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The Impact of Destination Exposure in Reality Shows on Destination Image, Familiarity, and Travel Intention

Stacia Reviary Mege* and Daniel Tumpal H Aruan**

The increasing popularity of reality shows renders them as potential media for tourism promotion. However, there is limited research regarding the impact of destination exposure in reality shows. This study aimed to investigate the impact of destination exposure in television reality shows on destination image, familiarity, and travel intention. To test the hypotheses, a within subject experiment was conducted. A worldwide popular reality show, *The Amazing Race*, was used as a stimulus for the participants. The results revealed that, in general, both cognitive and affective destination images were rated higher after watching the reality show. Furthermore, familiarity with the destination and travel intention to the destination increased after watching the destination in the reality show. The result of this study will be useful for destination marketing organization and the government to explore alternative promotional media and aid the promotion of tourism destination.

Keywords: Destination Image, Destination Marketing, Familiarity, Reality Show, Travel Intention

Introduction

International tourism is a fast growing industry and has successfully recorded 10% of total international trading (Brida & Risso, 2010). The number of overnight tourists in 2015 reached 1.2 million or increased 4.4% from the previous year (UNWTO, 2015). In 2015, Europe, Asia Pacific, and American regions enjoyed high tourist arrivals reaching 51%, 23%, and 15%, respectively. Meanwhile, the Africa region suffered from decreasing number of tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2015). Tourism industry worldwide gives 9% contribution to GDP (Gross Domestic Product), 6% to the world's exports, and 30% of services exports. The importance of tourism has driven the governments of countries around the world to promote their tourism (Lee & Chang, 2007; Nirwandar, 2014).

In tourism marketing literatures, one important construct that potentially influences tourists to further make travel decisions (Kim & Richardson, 2003) is known as destination image. Destination image is formed by personal and stimulus factors (Balogu & McCLeary, 1999) which respectively comes from inside the tourists themselves and from external sources. Movies and TV programs are also capable of being sources of information, which are classified as autonomous agents of destination image (Gartner, 1993). An autonomous agent is believed as a credible source of information, since it is outside the control of the marketer (Gartner, 1993; Connell, 2005).

A reality show is one of the popular TV programs that can serve as the autonomous agent in forming destination image. Despite being popular, there are very less research

regarding promoting tourism in reality shows. Two recent researches pertaining to the relationship between tourism and reality shows from Tessitore, Pandelaere, and Van Kerckhove (2014) and Fu, Ye, and Xiang (2016) are the only studies found so far. Previous researches on reality shows did not clearly identify the term "perception" as the same construct as destination image and did not utilize the proper measurement (Tessitore et al., 2014). On the other hand, Fu et al., (2016) investigated how audience involvement affects travel intention through destination image.

Nabi, Biely, Morgan, and Stitt (2003) described reality shows as TV programs documenting real activities by real people. Term "real people" defines individuals representing themselves, rather than fictional characters as in movies. Reality shows that were used as stimuli in previous researches were the ones that displayed celebrities as participants. This research, on the other hand, used non-celebrity reality shows with the expectation to display more realistic situations. The primary aim of this research was to investigate if there is a change in destination image, familiarity, and the travel intention to the destination, after watching or receiving exposure of a destination in a reality show. This work will contribute to destination marketing by providing scientific evidence of how exposure of destination in reality shows change viewers' perceptions and even more, encourages the use of reality show as one of the channels for destination promotion.

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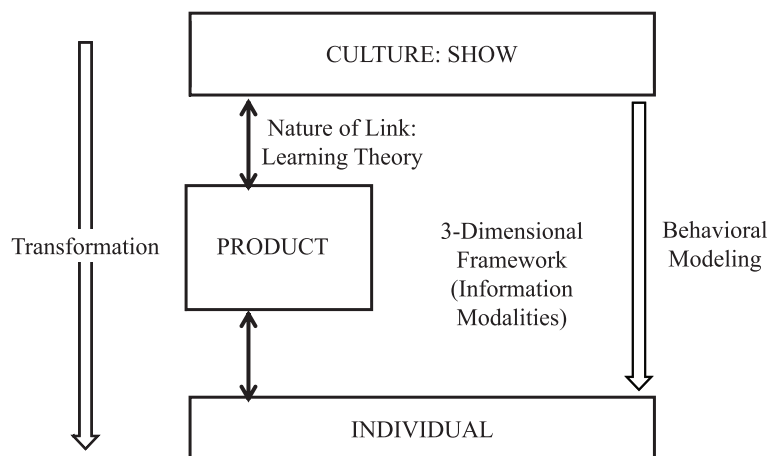


Figure 1. Adapted Meaning Transfer Model (Russell, 1998)

Literature Review

Product Placement and Adapted Meaning Transfer Model

Product placement is described as paid inclusion of products in media programming as a combination of advertisement and publicity in such a way designed to affect viewers (Balasubramanian, 1994). Placing a destination in a movie is an ultimate product placement (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). Previous researches have proven that there was an increase in information searching or even visitation to the destination shown in the movie. Some researchers have been wondering how the exposure of destination in the popular media affects tourists' interest to the destination. Yang (2011) and Rudowsky (2013) utilized Russell's (1998) adapted meaning transfer model to investigate the impact of movie genre to the destination image, familiarity, and travel intention. Some of the hypotheses were supported and some were just partially supported.

Adapted meaning transfer model is basically used to explain how product placement works, which according to Russell (1998), is a process of transformation. The transformation is considered a success when viewers are able to experience the products without using it. The transformation process happens from the show to individuals in the form of personal relevance, empathy, information, and execution. It is considered a successful transformation when the individuals have vicarious experience with the products, or in this research, the destination. Transfer of emotion also happens between the show and the individuals. The feelings generated from watching popular media will be transferred to the viewers. Hence, there are positive and negative emotions that could be derived from the show.

Destination Image

Destination image is defined as the accumulation of beliefs, ideas, or viewpoints gathered by someone from sources of information of a certain destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Crompton, 1979). As an important construct of tourism study, destination image has been widely examined by many researchers. Some tried to investigate the formation process (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993), while some others studied the components of destination image (Crompton, 1979; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Russell & Pratt, 1980; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Gartner (1993) viewed destination image formation as a series of agents who work together to create a unique image of destination. Overt induced agent is a form of publication delivered blatantly by the destination marketer such as TV advertisement, print media, etc. Covert induced, as its name indicates, is more subtle than the overt induced, for example articles made by travel writers. Information is classified as solicited or unsolicited organic agent when the information is retrieved from the acquaintance. Meanwhile, direct visitation is one of the strongest sources of information one can retrieve and is called an organic agent.

An autonomous agent is any kind of report, documentation, news, or exposure of other media about destination. Forms of popular culture such as movies, dramas, reality shows, and soap operas are classified as autonomous agents. An autonomous agent is believed as credible (Gartner, 1993; Connell, 2005), trustworthy (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997), and provide substantial information in a short time (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

Destination image has two components which are cog-

nitive and affective destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Gartner, 1993). Cognitive destination image is evaluation of characteristics and attributes owned by a destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu, 2000; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Affective destination image on the other hand is a subjective feeling or emotion someone has towards a destination. Gartner (1993) believed that cognitive and affective destination image is both capable in influencing someone to pay a visit to a destination.

Familiarity

Familiarity towards an object is a combination of direct and indirect experiences with the object itself (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Hence, the familiarity towards a destination is formed by both direct and indirect destination visit. Researchers argue whether familiarity is a multidimensional or one-dimensional construct. Either way, familiarity is an important factor in deciding which destination to visit (Chen & Lin, 2012). Movies or TV programs are able to increase familiarity towards a destination by displaying the destination during the program (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Familiarity was first placed as a dependent variable by Kim and Richardson (2003) to see if watching a destination in a movie could increase the familiarity towards the destination. However, the hypothesis was not supported by the data. In contrast, Rudowsky (2013) found that by watching the destination displayed in movies, the familiarity towards the destination increased.

Travel Intention

According to Fishbein dan Azjen (1975), intention is a tendency to act or to do something that will result in actual behavior. By measuring intention, one can predict the actual behavior that will be taken by individuals in the future (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975; Quintal and Pau, 2014; Kim & Jun, 2016). When tourists have the intention and motivation to visit a destination, their actions will follow accordingly (Jang & Namkyung, 2009). Croy & Walker (2003) believed that by watching the destination, one will have an intention to visit the destination. Beside movies, TV programs and serials could also influence intention to visit a destination.

Destination Placement in Movies and Reality Shows

In the field of movie tourism, studies of the impact of movies on destination have been widely recognized. To be more precise, these studies aimed to examine the change of perception such as destination image towards the intention to visit the destination in 21st century (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Other researchers (Shani et al.,

2009; Hudson et al., 2011) examined the relationship between destination image and intention to visit if the destination is displayed in a negative-genre movie. The result showed that after watching the movie, the destination image increased and participants had higher intentions to visit the destination. However, the affective image changed negatively. Yang (2011) applied transportation theory and adapted meaning transfer model to explain the phenomena. It was found that through violent crime movies, the cognitive and affective destination image toward Japan decreased. Rudowsky (2013) found mix results where only some data supported the hypothesis.

The publication of Tessitore et al., (2014) was the first to investigate destination placement as a medium for tourism promotion especially through a reality show. They found that the perception of participants toward India mostly increased, so did the attitude and travel intentions.

Methods

Design

In order to answer the research questions, we conducted an experimental study by applying one group within-subject design. This is an appropriate study to examine the change that happens after receiving stimulus. The group of undergraduate students was asked to complete a questionnaire before and after receiving stimulus.

Stimuli

The stimulus used in this research was a reality show titled *The Amazing Race* [see Appendix]. This show has run for more than twenty seasons with improved contents year after year. The participants are individuals from different backgrounds and occupations. The reason to use this reality show is because it is an outdoor reality show that visits various countries during one season. The destination object used in this study was Zimbabwe. This destination was chosen to reduce the probability of previous visits by the participants.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from undergraduate students of a university in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. As many as 53 students participated in this research. The procedure started with a brief explanation about the experiment. The researcher then distributed the informed consent forms for their agreement to follow the whole experiment process. Afterwards, the participants continued by completing the pretest questionnaires. Upon completion, the participants were ready to watch the video stimulus. The duration of stimulus was approximately 18-19 minutes.

Table 1. Paired Sample T Test on Cognitive Image

Indicators	Before Mean (SD)	After Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (SD)	DF	T-value (sig)
CI 1	1.94 (1.11)	3.65 (1.58)	-1.70 (1.74)	53	-7.177 (.000)***
CI 2	1.87 (1.17)	3.22 (1.45)	-1.35 (1.43)	53	-6.949 (.000)***
CI 3	1.93 (1.18)	3.26 (1.60)	-1.33 (1.63)	53	-6.029 (.000)***
CI 4	1.89 (1.08)	2.81 (1.33)	-.93 (1.41)	53	-4.818 (.000)***
CI 5	1.85 (1.14)	3.15 (1.56)	-1.29 (1.61)	53	-5.919 (.000)***
CI 6	1.91 (1.17)	2.70 (1.44)	-.79 (1.55)	53	-3.784 (.000)***
CI 7	1.85 (1.16)	3.04 (1.44)	-1.19 (1.56)	53	-5.601 (.000)***
CI 8	1.98 (1.07)	3.70 (1.67)	-1.72 (1.75)	53	-7.220 (.000)***
CI 9	1.83 (1.11)	2.44 (1.19)	-.61 (1.22)	53	-3.682 (.001)**
CI 10	2.04 (1.12)	4.76 (1.47)	-2.72 (1.98)	53	-10.126 (.000)***
CI 11	2.20 (1.20)	5.72 (1.43)	-3.52 (1.94)	53	-13.327 (.000)***
CI 12	1.98 (1.07)	5.13 (1.47)	-3.15 (1.77)	53	-13.040 (.000)***
CI 13	2.06 (1.12)	5.19 (1.49)	-3.13 (1.74)	53	-13.233 (.000)***
CI 14	1.93 (1.11)	2.91 (1.28)	-.98 (1.33)	53	-5.445 (.000)***
CI 15	2.20 (1.20)	3.67 (1.65)	-1.46 (1.94)	53	-5.542 (.000)***
CI 16	2.13 (1.19)	3.61 (1.69)	-1.48 (1.93)	53	-5.640 (.000)***
CI 17	2.35 (1.32)	5.11 (1.51)	-2.76 (1.83)	53	-11.068 (.000)***
CI 18	2.26 (1.33)	4.69 (1.71)	-2.43 (2.12)	53	-8.427 (.000)***
CI 19	2.37 (1.38)	5.56 (1.50)	-3.19 (2.05)	53	-11.433 (.000)***
CI 20	2.37 (1.39)	5.59 (1.57)	-3.22 (2.20)	53	-10.746 (.000)***
CI 21	2.00 (1.18)	3.35 (1.48)	-1.35 (1.56)	53	-6.384 (.000)***
CI 22	1.91 (1.12)	3.48 (1.61)	-1.57 (1.74)	53	-6.632 (.000)***
CI 23	2.04 (1.23)	3.46 (1.63)	-1.43 (1.83)	53	-5.731 (.000)***
CI 24	2.02 (1.25)	3.78 (1.79)	-1.76 (1.75)	53	-7.397 (.000)***
CI 25	2.15 (1.25)	3.50 (1.79)	-1.35 (1.89)	53	-5.270 (.000)***
CI 27	1.85 (1.19)	3.57 (1.55)	-1.72 (1.45)	53	-8.752 (.000)***
CI 28	1.81 (1.08)	3.20 (1.38)	-1.39 (1.59)	53	-6.399 (.000)***
CI 29	1.81 (1.05)	2.78 (1.22)	-.96 (1.39)	53	-5.103 (.000)***
CI 30	2.13 (1.25)	2.81 (1.03)	-.69 (1.13)	53	-4.457 (.000)***
CI 31	2.07 (1.13)	2.91 (1.29)	-.83 (1.29)	53	-4.712 (.000)***
CI 32	2.17 (1.36)	3.93 (1.69)	-1.76 (1.94)	53	-6.657 (.000)***
CI 33	2.28 (1.38)	3.76 (1.73)	-1.48 (2.06)	53	-5.278 (.000)***

p < 0.1.*p < 0.01

The researcher distributed the posttest questionnaires after the participants finished watching the reality show. They completed the questionnaires for approximately 10-15 minutes. The researcher collected the posttest questionnaires and delivered souvenirs for each of the participants.

Measurements

The measurements used in this experiment were as follows. The measurement of Cognitive Image was adopted from Echtner & Ritchie (1993) which consisted of 34 indicators. Cognitive image was measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = “totally disagree” and 7 = “totally agree”). Two indicators were not included in the final questionnaire as a result of a pilot test, leaving only 32 indicators. Affective Image measurement was adopted from Russell (1980) and Russell and Pratt (1980). The

four bipolar scales were unpleasant – pleasant, sleepy – lively, gloomy – exciting, and distressing – relaxing. Familiarity measurement was taken from Kim and Richardson (2003). Familiarity was measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = “totally disagree” and 7 = “totally agree”) on three statements. Participants were asked how much they judge themselves familiar with: lifestyle of the people in Zimbabwe; cultural/historical attractions in Zimbabwe; and landscape in Zimbabwe. To measure travel intention, the measurement used in Shani et al., (2009) was utilized here. Travel intention was measured on a seven-point Likert Scale (1 = “totally disagree” and 7 = “totally agree”) on four statements as follows: “I am aware of Zimbabwe as a suitable tourism destination”, “I am interested in getting more information about Zimbabwe”, “I have a desire to visit Zimbabwe”, and “I will book a vacation to Zimbabwe”.

Table 2. Paired Sample T Test on Affective Image

Affective destination image	Before Mean (SD)	After Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (SD)	DF	T-value (sig)
AI1	2.32 (1.27)	5.89 (1.08)	-3.57 (1.59)	53	-16.427 (.000)***
AI2	2.31 (1.34)	4.33 (1.48)	-2.02 (1.78)	53	-8.357 (.000)***
AI3	2.20 (1.29)	5.15 (1.72)	-2.94 (1.98)	53	-10.953 (.000)***
AI4	2.07 (1.16)	4.98 (1.46)	-2.91 (1.65)	53	-12.938 (.000)***

***p < 0.01

Table 3. Paired Sample T Test on Familiarity

Familiarity	Before Mean (SD)	After Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (SD)	DF	T-value (sig)
FM1	1.09 (.29)	2.59 (1.37)	-1.50 (1.38)	53	-7.965 (.000)***
FM2	1.07 (.26)	2.57 (1.45)	-1.50 (1.45)	53	-7.600 (.000)***
FM3	1.07 (.26)	3.09 (1.80)	-2.02 (1.78)	53	-8.357 (.000)***

***p < 0.01

Analytical Methods

In order to analyze the results, we use paired sample t test to compare the mean between the pretest and posttest results.

Results and Discussion

Cognitive Image

First, we investigated the changes in participants' cognitive image toward Zimbabwe before and after watching the reality show. It was found that the entire 32 indicators showed significant changes in cognitive image. The mean score of each indicator in the posttest was higher than the pretest. It indicated a better evaluation on the attributes of Zimbabwe after watching the reality show.

This result supports the theory of adapted meaning transfer model (Russell, 1998), where participants felt personal relevance with Zimbabwe by watching it on the reality show. Participants then experienced the vicarious consumption in which they felt like being in the location or destination by seeing it on reality show.

All indicators represented attributes of Zimbabwe, showed a significant change in the mean score. An interesting point is that only some attributes can be seen on the stimulus, namely the natural life or the capability of speaking and understanding English, while most of the attributes were not displayed in the stimulus. It indicates that through the reality show, participants received symbolic information about Zimbabwe. The symbolic information especially on a reality show can represent the rest of the attributes; hence, participants can give good evaluations.

This result was also supported by the nature of the reality show which focuses on reality or authenticity in its concept. When participants received the exposure of Zimbabwe through the reality show they can feel that the attributes shown were real and not purposively set to look good for filming. This is the difference between reality show and movies. There is a possibility in movies that the conditions are not real, while on the other hand, reality show programs provide more realistic situations.

Affective Image

The affective image of Zimbabwe was expected to be higher on the posttest compared to the pretest. Table 2 shows the mean changes of participants' affective image toward Zimbabwe. It can be seen that the mean score of each indicator in the posttest is higher than the pretest.

This result is in line with the adapted meaning transfer model (Russell, 1998) where there is a transfer of emotion from the reality show to the viewers. The positive emotion emerging from the reality show was transferred to the participants so they can feel the emotion towards the destination. Zajonc (1968) through mere exposure theory stated that by simply seeing a product displayed on popular media such as movies, TV serials or other reality shows, viewers will have a positive attitude toward that product. Particularly in this research, participants who saw the destination that was placed as the product will have a positive attitude towards it.

Previous researches regarding the affective image of a destination showed mix results. Shani et al., (2009) was able to prove that a negative movie can transfer negative emotions to the viewers. Rudowsky (2013) and Yang (2011) found horror movies and crime movies create negative feelings towards the destination. However, none

Table 4. Paired Sample T Test on Travel Intention

Travel Intention	Before Mean (SD)	After Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (SD)	DF	T-value (sig)
TI1	2.19 (1.17)	5.46 (1.46)	-3.28 (1.71)	53	-14.092 (.000)***
TI2	2.91 (1.73)	4.85 (1.66)	-1.94 (2.12)	53	-6.731 (.000)***
TI3	2.80 (1.55)	4.93 (1.67)	-2.13 (2.12)	53	-7.384 (.000)***
TI4	2.19 (1.29)	3.89 (1.82)	-1.70 (2.01)	53	-6.241 (.000)***

*** $p < 0.01$

of the previous researches was able to prove that positive movies or programs can derive positive feelings. It is assumed that this phenomenon cannot be found in movies because there is a possibility of displacement. Displacement is a condition when the location introduced in film is not the real shooting location (Bolan, Boy, & Bell, 2011). The film maker or producer sometimes takes this action to reduce the production cost. On the other hand, this issue is less prominent in reality shows because the content of reality shows is perceived to be authentic.

Familiarity

The third construct investigated in this paper was familiarity. Based on the hypothesis, the familiarity towards the destination was expected to be higher after watching the stimulus. The results showed support for the hypothesis.

It can be seen from the table that all indicators of familiarity show significant difference between the pretest and the posttest. Mean score of each indicator in the posttest was higher than the pretest. Even though the change is descriptively small, but it was able to prove that familiarity towards the destination statistically increased after watching a reality show containing the destination. According to adapted meaning transfer model, the participants have vicarious consumption or vicarious experience (Kim & Ricardson, 2003). By watching the reality show, the participants can imagine themselves visiting the place and interacting with the characters. In movies, everyone are actors, hence, the interactions should follow the script prepared beforehand. In contrast, a reality show does not require the person to follow a script because they can act as they want. That explains why this result is strongly supported through reality show.

Travel Intention

Travel intention was expected to be higher on the posttest than the pretest. Like other papers on tourism, the travel intention is an important construct because through intention, marketers will be able to predict the future behavior of the tourist. This research found that travel intention increased after watching the destination on the reality show.

It can be seen from the Table 4 that all indicators show significant change. After watching stimulus that showed Zimbabwe, participants' intention to travel to Zimbabwe increased. To be more specific, if we look at the mean difference, the largest change happened to TI1, followed by TI3, then TI2 and TI4, consecutively. These results indicate that the reality show triggered participants' awareness of Zimbabwe and increased the desire to visit that country. Meanwhile, the exposure of destination in a reality show triggered the intention to book a vacation, but there was just a little change. That can happen because participants or viewers may need more information about Zimbabwe for them to increase the intention to book a vacation to Zimbabwe. Croy & Walker (2003) argued that by seeing a destination displayed in popular media such as movies or reality shows, the viewers will have the intention to visit that destination.

Conclusions

The change in participants' destination image, familiarity, and travel intention towards Zimbabwe happened in positive direction and overall indicated that exposure towards a destination on a reality show can change those perceptions. To be more specific, after receiving destination exposure in the reality show, viewers gave higher or more positive evaluation towards the attributes of the destination; viewers favored the destination more than those who did not watch reality show. Furthermore, viewers felt more familiar with the lifestyle, the culture, and the landscape of the destination after watching the reality show and conclusively, they had a higher intention to visit that destination.

The theoretical implication of this research lies in the several aspects as follows. This research enriches the literature of product placement where a reality show acts as the placement media. From the point of view of the product, this research contributes by placing destination as a product promoted through popular media. This research also contributes in supporting the adapted meaning transfer model through reality show. Furthermore, this research is the first to study the change of familiarity toward the destination after watching a reality show.

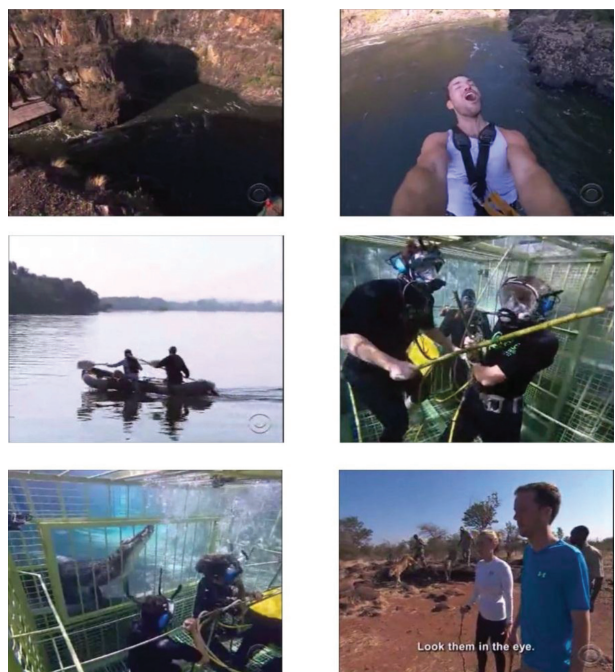
The managerial implication of this research focuses on the utilization of a reality show as a media to promote a destination. The results show that viewers will have a more positive evaluation towards the attributes of a destination; they will favor the destination; feel more familiar with it and will have more intention to travel to the destination they saw in the reality show. Government or destination marketers can invite the producer of reality shows to conduct the filming in their destinations. A reality show is more flexible than a movie because a movie only consisted of limited duration while a reality show has a number of episodes, hence, creating more opportunity for destination marketers to promote their destinations.

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Appendix



Screenshots of Video Stimulus of Reality Show 'The Amazing Race'