

Themes of the world's select destination slogans

Mark Herman Sumagang Potoy*

Abstract: One simple yet primordial contributor in promoting the tourism of a certain nation is a well-crafted destination slogan. As such, country destinations are challenged to craft a slogan that stands out from the rest. It is in this view that this study is undertaken to take a closer look into the underlying themes of the world's select destination slogans. It utilizes the qualitative method of research where ninety-eight destination slogans are randomly selected as corpus of the study. After the analysis, the following themes are found, Endless Discovery, Originality, Emotional Association, One and Only, Hospitality, Ego Targeting, Ancient Aura, and Physical Dimension. Among these eight themes, Emotional Association is recorded to be the most frequently used reaching up to thirty-five actual usage. The second most prevalent theme is Endless Discovery which is present in eighteen slogans such as that of Canada, Maldives and Saudi Arabia. Construction of destination slogans should be viewed as a complex process that needs in-depth analysis on how it should be phrased since language is an essential vehicle in successfully conveying the message it intends its tourists to decipher. A destination slogan's deep structure has to be the first element to be considered upon its creation because it will serve as the backbone that will hold everything about it. The meaning behind its surface structure has to be the primordial concern for those who are assigned to come up with a slogan.

Keywords: semantics, deep structure, destination slogan, themes, analysis

Introduction

Destination slogans are integral part in promoting the tourism industry of any country for it serves as a readily available resource where one can take a glimpse of what such destination can offer. Although most of the highly established country destinations still have occupied the top positions in the list, it is noticeable to see relatively small and budding countries to climb the list (Khan 2014). This phenomenon that

*Mark Herman Sumagang Potoy()

College of Arts and Sciences, Jose Rizal Memorial State University, Philippines
e-mail:markpotoy@gmail.com/mspotoy@jrmsu.edu.ph

has been observed for quite sometimes is attributed to these countries' outstanding marketing strategies leading to increased public promotional undertakings to ensure that the destination is made known to everyone across the globe. However, the biggest challenge of country destinations is on how to stand out from the sea of equally vibrant and favorable countries to visit. It is not a secret that these places share almost the same product that they offer to visitors who visit their country. Hence, these countries' destination marketing organizations (DMOs) have to be truly innovative in creating unique, appealing, and memorable country identity that speak so much about the destination with only one goal in mind which is to get tourists' attention and drive them in to the country (Ritchie & Crouch, in Khan 2003).

Apparently, only few studies have been conducted tackling destination slogans. Those that have been made are mostly into tourism, advertising, and business marketing; the reason why language and its importance are overlooked and have been given undue attention that they rightfully deserve. This study attempts to discover the underlying themes of destination slogans. To determine the underlying themes of the different destination slogans that are being analyzed, the study utilizes the framework developed by Sonia Khan. She identified eight major themes namely: Endless Discovery, Originality, Emotional Association, One and Only, Hospitality, Ego Targeting, Ancient Aura, and Physical Dimension. These themes are used to analyzing and to examining the different destination slogans being identified. The identified themes have proven that words and word structures are functioning with a significant role in creating a successful slogan that clearly conveys what the destination truly embodies.

Themes in the destination slogans

Eight different themes are found in the destination slogans being subjected for analysis which are namely: Endless Discovery, Originality, Emotional Association, One and Only, Hospitality, Ego Targeting, Ancient Aura and Physical Dimension. These themes are further classified into two sub-themes except for Emotional Association which has three. Listed under the third column are some of the words used in the slogans that signal the theme they carry. Finally, the last column contains the frequency of slogans that belong to each sub-theme.

1. *Endless discovery*

This is the first identified theme which sends the message of unlimited adventure through discovering unexplored places that a certain country has. It provides tourists with a seemingly vague yet exciting idea of what a nation can offer through their personal exploration and exploitation of the country. Eighteen destination slogans are found to carry this particular theme. This theme is composed of two sub-themes namely, Exploration and Riches.

Exploration

According to Khan (2014, 31) “exploration attracts tourists who wish to take the ‘offbeat’ path and have an insatiable appetite for visiting undiscovered places.” This sub-theme is evidently used to attract tourists who are seeking for undiscovered, less conventional and more than the usual attractions and locations that they can visit and enjoy. Moreover, it is viewed to have been used in slogans to give tourists an assurance that such nation can offer something different and unending. Categorized under this sub-theme are the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Canada, Japan, Haiti, Kiribati, Moldova, Namibia, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sierra Leone, Zambia. Canada’s slogan states, “Keep exploring.” By land area, this nation is considered to be the world’s second largest country after Russia which roughly occupies two-fifths of the North American continent. However, even with the vastness of the land area of this country, it is as well considered to be part of some of the world’s countries with population that is thinly dispersed. It is in this light that the government of Canada is exerting immense effort to entice tourists to come to their country. One good strategy in carrying this out is by letting people know of the things that they are yet to discover in this nation through the clever use of the slogan “Keep exploring.” Having the enormous size Canada has, innumerable places are yet to be discovered and explored. This nation is blessed with breathtaking landscapes with vast swaths of wilderness, lakes and mountains. Moreover, it is home to the Niagara Falls, a famous group of waterfalls. Further, this country is a melting pot of multiculturalism being a warm host to many immigrants across the world.

Riches

This is the second sub-theme of *Endless Discovery* which highlights a country’s ‘riches.’ Khan (2014, 31) explicates that this sub-theme is achieved by making the destination a “treasure trove.” From the ninety-eight slogans subjected for analysis, only five bear this sub-

theme, namely: Czech Republic, Guyana, Maldives, Solomon Islands, and Tanzania. Czech Republic's slogan states, "Land of stories." This country, situated in Central Europe is popular for its rich history, century-old castles and traditional beers. Its capital city Prague is where one can find the grandiose Prague Castle, built in the 19th century, a well-preserved old town from the Medieval period and a magnificent Charles Bridge adored with lined statues in it. Another notable location in this country is a small town called Český Krumlov located in the South Bohemian region. It is known for its abundance of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque buildings. Indeed, this nation is blessed with rich history and culture, hence the reason why they capitalize on the use of the word 'stories' in its slogan. It can be deduced that Czech Republic wants to convey to the world how uniquely beautiful this country is through giving emphasis on what it is rich with – history and culture.

2. *Originality*

This is the second theme which is generally concerned with the conveyance of the message that a certain destination is uniquely different from others in terms of its genuineness and naturalness hence, the use of words such as true, truly, natural, pure and wild. Two sub-themes are identified under it which are Authenticity and Natural Purity. This theme is found to have been present in twelve destination slogans.

Authenticity

With the present condition of the world today where modernization and industrialization are swiftly sprawling into various communities across the globe people are seeking for destinations that still retain an authentic experience of the nation. Khan (2014, 31) has this to say, "...discerning tourists are on the lookout for the real and genuine attractions in order to gain unique and unparalleled experiences at the places visited." This sub-theme is present in the destination slogans of Estonia, Jordan, Madagascar, Malaysia, and Netherlands. Madagascar's slogan, "A genuine island, a world apart" is classified under this sub-theme. These three titles namely, the Eight Continent, Big Red Island and Rainbow Island are few of the names that refer to only one country - Madagascar. "The fourth largest island in the world has been isolated for about 88 million years and many of its plants and animals are unique to the island. The prehistoric breakup of the supercontinent Gondwana separated the Madagascar-Antarctica-India

landmass from the Africa-South America landmass around 135 million years ago. Madagascar later split from India about 88 million years ago, allowing plants and animals on the island to evolve in relative isolation” (*One World Nations Online*). The destination slogan of Madagascar directly uses the word ‘genuine’ to convey the message that this country is authentic in terms of its topography as revealed in its interesting etymology. Apart from this, this nation is also uniquely different as it is where one can find numerous animal species that can only be found in this country such as lemurs. Moreover, this country also boasts its unique rainforests, beaches, and reefs.

Natural Purity

This sub-theme, revolves around the idea of highlighting the natural wonders of a certain destination hence, the use of words such as ‘pure,’ ‘natural,’ and the like. Chad, Dominica, Gambia, Grenada, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, and Norway are the countries whose destination slogans carry this sub-theme. “100% Pure” is New Zealand’s slogan. This is a country that uses the word ‘pure’ to emphasize its natural beauty and capacity to entertain tourists from all walks of life. As expressed in one of its promotional videos, New Zealand is pure for its natural wonders where one can choose a relaxing vacation in the countryside or an adventurous journey on the beach or lake; a sweaty hike in the rocky mountains or an immersion with the locals in the villages. New Zealand is situated in the southwestern part of the Pacific Ocean consisting of two main islands. Truly, this nation boasts its purity in terms of the natural sites that can be explored therein such as the beach, waterfalls, rainforests, rivers and more. Tourists are just left to discover the purity of this nation.

3. *Emotional association*

With the very competitive tourism environment in the world, countries are creating destination slogans that not only present facts about what they can offer but also appeal to tourists emotions through statements about love, fun, and the like. Emotional association is found to have been the most prevalent theme among the slogans being investigated which was used thirty-five times. It is a theme that specifically appeals to the emotional nature of human beings hence, the use of emotionally appealing words such as feel, inspiring, live and so on.

Emotions

This is the first sub-theme of Emotional Association which as to Khan (2014) is used “by striking an emotional chord with the audience.”

Generally, this sub-theme tries to appeal to the emotional senses of tourists. There are ten destination slogans that carry this sub-theme, namely: Cape Verde, Cyprus, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, Lebanon, Slovenia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Tajikistan and Tunisia. Germany's slogan is worded, "Simply inspiring." So, what really is so inspiring about this nation? It is considered as

one of Europe's largest countries, Germany encompasses a wide variety of landscapes: the tall, sheer mountains of the south; the sandy, rolling plains of the north; the forested hills of the urbanized west; and the plains of the agricultural east. At the spiritual heart of the country is the magnificent east-central city of Berlin, which rose phoenix like from the ashes of World War II and now, after decades of partition, is the capital of a reunified Germany, and the Rhine River, which flows northward from Switzerland and is celebrated in visual art, literature, folklore, and song. Along its banks and those of its principal tributaries—among them the Neckar, Main, Moselle, and Ruhr—stand hundreds of medieval castles, churches, picturesque villages, market towns, and centers of learning and culture, including Heidelberg, the site of one of Europe's oldest universities (founded in 1386), and Mainz, historically one of Europe's most important publishing centers. All are central pieces of Germany's thriving tourist economy, which brings millions of visitors to the country each year, drawn by its natural beauty, history, culture, and cuisine (including its renowned wines and beers). (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Experience

This is the second sub-theme of Emotional Association which is present in eleven destination slogans, such as in Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, India, Indonesia, Laos, Lithuania, Palau, and Rwanda. The sub-theme revolves around the creation of an atmosphere of the country being a dream destination for those tourists who want to have a dreamy experience. The destination slogan of India, "Incredible India," simply describes what it's like to be there – incredible! This is a striking use of a very powerful word that signals an equally powerful message to tourists who wish to visit the country. By definition, incredible means impossible or very difficult to understand. What then makes this country incredible? India is the second most populated nation in the world. It is known for its highly sophisticated urbanized culture called Indus Civilization which is believed to be the roots of Hinduism. Buddhism and Jainism are also considered to have originated in India though their presence in the country is diminishing. Moreover, talking about diversity, India is considered to be among the world's most ethnically diverse, in fact,

innumerable tribes and castes and it records hundreds of linguistic groups. This nation is also home to the Himalayas, the loftiest mountain system in the world and the Taj Mahal, one of the world's great architectural masterpieces. With these and more, isn't India incredible?

4. *One and Only*

The aim of this theme is to create a uniquely different image that will stand out from the sea of slogans around the world. It tries to set the destination apart from others. Further, it highlights itself as a destination incomparable to others. This theme is as well seen to be a strategy used to emphasize that there is no other place like the destination. Ten destination slogans are discovered to carry this theme with them and they are further classified into the two different sub-themes.

Different

This is the first sub-theme of *One and Only* which is present in eight destination slogans. These are that of Andorra, Australia, Italy, Lesotho, Morocco, Seychelles, South Africa and Tuvalu. Australia's slogan, "There's nothing like Australia" is the foremost example for this sub-theme. It tries to convey to its prospect tourists that this country is unique in so many ways that you can never find a similar destination like it. This sub-theme mainly focuses on how a destination can stand-out with the use of words that manifest its uniqueness and difference from others. With the use of the words 'nothing like,' this slogan strikes a great punch by claiming to be one and only.

Must see

This second sub-theme of *One and Only* emphasizes that the destination is a 'must see.' Slogans classified under this sub-theme use the phrase 'your destination' to pose an emphatic appeal of the country being the ultimate destination. Only Botswana and Venezuela have destination slogans categorized under this sub-theme. With the use of the phrase 'your destination,' these countries try to entice tourist to come and visit them by claiming to be the must see destination.

5. *Hospitality*

This theme emphasizes the value of being welcoming since for a fact, this is the foremost concern of destinations. Visitors are persuaded to come to a certain country for various reasons and it is only just and right for destinations to express whether or not tourists are really do

welcome. There are only six countries with slogans carrying this theme. Below are the two sub-themes, namely Beckon and Invitation together with some of the slogans classified under each of them.

Beckon

This is the first sub-theme which indirectly conveys the message of hospitality. By dictionary meaning, beckon is an act of coming up with a non-verbal signal using the head, arm or hand to entice an individual to follow or come nearer. This slogan “Tourism for everybody” conveys to tourists that Algeria welcomes everyone to come and explore this country. Although the message does not specifically and directly tell visitors on what to do but certainly, the statement clearly expresses inclusivity of anyone to partake in the tourism activities of Algeria. Nepal’s slogan “Once is not enough” indirectly conveys being welcoming. It simply expresses warmth for its visitors to come and visit the place again. It further expresses an assurance that tourists who will visit this country will certainly come back and the slogan just tells them why not.

Invitation

This is the second sub-theme of *Hospitality* that focuses on enticement and allurement. It tries to persuade someone to come and visit the destination and expresses directly how welcome tourists are who wish to come to the destination. Iran, Uganda, Belarus, and Oman are the four countries with destinations slogans classified under this sub-theme. These slogans create a hospitable atmosphere that will truly entice tourists to come and visit these countries because of the warmth that these slogans carry with them. Below are some of these slogans.

6. *Ego Targeting*

This theme highlights tourists as special individuals that should be regarded special in all possible ways hence there should be an assurance of their personal satisfaction. There are only eight (8) destination slogans that carry this theme which are then classified under two sub-themes, namely, Personalization and Fulfilment.

Personalization

This is the first sub-theme of *Ego Targeting* which targets each and every individual. Khan (2014, 34) explains that, “Destinations often invite the tourists by stating that a visit to a particular destination country will help a tourist to discover himself/herself and will help him touch base with the meaning of his existence.” Six destination slogans are classified under this sub-theme. These are the slogans of Albania,

Bahrain, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, and United States of America. Below are some of these slogans. Albania's slogan "Go your own way" is clearly very personal signaled by the use of the pronoun 'your.' Further, the slogan becomes more striking because it is constructed in an imperative statement. This makes it totally personalized since tourists are directed to make sure they create their own person story in all possible ways they could as they visit the country. This slogan "It's all about U" of Ukraine is uniquely constructed with the use of the first letter of the country's name 'U' instead of directly using the personal pronoun 'you.' With reference to the entirety of the construction, the slogan is undoubtedly and exceedingly personal by letting tourists know that it's all about them and no one else. This creates a welcoming atmosphere of the country and gives visitors an uplifting spirit of trust and confidence of the nation anytime they decide to visit it.

Fulfillment

This is the second sub-theme of *Ego Targeting* which targets the fulfilment of tourists' dreams and aspirations. There are only two countries with destination slogans carrying this sub-theme. Qatar's tourism slogan which says, "Where dreams come to life" embodies this sub-theme. Qatar sends a clear message to its tourists that it can make their dreams come true. This is a striking slogan that appeals to all since everyone has a dream that they have always worked hard for its attainment. East Timor's slogan which is "Being first has its rewards" is an example of an indirect promise of fulfilment. Being a not so popular travel destination, this country struggles to persuade visitors to come and explore the place. With this, the slogan is simply fitting since it promises something good for them.

7. *Ancient Aura*

This theme primarily revolves around the creation of an image of being the origin of many civilizations a long time ago, hence; the two sub-themes History and Birthplace. Destination slogans carrying this theme are primordially written to highlight the destination's major role being played in the history of mankind.

History

This sub-theme carries the image of the destination being a significant contributor in world history. It tries to convey to tourists that coming to such nation is being able to travel back in time. Ethiopia's slogan "Land of origins" can easily be classified under this theme with the use

of the word ‘origins.’ It creates a nostalgic atmosphere that is what is being looked for by tourists. This country claims to be the land of origins because it is considered to be among the oldest in the world. The Ethiopian Herald through the website *All Africa* provides the reason why this nation is considered to be the land of origins. It says, Ethiopia is

the origin of humankind; home of the earliest remains of human ancestors ever found - the first being which routinely walked on two feet named ‘Lucy’, the origin or birthplace of the wild coffee plant, ‘Arabica’, the origin of the Blue Nile, longest river of the planet. The attractive and traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony is enjoyed daily by locals and tourists. Ethiopia is also believed to be the depository of the lost Biblical Ark of the Covenant, stored in the securely guarded Chapel of the Tablet next to the St. Mary of Zion Church in ancient Aksum. The Nechisar Nightjar, the elusive endemic to Nech Sar National Park in southern Ethiopia, is the home to world's rarest bird species. (*All Africa*)

Birthplace

This second sub-theme of *Ancient Aura* gives emphasis to a destination’s role as a place of birth or the starting point of things. The use of words such as ‘creation,’ ‘begin,’ and ‘started’ signal that such slogan can be classified under this sub-theme. Israel, Egypt, and Mozambique are the only ones with slogans categorized under this theme. Below are these slogans. It is needless to say that this slogan is just fitting to be categorized under sub-theme. Israel’s “Land of creation” is by far the most popular country that cradles the origin of mankind. The *Rakso Travel* uses to say about this country: “Lift up your faith by discovering Israel, the Land of Creation and see for yourself the famed locations of Jesus’ life. Ablaze your faith with the Holy sites of Jerusalem & Bethlehem, float in Dead Sea, sail the Sea of Galilee, overlook ancient Masada with Cable car ride and many more!” Egypt’s “Where it all begins” is another slogan that is already a known fact to many. Egypt is considered to be the birth place of civilizations hence, the slogan is simply fitting. Travelers are already given the idea of what they can expect upon visiting the country – see for yourself the beginning of everything.

8. *Physical Dimension*

This theme capitalizes on the physical aspects that a certain destination has specifically, its size and geographical location in the map. It attempts to convey to visitors that regardless of its size, whether or not

it is small but it can offer a wealth of attractions. This is the least used theme which is employed in only four destination slogans. This is further classified into two sub-themes namely, Size and Center.

Size

Does size really matter? This sub-theme focuses on highlighting the extent and expanse of the nation in terms of its capacity to offer attractions to visitors. Size does not only mean the land mass but as well as what encompasses a certain country. Only two destination slogans have been classified under this theme such as that of Zimbabwe, "A world of wonders." This landlocked nation is situated in Africa's southern part. Its astounding landscape and wildlife can readily be experienced in its safari areas, reserves, and parks. This and more makes this country famous. Its slogan tries to create an image of how gigantic this country is. It claims to be the 'world' of wonders, hence posing a bold statement that it has and can offer everything wonderful. What can be the reason for this claim? This African country is rich with wonderful people and culture. With this, the Mbende Dancing Troupe is declared by UNESCO as Intangible Human World Heritage Site. Moreover, it is as well where one can find The Grand Medieval Palace. It is rich with wonderful natural resources. In fact, it home to the majestic Victoria Falls. Because of these, Zimbabwe is considered to the Adrenaline Capital of the World where bungee jumping, white-water rafting, zip lining, and more are just everywhere. Pristine wildlife is what makes this country extraordinarily wonderful. Visitors who are looking for a close encounter with the big seven; they are proudly on display in this country. With all these are more, isn't this country a world of wonders?

Center

This second sub-theme of *Physical Dimension* mainly focuses on claiming to be the 'center' of a certain place. Noticeably, destination slogans that carry this sub-theme use words that significantly mean in the middle. Quite interestingly, only a single word carrying this meaning has been used in the two destination slogans classified under this sub-theme. The slogans of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Malawi have used the word 'heart' to give emphasis to its significant role as the center of a certain region where they belong. This is seen to be a strategy in marketing to attract tourists who do not intend to visit all the countries in a region but would want to gain a whole experience representing them all. And one simple way to do it is to visit the center

because surely it represents the rest of them all. Bosnia and Herzegovina claims to be the heart of South Eastern Europe while Malawi proclaims to be the heart of Africa. The former's claim is a clever use of the word 'heart' because it does not only refer its geographical location but as well as to its shape. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a nation that is uniquely shaped like a heart located in southeast Europe's heart. According to *National Geographic* the website Bosnia and Herzegovina "what is most important for the visitor to know today, though, is that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a stunningly beautiful country with a vast array of landscapes, cultures, traditions and people. And as the old cliché goes 'people make the place' – and B&H prides itself on its hospitality and treating our guests as if they were family members. And family we take to heart."

Conclusion

The eight themes identified by Sonia Khan are found to have all been present in the destination slogans subjected for analysis. These themes are Endless Discovery, Originality, Emotional Association, One and Only, Hospitality, Ego Targeting, Ancient Aura, and Physical Dimension. Results of the study shows that construction of destination slogans should be viewed as a complex process that needs in-depth analysis of how it should be phrased since language is an essential vehicle in successfully conveying the message that it intends its tourists to decipher. The careful and strategic use of substantive words is a key factor in creating an effective slogan that would appeal to visitors from around the world. Finally, a destination slogan's deep structure has to be the first element to be considered upon its creation and construction because it will serve as the backbone that will hold everything about it. It should be founded on grounds that are strong enough to keep still the existence of the slogan. The meaning behind its surface structure has to be the primordial concern for those who are assigned to come up with a slogan.

References:

- All Africa*. <https://allafrica.com/>
Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany>
Khan, Sonia. 2014. Word Play in Destination Marketing: An analysis of country tourism slogans. *TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 11 (1): 27- 39.

Themes of the world's select destination slogans

- National Geographic.*
<https://nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/bosnia-and-herzegovina>
- One World Nations Online.*
http://digitalref.jdvu.ac.in/GEOGRAPHICAL_SOURCES/One_World-Nations_Online.pdf
- Pike, S. 2004. Destination brand positioning slogans: Towards the development of a set of accountability criteria. *Acta Turistica*, 16(2): 102-124.
- Pike, S. 2005. Tourism destination branding complexity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(4): 258-259.
- Rakso Travel.* <https://www.raksotravel.com/>
- Ritchie J., & G. Crouch. 2003. *The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. Wallingford: Cabi.
- Salehi, H., & M. Farahbakhsh. 2014. Tourism advertisement management and effective tools in tourism industry. *International Journal of Geography and Geology*, 3(10): 124-134.