed to diagnose the effectiveness of the promotions. Keywords, likes, photos/ videos were analyzed and the conclusions reached that Facebook as a brand building tool had not been exploited by Sikkim tourism.

The study by Shankar, 2019 identified attribute sofa tourist destination: natural attractions, culture and history, leisure, infrastructure, destination ambience and other aspects like crime, economic and political stability.

The paper by Choudhury and Mohanty, 2018 analyzed the social media marketing strategies adopted by the Odisha tourism vs Kerala and suggested measures for Odisha tourism board to ensure the effective use of social media in tourism. Content analyses was conducted on the Facebook pages using categories like: ‘like and shares, number of posts,

frequency and relevance, Photos/Videos in posts, links shared to the page, Destination Information, Culture promotion, Events, Own and others' website information and Other posts.

The study by Picazo and Moreno-Gil, 2019 analyzed literature and developed a comprehensive content category of images of tourism destinations. These cover three broad areas of people, activities and contexts. The sub attributes of people cover number of people, ages, scenes, type of persons. The sub attributes of activities include whether it is active or passive. The sub attributes of context include nature, culture, leisure, accommodation and infrastructure.

## 5. GAPS IDENTIFIED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The research articles are quite comprehensive however a bit more depth in coding categories may be added to depict the brand representations.

These studies largely draw on quantitative analysis of content e.g. likes, followers, shares. posts shared from the page, posts shared to the page, frequency of posts. Content such as destination information for tourist, culture promotion, events, awards were analyzed by some of the studies

Content categories chosen for the study include a few additional categories that would add to the understanding of destination branding representations:

- Description of the posts(This was considered to cover the posts in greater depth so as to gain insight into brand representations)
- Posts with Hashtags (Research shows that consumer searches often include hashtags)
- Posts with Photos and videos (This code category was common to Puja and Kumar, 2016; and Choudhury and Mohanty, 2018)
- Posts featuring Activities and dominant activities and places covered (This was adapted from Picazo and Moreno-Gil, 2019)
- Posts with Likes comments and Share (This was adapted from Puja and Kumar, 2016; and Choudhury and Mohanty, 2018)
- Own posts and Posts from elsewhere (This was adapted from Choudhury and Mohanty, 2018)
- Posts covering Dominant aspect of culture and Nature depicted(This was adapted from Picazo, & Moreno-Gil,2019;and Choudhury and Mohanty,2018)

## 6. METHODOLOGY

The study uses content analyses of the Facebook posts to understand how two popular tourist states in India represent their brands in social media. Studies point to the fact that Facebook was a platform of choice among Indians (Diwanji,2019)

Kerala has been an award winner in Tourism for several years and its neighboring State Tamil Nadu is a tourist attractor larger than Kerala. It was decided to compare how destination brands use social media for communicating tourist attractions. Both tourism states are government controlled and use Facebook besides other means of communication.

Posts appearing from July to August 2019 which were 36 for each destination were chosen for the analyses. These appeared sequentially on Facebook and were considered adequate for an exploratory study.

Content Categories chosen for the study include

- Descriptions of the post
- Posts with Hashtags

- Posts with Photos and videos
- Posts featuring Activities and dominant activities and places covered
- Posts with Likes comments and Share
- Own posts and Posts from elsewhere
- Posts covering Dominant culture and Nature depicted

## 7. ANALYSES

The analyses cover the findings for each category code.

### 7.1. Descriptions of Posts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu

The Kerala Facebook posts cover a range of aspects: boating and boat races, marketing events and conferences, beaches, flute played against backdrop of beaches, backwaters, boating on rivers, lives of fisher men and ordinary people, stories told by a travel blogger, music and rhythm to the beat of boats, and other aspects. The pictorials and videos are inviting; the videos give one a great sense of what it would be like if one were to visit the destination. The photos and videos are truly well made and which motivate a traveler to pick his bags and visit the state with its vast natural surrounding: rivers, oceans, backwaters and adventure sports like boating and kayaking. There are the hills as well. The posts are dedicated to attracting a traveller looking for adventure with the boating championships, nature, serenity, healing. Several places are covered Punamada, Allepey, Kannuar, Kovalam, Allapuzzah, Matancherry, Munnar.

On the other hand, the posts from Tamil Nadu are different. There are several temple/church tours packages that are offered. Navashakthi Temple, Pillaiyar Patti Tour, Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple, Tirupathi, Vellankani and so on. The posts portray traditions, food, architecture, religion, holy places, historical places, palaces, forts, hotels for accommodation and celebrations around multiple event like baby shower, engagements. The tourism promotion in both states appear quite contrasting. One emphasizes the natural surroundings, nature and the other religious tours and some coverage of nature, architecture. Table 1 and 2 give descriptive details of the Facebook Posts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

**Table 1** Descriptions of Posts of Kerala

	<b>Kerala</b>
<b>Posts</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Wishes for teachers Day
2	Boat race and scores of teams and booking information for next round at Thazhathangadi
3	Tourism at Kumarakam( Life lessons - from a flock of ducks) video
4	Register for ICTT 2019. conference (Come watch Ellie Shedden speak about influential marketing in the tourism video)
5	Kovalalm Kerala Beaches background and a flute player( video)
6	Nehru Trophy Boat Race; Pallathuruthi Boat Club were the proud winners
7	Watch the launch of the #ChampionsBoatLeague, LIVE from Punnamada( YOUTUBE)
8	#ChampionsBoatLeague kicks off today Punnamada with Sachin Tendulkar Leaflet
9	Kerala hosts 12th Conventions India Conclave from 29 - 31 August 2019(Indian Convention Promotion Bureau leaflet).
10	Thaalam. The rhythm of the nation film set in Kerala AR Rahman
11	An intense display of teamwork is about to unfold this Saturday, at Alappuzha. Champions Boat League Aug 31 to Nov 23 photo leaflet
11b	Stay abreast of the digital transformation in Tourism. Register at <a href="http://www.icttindia.org">www.icttindia.org</a> leaflet
12	Only 4 more days to go before the speed kings of the backwaters lock horns in battle. #ChampionsBoatLeague
13	revised #ChampionsBoatLeague schedule calendar schedule photo

14	Chase these water trails and leave with a thousand tales. Water trails Alapuzza /Marari(video)
15	Worlds tourism marketing event photo Leaflet
16	Pedro Richardson reminiscing about Kerala travel Blogger personal thoughts on people of Kerala
17	ICTT 2019 is fast approaching video on ICTT
<b>Posts</b>	<b>Description Kerala</b>
18	Of Great Indian Hornbills in all their glory, at Malakkappara
19	Water Trails video Allepey
20	Mattancherry, a place that is 5 square km give or take, a stone's throw away from Fort Kochi in Kerala, there live 39 communities
<b>Posts</b>	<b>Description Kerala</b>
21	Keep up with constant transformation in the world of Tourism.ICTT 2019 is fast approaching
22	Our 'God's Own Country' campaign makes it to the list of defining moments that built 'Brand India'
23	Photo of flag against God's Own country Sketch #IHappyIndependence Day
24	Mark your dates for the 'International Conference on Tourism Technology in India'
25	Lives of Fishermen
26	Usher in, the truest spirit of Bakrid. Video
27	First race of the Champions Boat League has been postponed, due to bad weather
28	The Nehru Trophy Boat Race most popular of all the boat races. Besides the race, there are ceremonial processions, decorated boats, and spectacular floats, to add to the attraction.
29	Kovalam, go beyond the beach with our #ResponsibleTourism initiatives
30	Kannaur the land of looms and lore's video
31	5 more days to go for #ChampionsBoatLeague photo
32	Want to hear nature holler back at you Echopoint Munnar photo
33	Kettuvallam in all its splendor houseboat photo
34	Binge on some sweet halwa
35	Music in the forest Rock the thunder experience on your skin. With beauty. Video
36	Music in the forest Rock the thunder experience on your skin. With beauty. Video

**Table 2** Descriptions of Posts of Tamil Nadu

<b>Posts</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu Description</b>
1	In Tamil Nadu, the goods received by the geo code..
2	Experience a exciting one day trip to Navashakthi Temples in Chennai with your family, friends and loved ones.
3	Devotional Trip to Pillaiyar Patti Tour
4	Pilgrimage tour packages
5	Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple has been adjudged the second-best 'Swachh Iconic Place' (clean place) in India.
6	Tirupathi Tour
7	Moyar Water Falls - Masinagudi
8	Rangoli using rice flour on cow dung floor
9	Athangudi tiles are one of the well-known handicrafts in Karaikudi region
10	Wellington is situated some 16 KM away from the tourist town of Ooty. This town has a perfect weather all through the year. It is blessed with a great collection of flora and fauna.
11	Hoteltamilnadu Madurai.
12	Everything in the universe has rhythm, everything dances... at Nadagam Banquet Hall, Hoteltamilnadu Madurai
13	Parenthood is a huge transition. Moms-to-be and dads-to-be are preparing for perhaps the biggest change in their lives.. #Babyshower_function at Hoteltamilnadu Madurai
14	Vinayagar Chaturthi Tour on 02.09.2019
15	Happy vinayagar chaturthi wishes
16	Tour package for Velankanni Annual Feast Tour
17	Vinayagar Chaturthi and Sankatahara Chaturth
18	Devotional Trip to Pillaiyar Patti Tour

19	Thirumalai Nayak Palace ,Madura
21	Velankanni
22	Vinayagar Chaturthi Tour on 02.09.2019
23	Quiz guess the cities
24	Vinayagar Chaturthi Tour on 02.09.2019
25	Vivekananda Rock Memorial is a popular tourist monument in Kanyakumari
26	Tree of Tamil Nadu
27	Rameshwaram is one of the holiest places in India and is located on a beautiful island. It is separated by a small Pamban channel from Sri Lanka. The Ramanathaswamy Temple houses the longest corridor in the world.
28	Stones & Stories of Kanchi kailasanathar temple
29	Hotel Tamil Nadu and check out multiple sized rooms and budget-friendly package
30	Happy Madras day
<b>Posts</b>	<b>Description Tamil Nadu</b>
30	Happy Madras day
31	Guess the cities
32	Guess the place
33	Timing stone
34	Venpongol is a popular Traditional South Indian Breakfast
35	Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. Edappadi K. Palanisamy inaugurated the new Volvo A/C Luxury Bus Service with
36	Grinding stone with spices

### Hashtags Used

Kerala and Tamil Nadu both use hashtags. However Tamil Nadu has every post with multiple hashtags. Dominant hashtags are Tamilnadu, TTDC and Incredible India. Kerala's most popular hashtags is #ChampionsBoatLeague. Tamil Nadu has a total 36 posts with 368 hashtags vs Kerala 19.

Kerala had 52.78 % posts with hashtags vs Tamil Nadu has 75 % with hashtags. Hashtags are meant to assist in consumer searches.

**Table 3** Posts with Hashtags

<b>Posts with Hashtags</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
No. of Posts with Hastags	19	27
% Posts with Hashtags	52.78	75
No. of Posts with Nil Hashtags	17	9
Total Hashtags	19	368
Dominant Hashtags		
#ChampionsBoatingLeague	10	Nil
#TamilNaduwith words tourism	Nil	98
#TTDC	Nil	41
#Incredibleindia	Nil	41
#Enchanting TN	Nil	9

### 7.2. Posts with Photos and Videos

Posts with photos of people do not vary greatly between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. But Tamil Nadu has a larger number of God/Temple dominated photos/leaflets/videos. Many of these announce temple tour packages. Tamil Nadu has 16 photos/leaflets or videos with Gods/Temples

Kerala had more than 52 % posts with photos or leaflets vs Tamil Nadu had more than 77 % with photos or leaflets. The use of videos varies. Kerala has 44.44 % of posts with videos and Tamil Nadu has 22.22% posts with videos. The quality and finesse varies with Kerala

scoring better over Tamil Nadu in terms of attractiveness and actual sense of the place being conveyed.

**Table 4** Post with photos and videos

<b>Photos and videos</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
% Posts of photos with people	27.78	25
% Posts with Leaflets/photos without people	25	52.78
% Post without photo or sketches	2.78	Nil
% posts with videos	44.44	22.22

### 7.3. Posts with Activities and Places covered

Kerala posts with activities are 88.88 % vs Tamil Nadu with 94.44%

Most posts cover activities in both cases. However Tamil Nadu has more posts with temple tours whereas Kerala has boating as the dominant activity.

Kerala and Tamil Nadu posts covered differing activities. Kerala posted a significant amount of activity related to boating/ boat races (more than 41 %) vs Tamil Nadu which posted activities related to Gods/Temple visits (more than 47%).

Nature in Kerala was strongly promoted through videos and photos (water trails, waterfalls rivers, backwaters, beaches, houseboats). Tamil Nadu has a lesser coverage of nature.

Kerala photo/video posts cover: boating, boat races and event dates, conferences and event dates, people enjoying water trails, waterfalls rivers, backwaters, beaches, houseboats. Places covered are Kerala, Kovalam, Punnamada, Allepey backwaters, Allapuzah Ernakulam, Malakkappara, Munnar, Kannaur

Tamil Nadu posts cover activities like: temple tours, forts, traditions of baby showers, and engagement ceremonies, foods, architecture of temples, forts. Places covered include Chennai Pillai Patti Tour, Madurai, Tirupathi, Masingudi, Karaikudi region, Wellington.

**Table 5** Posts with Activities

<b>Posts with activities</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
% Posts with Activity	88.89	94.44
Nil	11.11	5.56
Types of dominant Activities		
% posts covering Boating	41.67	Nil
% post covering Temples and God Tours	Nil	47.22
Other Activity	47.22	47.22

### 7.4. Total Likes Comments and Shares

In terms of Likes comments and shares Kerala surpasses Tamil Nadu by a big distance. Kerala has 2177550 likes, 1105comments, and 3286 shares

**Table 6** Total Likes Comments and Shares

	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>TN</b>
Likes	2177550	5644
Comments	1105	143
Shares	3286	1156



### 7.5. Links from own post or other posts

Both Kerala and Tamil Nadu had large number of own posts (Kerala has more than 77% and Tamil Nadu had more than 86%) and a smaller number of posts from other webpages. For instance, Kerala posted information related to conferences to be held, films covering Kerala. The posts had tourist information pertaining to tourist destinations, events like boat racing or temple tours.

**Table 7** Links from own post or other posts

<b>%Posts from other links vs own</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
Own	77.78	86.11
Others	22.22	13.89

### 7.6. Dominant Culture and Nature information

Kerala posts have a predominance of rivers, backwaters and waterfalls alongside boating and boat racing events versus Tamil Nadu which includes culture defined by varied aspects like temples and temple tours, forts, palaces, food.

Kerala has 44.44 % posts covering rivers, backwaters, waterfalls vs Tamil Nadu has 13.89 % such posts. Tamil Nadu has 72.22 % posts relating to Culture Religion Art Architecture tradition music. This shows that each state promotes different tourist attractions

**Table 8** Dominant Culture and Nature information

	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
% Posts with River/Ocean /Backwaters/waterfall	44.44	13.89
% Posts with Conference	16.66	Nil
% Posts with Culture People Religion Art Architecture tradition music	22.22	72.22
Other	16.67	13.89

Tamil Nadu has predominance of Gods/Temples. Palaces, forts, festivals, historical monuments traditions as part of culture. Kerala's culture emphasizing boating /boat race are significant.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Social media posts can be analyzed to understand destination branding representations. Kerala branding representations cover its natural surroundings with boating as a major event whereas Tamil Nadu brand representations cover temples, religion, and other cultural aspects like monuments, forts and palaces. Tamil Nadu has a larger number of Gods / Temple dominated photos / leaflets / videos. Many of these announce temple tour packages. Tamil Nadu uses a larger number of hashtags than Kerala (refer Tables 1, 2, and 3).

The Kerala posts display a larger number of videos (Table 4). While Tamil Nadu has used fewer videos in their posts. Tamil Nadu posts use photos and leaflets to a greater extent. Kerala tells the destination brand stories with videos. It is probably the reason its likes share and comments outdo Tamil Nadu. Likes, shares comments can be taken as an indicator that social media users viewing Kerala posts perceive the posts positively and consider it worth sharing. Thus Kerala posts seems to be more acceptable with Facebook users (Table 6)

Dominant activities (Table 5) displayed in the posts tell us that these are being used as strong positioning points in destination branding. Kerala has therefore come to be known for boating and water related attractions vs Tamil Nadu is known for its temple tours.

Studying the content categories by collecting descriptions, photos and videos can give more in depth insights about the brands. Further categories which cover activities, dominant activities and dominance of culture or nature also throw up more insights (See Tables 5 and 8). There were many finer categories drawn up for nature eg. Waterfall, river, beaches, but it was difficult to get adequate numbers for each and hence nature and culture were broadly categorized with dominance of each examined as explained in Table 8.

Tamil Nadu can benefit more from the use of social media if they utilize Facebook posts effectively with better visuals and videos. Kerala has a social media strategy worth emulating. Since social media is important to the consumer decision making process for vacations it must receive its due importance.

Both destinations do not provide detailed information about transport, stay, best time to visit on the tourism products and services. The information may be linked to providers of various services and packages so that it helps travelers plan their trip and actualize the experiences as depicted in the posts, photos and promotion videos. Table 6 shows that both destinations do not have a high percentage of posts shared from other pages. It may be an opportunity to link with other service providers for a comprehensive coverage of information that consumers might use.

## 9. LIMITATIONS

Number of posts analyzed were only 72 in all. Use of software would have permitted handling analyses of larger number of posts and coding categories. Since images influence consumer choice in depth analyses of the same would have been useful. No direct survey of consumer perceptions was undertaken

Visual analysis could have also given more insight into the pictures and their composition. Video analyses could have also been done in greater depth. For such analyses software may be used.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The study shows that brand representations through social media can give useful insights about destination branding of tourist destinations. Destination brands should use content analyses to develop an understanding of differentiators used by competitors. This may further be supplemented with consumer surveys to study the perceptions of brand images conveyed.

Social media offers the potential to further study changes in destination brand representations over time. It could prove an effective way of understanding differentiators of a destination and the changes. The future challenge is to build models and frameworks to better understand destination branding through social media. The frameworks need to be worked out to improve the effectiveness of social media communications.

Finally, it can be seen that destination branding representations using geographical features, people, activities, culture and heritage find a greater prominence in social media. Each of these can be analyzed to understand destination branding representations in much greater depth.

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