Amsterdam tourism marketing condition tourism essay

\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

\n \t

\n[/toc]\n \n

Amsterdam has long been regarded as diversified, international city. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe, in 2008, 4. 5 million visitors stayed over in Amsterdam. The city break market's significance and economic value is increasingly being acknowledged by city managers and administrators (Dunne, 2007). Domestic tourists constantly account for about 20% of Amsterdam tourist arrivals, followed by 18% of U. K tourists and 11% U. S tourists[1].

In 2009, due to the economic recession, during the first six months of 2009 the number of bed nights of international guests continued to decrease, with the UK (-23%), Spain (-20%) and the US (-9%)[2]. The significant change in 2009 tourism was the increase of Spain tourists and tourists from BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China). This indicated that no matter within or outside Europe, even during economic recession, the market potential would be worth exploring in the future.

What makes a potential tourist come to Amsterdam? Before they start the trip, they have a perception of this city, which refers to destination image. The importance of the tourist destination's image is universally acknowledged, since it affects the individual's subjective perception and consequent behaviour and destination choice (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). That is to say, destination image motivates people travelling.

Hall and O'Sullivan (1996) proposed that the creation of a destination image is based on three elements: (a) Returning tourists through word-of-mouth reporting, (b) Media reporting and image-making and (c) Government policies and interests. Supported by Seddighi et al. (2001), stated that " perceptions about country image are formed through advertising and promotion, news accounts, conversation with friends and relatives, travel agents and past experiences" (2001, p. 182), suggesting that the attractiveness of destination needs an informative city image.

In the three elements mentioned above, returning tourists reporting and media reporting are important factors in motivating people visiting Amsterdam. Amsterdam has various types of recreational areas that serve different types of tourists. Comparing with Berlin, Paris and Rome, Amsterdam has its language advantage. Amsterdam inhabitants speak fluent Nederlands and sufficient English. This creates an accommodating and friendly tourist environment. What's more, the general hygiene of Amsterdam is well maintained. This city is relaxing and has no specific religion restrains. As a result, word-of-mouth would be generally good.

The second factor, media reporting and image-making, is the part that can be improved. And the improvement will make significant difference in motivating more people coming to Amsterdam. It has a lot to do with target marketing. The city image of Amsterdam is diversified. On one hand, it could be a good thing: any types of tourists will find that this city fit them. However, it makes Amsterdam an optional place to visit. If potential tourists are not fully motivated to come to Amsterdam, they can easily change their destination to Paris or Madrid. It is important for Amsterdam to have specific image to target tourist groups.

As to government policies, Amsterdam has a stable and safe social environment. Despite marijuana and prostitution are legal in this city, the crime rate holds medium to low comparing with other EU cities. And these two factors are attracting a lot of curious tourists and generating money from them.

The local government of Amsterdam is making an effort to promote tourism. It is obvious this city welcomes tourist, for instance, the spread of tourist information office and tickets centres, English introductions in major tram lines to entertainment area. So this element can be regarded as accomplished.

2. Tourist Segmentation and Motivation

2. 1 Demographic Breakdowns

Collectively, previous studies have demonstrated that tourists with different cultural backgrounds may show differences in their motivations, preferred tourism resources, and behavioural characteristics (Chen et al. 2000).

According to the factsheet 2009 of Amsterdam, the main travellers are from EU countries (76%). The geographic category is: The Netherlands, U. K, U. S, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, rest of Europe, Asia, rest of America, Africa and Oceania. Since tourism is a price sensitive industry, the demographic should include income. Educational background and age are also parts of tourist profile.

2. 2 Subjective Culture Groups

Hofstede (1980) found that people from different societies varied in terms of four subjective cultural aspects, including power distance, masculinity-femininity, individualism-collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance.

Power distance refers to the degree to which cultures encourage or maintain status differences between power holders. Masculinity-femininity refers to the relative emphasis on achievement which characterizes gender distinctions in some national cultures. Individualism means one's identity is by determined by personal choices and achievement. Collectivism has to do with one's identity is determined by the character of the collective groups to which one is attached. Uncertainty avoidance has to do with the degree to which societies and cultures develop ways to deal with the anxiety and stress of uncertainty (Kim, 1999).

Previous research showed that western and Asian culture has distinctive difference with respect to four subjective cultural aspects (Enright, 1994; Dann, 1981). Power distance is bigger in Asian countries than in western countries. This implies the way people wanted to be accommodated differs when the culture backround changes. Gender and religion issue could arise

by travellers from Middle Eastern countries, for example, gender-separated prayer room would be appreciated by Muslims, while people from Japan and China probably would not pay much attention to it.

What's more, individualism is more appreciated in western countries while collectivism is an idea that commonly shared by Asian countries. The implication would be different focus when advertising Amsterdam. In western countries, DIY booklet of city tour would be more popular. In Asian countries, group easy access would satisfy potential travellers.

People from different subjective cultural groups tend to link themselves with preferred city image of Amsterdam. So the city image of Amsterdam should have a different focus on media in different countries.

2. 3 Motivation Factors

Motivation has been referred to as psychological/biological/social needs and wants, including internal (or emotional) and external forces (Dann, 1981). In the context of tourist motivation, internal force is the desire to go travelling; external forces could be public holiday, attractive city experience, budget, etc. Motivation based segmentation helps marketers determine why visitors are consuming a product or service, and suggests the means by which visitors' desires can be met (Oh et al., 1995). Therefore, tourist motivation studies are useful in developing product, promotion, and segmentation strategies.

Analysis of tourist motivation attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationship among the push and pull motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty (Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

According to Uysal & Hagan (1993), these forces describe how individuals are pushed by 6 motivation variables into making travel decisions and how they are pulled or attracted by destination attributes. " Push" factors are defined as origin-related and refer the intangible, intrinsic desires of the individual traveler, such as desire to escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, health and prestige. " Pull" factors are defined mainly related to the attractiveness of a given destination and tangible characteristics such as beaches, accommodation and recreation facilities and cultural and historical resources (Uysal & Hagan, 1993).

Goossens (2000) describes push and pull factors of tourist behavior as, " two sides of the same motivational coin" (2000, p. 302) and further posits that the psychological concept, emotion, connects both sides with needs functioning as a pushing motivation and benefits as a pulling motivation.

More specifically, Kozak (2002) has categorized motivation push and pull factors into four subcategories: culture, pleasure-seeking/fantasy, relaxation, physical (2002, p. 226). These four factors can be used in measuring tourist motivation. While Kay (2009) categorized motives as: social consumption, novelty, learn local culture and relaxation. These two categories shared similarity and have differences.

3. Marketing implication

The travel market is often divided into four types of markets: personal business travel, government or corporate business travel, visiting friends and family, and leisure travel. Market segmentation is based on the profiles of

target groups and measuring the attractiveness of the market (Zhang et al. 2007).

In this paper, the main focus will be on leisure travel, because three types mentioned above are not sensitive to marketing strategies. They can be regarded as more fixed travel pattern on a fixed schedule and destination.

4. Theoretical Framework

Motivations:

1. Relaxation

2. Social consumption

3. Pleasure-seeking/Novelty

4. Local culture

Marketing implication of leisure travel to Amsterdam

Subjective Culture Groups