

Strategies to sell seoul as a leisure destination tourism essay



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\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [2. Seoul as a tourist destination](#) \n \t
3. [3. Analysis of tourists visiting Seoul](#) \n \t
4. [4. International events for national image and tourism](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

This diploma paper introduces Seoul, the growing market as a leisure destination. The purpose of this paper is to find and suggest ways for Seoul to become a popular leisure destination for Europeans. The paper starts with introduction to Seoul, analysis of tourists who visit Seoul. Furthermore, this paper provides three ways for Seoul to become a popular leisure destination for Europeans by clear three steps including increasing awareness, marketing which gives Europeans motivation and information, and an improvement on Seoul as a tourist city.

Chapter one is an introduction to this paper, which gives a general thought about Seoul as a leisure destination.

In chapter two, there will be a closer look at Seoul. Starting from general introduction to South Korea, this chapter shows tourism industry in South Korea and a few attractions in Seoul which are divided into both traditional and modern points.

Chapter three deals specifically with statistics related to visitors of South Korea, concentrating on difference between Asian and European visitors.

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Then, it leads to stepping stone of ways for Seoul to become popular among European leisure-oriented travelers.

Chapter four shows the importance of international events in terms of national image and tourism. To build awareness and images of South Korea is linked for Europeans to be motivated to think about visiting South Korea. This chapter will explain this and gives a case.

In chapter five, Hong Kong which is the one of the most popular destination in Asia is analyzed to be compared to Seoul. By understanding and learning from the metropolis, Hong Kong, the milestone of next two chapters about marketing strategies and development of Seoul will be set up.

Chapter six suggests marketing strategies to sell Seoul as a leisure destination for Europeans. As marketing strategies, the roles of government and media will be shown.

Chapter seven is about how to improve Seoul as a leisure destination. Through SWOT analysis, a few points will be suggested to develop Seoul to attract Europeans.

In chapter eight, the last chapter, there is a conclusion based on all the chapters of why this research is important and published.

Introduction

This diploma paper was created to find and suggest ways for Seoul to become a popular leisure destination for Europeans. The capital city of South Korea, Seoul, has many both traditional and modern attractions and great

potentials to attract Europeans as a city tourism destination. However, it is not as much well-known as the fascinating cities in Asia such as Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Shanghai.

For Europeans, Asia would seem to be somewhere new and adventurous. Since they do not know and are curious about the continent, their expectations of what they want to experience are somewhat oriental. However, some major cities like Tokyo are very westernized, modern but yet have their own uniqueness based on traditions and culture. Moreover, they would like to go to those places and see the real lives of the country. This is called 'City Tourism', which means that the city itself has lots of tourist attractions of accommodation, transportation, amusement facilities, culture, and food to make people from outside to be motivated to visit.

Those both sides of attracts encourage Europeans to see oriental, traditional Asian parts and experience the real life of metropolis in Asia. In that respect, Seoul has true colors of South Korea's culture and tradition behind and yet as a metropolis of more than 10 millions of residents, tourists would be able to see and experience how Korean live. In other words, Seoul has the real charms of pull Europeans.

Then, why Seoul is not yet the popular and concerned destination for Europeans to travel? This paper demonstrates the reasons and answers for the question. First reason is that South Korea is still not well-known, especially for European tourists, which leads to the fact that it is crucial to increase Europeans' awareness of national images so that they would know and be motivated to visit South Korea. Also, there is lack of marketing

strategies for Europeans to be encouraged to travel Seoul. Finally, Seoul should be improved more in terms of tourism industry, including cultural tourism, various activities and events for tourists, the needs of overcome language barriers, and so on.

South Korea was not the destination for leisure purposes until late of 1980s. After holding successful Olympics in Seoul, the world had started looking at the country differently, while images of South Korea would have been poor and developing country after the Korea War. Furthermore, 2002 World Cup Korea Japan has definitely helped Korea to become a tourist destination that people talk about. Importance of international events, which will be acquainted later in chapter 5, is one of the major factors for a country to be well-known and improve tourism industry.

2. Seoul as a tourist destination

Introduction to South Korea

Geographically South Korea is located in East Asia, between China and Japan. The Korean peninsula is roughly 1,030 km long and 175 km wide at its narrowest point. The land area is 99,200 sq km, and it has a population of 48.6 million people. From Gojoseon which was the first form of country to after Japanese occupation, Korean War and division, Korea has more than 5,000 years of history. After Korean War and division from North Korea, the Republic of Korea had developed economy remarkably from 1960 to 1980s, which is called 'Miracle on the Han River'. South Korea is a member of the OECD, and is classified as a high-income economy by the World Bank and an

advanced economy by the IMF and CIA. South Korea is now a member of G-20 and will hold the annual G-20 meeting in 2010.

History of tourism industry in South Korea

Along the development of economy, tourism industry also has been growing. This figure shows that the number of people visiting Korea from other countries rise remarkably from 11, 109 in the year of 1961 to 6, 155, 047 in 2006. Especially, between 1980 and 1992, Asia-Pacific region moved from being a minor player in the international tourism scene to becoming the fastest-growing and most talked about region of the world. And one of the fastest-growing markets was South Korea according to WTO (World Tourism Organization).

Figure 1. Visitor Arrivals in South Korea from 1961-2006

Introduction to Seoul

Seoul is the capital city of South Korea. With a population of over 10 million, it is one of the world's largest cities. It is also the second largest metropolitan area. Seoul is located on the Han River in the center of the Korean Peninsula. Even though it may not be the center of South Korea geographically, Seoul is definitely the center of economy, politics, culture, and transport. Also, it is known as the hub of East Asia.

Not surprisingly, this figure shows that among foreign visitors to South Korea, more than 70 percent of them visit Seoul.

Year

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2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

Visitors (%)

85.0

80.9

78.1

76.8

73.4

Figure 2. Percentage of foreign visitors to Seoul taken from total population of foreign visitors to Korea

Seoul is a very attractive city which has both oriental and modern characteristics. Traditional places such as palaces, temples, and traditional house villages attract people from the West as oriental attractions which are unfamiliar and interesting. Also, Seoul as a modern metropolitan city which shows how westernized Seoul is.

Seoul as an oriental destination in Asia

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Gyeongbokgung (Gyeongbok Palace)

(Seoul has been a capital city for approximately 600 years. Therefore, there are a lot of palaces, especially the ancient royal palaces of the Joseon Dynasty: Gyeongbokgung, Deoksugung, Changdeokgung, and Changgyeonggung.) Gyeongbokgung is the first palace of the Joseon Dynasty which was built in 1395 and remained the core nucleus of autocratic rule through much of Joseon period. It was the palace where the head of state conducted important matters, received foreign envoys, and assembled his court in royal rituals. Enthronements also took place here. (It is 340, 000 m² (square meter).)

Remarkably, the most representative edifices of the Joseon Dynasty, Gyeonghoe-ru Pavilion and Hyangwonjeong Pond are still relatively in tact. Woldae and the sculptures of Geunjeongjeon (The Royal Audience Chamber) represent the past sculpture art which was the trend back then.

The National Palace Museum of Korea is located south of Heungnyemun Gate, and the National Folk Museum is located east within Hyangwonjeong.

Bongeunsa (Bongeun Temple)

One of the unique facts which attract people from Western countries is Korean Buddhism. Bongeunsa is one of only a few traditional Buddhist temples found in the city. Surprisingly, it is located in the busy, fast-paced part of the World Trade Center area. It is a pleasant place not only for Korean to visit but also for travelers to get to know Korean Buddhism culture. ‘

Temple Stay’ is what people can experience daily lives in a temple and learn

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Buddhism culture and spirits. In fact, lots of visitors stay there from few hours to 2 days to get to know Korean Buddhism, exotic culture.

Bukchon Hanok Village

There are traditional Korean houses remained in Bukchon Hanok Village. Most of houses are residences, but there are galleries, traditional workshops which sell fine jewelries, Korean restaurants, and minbak (Korean traditional Bed & Breakfast).

Insa-dong (Insa District)

Insa-dong, located in the middle of the city, is an important place where old but precious and traditional goods are on display. Galleries, traditional restaurants, traditional teahouses, and cafes take place the whole area. The shops in Insa-dong are very popular among all age groups, because each one is unique. For young people especially, cheap but yet traditional and fine goods are sold in carts on the street. There are about 100 galleries in the area which travelers can see every example of traditional Korean fine art from paintings to sculptures.

Seoul as a modern city

N Seoul Tower

N Seoul Tower is the landmark of Seoul. It is located on top of Namsan Mountain and is a place where you can get fine views of Seoul. Built in 1969, it was a satellite tower but opened to the public in 1980. Besides fine views,

the tower has restaurants, cafes, and shops. Lighting show which takes place every night is also attractive for visitors.

Myeong-dong (Myeong District)

Myeong-dong is a massive shopping district where has all kinds of brand name shops and department stores are clustered along the streets and alleyways. Myeong-dong also has family restaurants, fast food, and Korean, Western and Japanese food.

Hangang (Han River) and Cheonggyecheon (Cheonggye Stream)

A place of relaxation and convenient waterway transportation, the Hangang River is the center of Seoul's urban renewal. Visitors come to the banks of the Hangang for leisure and recreation, an urban respite from the hectic pace of everyday life.

Cheonggye Stream had been the biggest wholesale market in Seoul for more than 40 years after the Korean War. However, after renovation construction in 2003, it is now a beautiful tourist attraction and a leisure place for Koreans. Beautiful 22 bridges are decorated with 9, 000 lights and 1, 500, 000 plants. Its length is 5. 84 kilometer and 12. 04 kilometer of walking paths are available. Especially, during December, the light show installed in the Cheonggye square which is the end of the stream is stunning.

COEX

The COEX (Convention and Exhibition) building serves as the World Trade Center Seoul that includes a convention center, exhibition hall, and mall. It is

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a place for international conferences and cultural and arts events. It has successfully held the 3rd ASEM, the Noble Peace Prize, OECD international workshop, and many other international conferences. It has more than 200 exhibitions and over 2, 000 international conferences and events annually. The COEX mall which is an underground shopping mall is the largest shopping center in Seoul. Also, it constitutes many other leisure places such as Aquarium, Megabox Movie Theater, Kimchi field museum, event court, and food court. Especially, Aquarium has more than 40, 000 fish of 600 species and dozens of large sharks. Moreover, two chain hotels are connected to the place.

Hongdae area

Hongdae stands for Hongik University but also around the university, the area is for nightlife, various activities, and art performance. A lot of youngsters in Seoul spend their free time clubbing, shopping and enjoying gigs in this area. Especially, the last Friday of each month in Hongdae is “ Club Day”, a wristband-powered event which allows entry to more than a dozen major clubs for the price of one.

Itaewon

Itaewon district is a place where various foreign cultures gather. Located between the southern slopes of Mountain Namsan and the Han River It started in the early 20th century, when it was a residential district for Japanese colonialists. Foreign communities form in the place, therefore many restaurants serving international dishes are found in this area including

cuisine from India, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, Thailand, and Mexico, foods that are not widely available in Korea.

3. Analysis of tourists visiting Seoul

This chapter acquaints with analysis of tourists visiting Seoul, South Korea. Based on the 'International Visitor Survey 2008' which was published by KTO (Korea Tourism Organization), this chapter will determine characteristics of visitors to South Korea, reasons why Asians travel South Korea more than Europeans do, which leads to differences between Eastern and Western tourists to South Korea. Also, this chapter includes key points which lead to answer the question; how Seoul can attract Europeans.

It is important to mention that most of statistics and surveys used in this chapter are based on South Korea, not Seoul. However, since more than 70 percent of visitors to South Korea travel Seoul, those figures are clearly explained to figure out about Seoul.

3. 1. Statistics of visitors to South Korea

First of all, the figure is provided to show you percentage of visitors to South Korea in 2008. In 2008, the total number of visitors to South Korea was 6,890,841. 72.7 percent of visitors which means that 5,018,219 were from Asian countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan, and Thailand. The second largest proportion of the pie was people from Americas. The number of Europeans who visited South Korea in 2008 is 592,303, which is 8.6 percent. 1.9 percent of visitors were from Oceania and 1.1 percent of visitors to South Korea were from Middle East such as Turkey. The smallest percentage, 0.4 percent of visitors was Africans in 2008.

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Figure 3. Percentage of visitors to South Korea

The pie shows that visitors are mainly from Asia. To indicate this fact more obviously, the chart below is provided to see from which countries are the most visitors to South Korea. Clearly, the massive numbers of visitors are from near countries to South Korea such as Japan and China while only Russia is included this chart.

Top 10 countries travelling South Korea (2008)

Rank

Country

1

Japan

2

China

3

United States

4

Taiwan

5

Philippines

6

Thailand

7

Hong Kong

8

Russia (Federation)

9

Canada

10

Australia

Figure 4. Top 10 countries travelling South Korea (2008)

3. 2. Reasons why Asian travel South Korea more than Europeans

Since more than 70 percent of travelers to South Korea are Asians, it is critical to find ways to attract Europeans by comparing with Asians, especially Japanese and Chinese who visit South Korea the most. Therefore, this sup-chapter will demonstrate reasons why Asian travel South Korea. There are several reasons why Asians travel South Korea more than

Europeans such as geographical locations, more accessibility, Asians knowing South Korea and its culture well, and the 'Korean Wave'.

3. 2. 1. Geographical reasons

First of all, Asian countries especially Japan and China are nearer to South Korea than other countries so that it is easier and cheaper for people from those countries to visit South Korea. It takes an hour to visit Seoul from Tokyo, Shanghai, and Beijing by airplanes. For them, it might be even nearer to travel Seoul rather than other cities in their own countries and it is still other country which motivates them to travel for leisure purpose. Because of geographical factor, there is more accessibility for Japanese and Chinese to visit Seoul. While almost people from other countries visit South Korea by airplanes, some of Japanese and Chinese travel South Korea by ships. As an example of comparison, there are approximately 30 flights in one day from Seoul to Tokyo, 26 flights from Seoul to Beijing, while only 5 flights in one day from Seoul to Paris.

3. 2. 2. Cultural reasons

Since China, Japan, and Korea are located all in Northeast Asia, they have some common and similar cultures behind them even though they all are individually unique. Therefore, tourists from China and Japan to South Korea feel more comfortable about travelling South Korea because they know the country. Moreover, they have more knowledge and experience about South Korea from education, media, and so on.

3. 2. 3. The Korean wave

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The Korean wave refers to the significantly increased popularity of South Korean culture around the world since the 21st century. The term was coined in China in mid-1999 by Beijing journalists surprised by the fast growing popularity of South Koreans and South Korean goods in China. Globalization has had an impact on pop culture to be opened to foreign countries for last decade. Especially, Korean TV dramas are really popular among Asian countries through the whole generations.

As an example, Japan is the one of the countries influenced by Korean pop culture popularities, which leads to increase of Japanese travelers to South Korea. NHK, Japan's public broadcaster introduced Winter Sonata as the first South Korean TV drama shown on its satellite channel in 2003. The TV drama created many syndromes about itself and because of its explosive popularity, Winter Sonata was aired twice in the same year and NHK published novels based on the screenplay and program guidebooks, as well as to produce DVDs, CDs and videos for both entertainment and for learning Korean. Meanwhile, travel agencies offer tour packages that highlight shooting locations of Winter Sonata and rare moments to meet the stars. The economic effects of Winter Sonata in South Korea have enormously benefited not only the entertainment but tourism industries, as well. As a result from Korean Wave, Japanese visitors accounted for 41.6% of 1.99 million visitors to South Korea in 2004.

3. 3. Differences between Asian and European visitors

There are mainly two obvious differences between Asian and European travelers; purposes of their visits and places that they visited. This

subchapter will indicate the basis to determine ways to bring more Europeans to visit Seoul.

3. 3. 1. Purpose of visit

Generally speaking, the percentages of business-oriented visitors and leisure-oriented travelers to South Korea are similar in 2008 according to the pie given below. Those two constitute more than 80 percent. However, people who visited for business/professional activities are slightly more than people who came to South Korea for leisure/entertainment/vacation reasons.

Figure 5. Purpose of visit (2008)

According to the chart below which shows the nationality and purpose of visit, there is a significant difference between Asian and European travelers. Asians, especially Japan and Taiwan, tend to visit South Korea with leisure purpose, while there are more Europeans who came for business or professional activities than those who came for leisure purpose. The difference between business and leisure purposes is more than six times among Europeans.

The Number of Case

Business/Professional activities (%)

Leisure/Entertainment/Vacation (%)

Friends/Family visit (%)

Total

11, 978

42. 0

40. 4

11. 5

Japan

4, 318

25. 6

63. 2

8. 9

China

2, 128

39. 2

37. 1

13. 1

United States

1, 108

57. 3

12. 2

23. 9

Taiwan

587

29. 3

62. 9

4. 5

Russia (Fed.)

249

68. 5

10. 6

10. 8

Canada

190

50. 8

15. 8

28. 5

Australia

175

50.6

25.0

11.9

Germany

165

76.9

8.7

9.8

England

159

76.0

8.3

10.9

Figure 6. Comparison of purpose of visit (2008)

3.3.2. Attractions in Seoul

There are two statistics about popular attractions in Seoul given. According to the first chart, the most visited place with 52.8 percent is Myeong-dong where has various shopping places and restaurants. The second and third most visited attractions are both market but yet have different characteristics. Dongdaemun market is also famous place for shopping different items, mostly clothing. Travelers who visit Namdaemun market discover this place very interesting. Because everything from cheap electronic products to vegetables, live fishes supposed to be cut and sold right away shows the real looks of Koreans. Also, they could find some traditional goods in cheap prices. 43.7 percent of answers to the survey dedicates to ancient palaces. Other places from Insa-dong where keeps traditional looks on the whole district to N Seoul Tower, the landmark of Seoul and Lotte World, the largest amusement park are visited by international visitors.

Figure 7. Places Visited in Seoul

However, a clear difference of the most visited place between Asians and Europeans is determined. For Asians, the most visited places are Myeong-dong and Dongdaemun market, which shows that they liked to go shopping in Seoul. Meanwhile, ancient palaces attract Europeans including English, German, French, and Russians according to the survey.

Country

Japan

China

Taiwan

England

Germany

France

Russia

The most visited place

Myeong-dong

Dongdaemun market

Dongdaemun market

Ancient palaces

Ancient palaces

Ancient palaces

Ancient palaces

Percent

74.9 %

63.9 %

82.5 %

49.2 %

56.8 %

63.6 %

52.9 %

Figure 8. The most visited place

3.4. Conclusion

Based on figures analyzed in this chapter, three main conclusions are determined in order to sell Seoul as a famous and popular destination for Europeans. First of all, Europeans' awareness of Korea should be increased so that they are motivated to travel. Secondly, not only to increase Europeans' awareness but also to promote tourism industry, the government should do more marketing and advertising through various and effective ways. At last but not least, Seoul itself should become a more attractive and comfortable tourist destination. And that needs several factors like preserving traditional attractions, solving language barriers. From next chapter, this paper will fully concentrate on those three points.

4. International events for national image and tourism

This chapter focuses on national images and their impacts on tourism as the first step to bring more Europeans into visiting Seoul. The reason why this chapter is the first means is that raising their awareness is created by raising well-known, attractive and positive national images. At first, definition and importance of national images will be introduced, and then this chapter will

deal with international events, which help effectively a venue to be known. To hold international events such as Olympic Games, Football World Cup, and exhibitions are crucial for a city or country to raise its images, which eventually make tourists motivated and attracted to visit before, during, and after the event. At the end of this chapter, there will be a case study about 2002 World Cup Korea Japan to demonstrate it.

4. 1. National images

Since the advance of globalisation, national image and reputation have become more critical assets in the modern world. In order to build national images, governments try to develop those under the name of ' national branding' as a marketing technique. The reputations of countries are similar to the brand images of companies and products.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a " name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers. The brand resides within the hearts and minds of customers, clients, and prospects. It is the sum total of their experiences and perceptions, some of which you can influence, and some that you cannot. To succeed in branding you must understand the needs and wants of your customers and prospects. Likewise, a country needs to build its own images in order to understand and attract target audiences including foreign tourists.

Every country has its own characteristics, also referred as brand images. As mentioned above, some national images built in target audiences cannot be <https://assignbuster.com/strategies-to-sell-seoul-as-a-leisure-destination-tourism-essay/>

influenced by the government's efforts. Because those images are formed by personal experience, the media, and so on. However, the government could improve and create positive and attractive national images to make potential tourists consider visiting the city or country by national branding.

Images about tourism tend to last until the reality.

" Charming images" promote collecting information and activity to try to visit the destination.

Formed images become expectations about the destination.

Expectations have impacts on evaluations.

Influence on images depends on the degree of knowledge and experience of the destination.

Figure 9. Seoho Uhm 1998, " The study about measuring destination images" - The study of tourism

The figure above was published by a Korean expert from the institute of tourism in University of Kyonggi. It shows that images of destination are built not only by actual attributes of the destination but by potential tourists and their desires of travel activities.

4. 2. Impact of international events on tourism