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Assessing the Situational Analysis of Heritage Tourism Industry in Melaka

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Abstract

Conservationists propose a stringent approach in protecting heritage site from possible adverse effects such as damage, pollution, and social issues. Yet, promoters of tourism eagerly want to sell out this highly potential locality for what it worth. Thus, this paper has set the objectives to look into i) the current heritage tourism trend in Melaka World Heritage City, ii) to evaluate the current marketing strategies that has been used, and iii) to measure the tourist perception for the heritage tourism in case study of tourism Melaka. Adopting several key marketing tools such as PESTEL, SWOT/TOWS, this research finding is essential in providing sustainable approach to benefit both stakeholders; the conservationists and promoters of heritage tourism. On top of that, to measure the successfulness of current strategies, perception of tourists on Melaka heritage tourism is analyzed using the mean test. Overall results from these tests provide a glimpse of ideas, both from service providers and tourists' point of views.

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1. Introduction

Palmer in Sorensen and Carman (2009) states that heritage tourism enables people to conceive imagine and authenticates their national imagination. Visits to heritage places may encourage visitors including locals to take pride in their nation's history. Orbasli (2000) quotes that heritage provokes a sense of being part of and belonging to place and community in the individuals.

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Promoters and conservationists are always tipping their toes when the issue of sustainability marketing for heritage tourism is in discussion. On one hand, promoters' job is to market the venue as a highly compelling site to visit, but in the other hand, conservationists are afraid of the adverse effects brought by excessive tourism activities to the heritage site. On the same note, there is no doubt that the commercialization of heritage can generate revenue to help conserve heritage resources, but for this to happen there have to be measures to facilitate this transfer of funds. Too often, income from publicly owned heritage simply disappears into general budgets, rather than being reinvested in the heritage resources themselves (Swarbrooke, 2002). In the case of Melaka, a unique local competitiveness creates a strong foundation for heritage tourism in the state to flourish. Tourism Melaka has been tapping this advantage and put this industry as a main propeller for Melaka GDP growth. With the inscription of Banda Hilir as World Heritage Site (WHS) by UNESCO, Melaka will face dilemma of 'chicken and egg' in choosing either commercialization or conservation of heritage (tangible and intangible) in Melaka.

Thus, to understand and formulate solution for this problem, this study is focused to find answers based on the following objectives:

1. To identify the external factors that influence marketing strategies for heritage tourism in Melaka
2. To study the internal strengths and weaknesses that contribute towards building marketing strategy as a key functional area in Melaka Tourism
3. To analyze sustainable approach for Melaka heritage tourism industry

2. Research Design and Methodology

People are tending to visit attractive places and have an intention to experience others' cultures, to understand the lifestyle, and discover the uniqueness of other country. Despite the emerging of the tourism market around the world, it has given impact directly or indirectly to the heritage both to tangible and intangible heritage product. It has been identified there is a gap between commercialization and conservation of both products based on the journal that has been written previously. The academic construct summarizes the whole analyses process. The analyses commence from SWOT analysis, followed by the PESTEL analysis to understand the situational factors, internal and external analysis. The components of the marketing plan were explained by using 7ps marketing Mix. As part of research objective 3, questionnaires are used to study people (tourists) perception towards heritage tourism.

Due to the nature of this research is more consultative in nature; the conclusive research design was adopted throughout this study. The research is confined to a case study. Primary and secondary data were gathered and analyzed by using strategic marketing tools. The usage of strategic marketing tools over the primary and secondary data will established a data that can be used to analyze the connection between commercialization with conservation towards sustainable marketing of heritage tourism.

3. Findings

To answer Objective 1, research has used PESTEL and SWOT analysis in indentifying the strength, weakness, opportunities & threat and also the external factors has provide information on identifying the external factors that influence the marketing strategies. Results indicated that Melaka has been a preferred tourist location in heritage tourism sector resulted from the political stability. Having UNESCO World Heritage status, gives Melaka extra boost to its award winning strengths. Cultural diversity, multiculturalism and ample accommodation make Melaka city is a good choice to visit. More development opportunities have been offered which may bring more economic stability in the state that creates more opportunities for local people. It can be said that from the findings, the local people in Melaka has gain advantage result of the growth of tourism. Therefore, the used of both methods of analysis has help to answer Objective 1 which is to understand the current industry trend for heritage tourism in Melaka.

For Objective 2, several notable findings were found including, but not limited to, the booming interest in heritage and cultural tourism has helped the tourism agency to develop more products in order to promote the interest among the local and also international tourist. Since been crowned as one of the heritage cities, the tourism industry has contributes more in the state revenue yearly. Besides offering the heritage and historical monuments,

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