Tourist motivations essay sample

A tourist motivation is an effective study to understand the purpose of tourists travel. There is a two-way relationship between motivation and the attraction, the motivation could affect the destination and the destination could also alter the visitor's motivation. In order make the destination to be a successful one, it is an advantage for the tourist attraction to understanding of tourist motivations and the market segmentation. In this essay, the Walt Disneyland in California and the Ocean Park Hong Kong are used as case studies. In completing this, the essay will be presented in four sections.

The first section will explain what tourist motivation is and examine whether it is an advantage for a tourists attraction. The second section will provide background information to the two selected theme parks, Walt Disneyland and Ocean Park Hong Kong. In the third section, explain market segmentation, investigate which market segment(s) might be motivated to visit this type of attraction and to show how motivations alter the contents of the destination. Finally, discuss the future of the attraction.

What is motivation?

Goossens (2000: 302) defined " motivation occurs when an individual wants to satisfy a need". From the former stream of motivation literature, tourists' motivation can be understood by the Crompton's (1993 cited in Chuo and Heywood 2006: 74) Push and Pull model. In his model, tourists motivation is divided into two forces, the " push" force included the factor of origin-related, for instance, the " intangible, intrinsic desires of a tourist such as the desire for escape" (Chuo et al. 2006: 74). The " pull" force refers to the tangible features, for instance, " recreation facilities and the unique scenic,

cultural, or historical resources of a given destination" (Uysal and Hagan 1993 cited in Chuo 2006: 74).

On the other hand, The Leisure Ladder Model (LLM) suggested by Pearce (1993 cited in Chuo et al. 2006: 75) categorized tourists into groups by their main purpose of visit. He also stated that the model's idea is base on other researcher's findings; he modified the contents and finally come up with the Leisure Ladder Model especially to reflect the motivations of visitors to theme park settings.

The model contains five ascending levels of motivations to visit theme parks change over time, the five ascending levels are " relaxation/ bodily needs, simulation, relationship, self- esteem/ development and fulfillment" (Chuo 2006: 76). Every theme park visitors will fall in one of the levels of the model and some visitors may fall into more than one level which is also called multiplicity of tourist motivation. Chuo (2006: 76) stated that visitors tend to ascend levels of the ladder as they become older, or more experiences visitors in the theme park settings.

Both of the " push" and " pull" and the Leisure Ladder model helps tourism attractions to have a greater understanding of the tourists visiting purposes. Tourism attractions can use the model to determine the objective of the attraction and target itself to the desirable market. Therefore, understanding the tourists' motivations, it is definitely an advantage for a tourist attraction.

Back ground

In order to illustrate the understanding of tourist motivations is an advantage for a tourist attraction; two theme parks will be use as an example, The Disneyland Park and the Ocean Park Hong Kong.

In the earlier days, as the development of technology and growth of urbanization, amusement parks were built for family amusement which contained costuming, merchandising, and architecture with entertainment through rides and attractions. In 1955, Walt Disney built the first theme park in the world which was Disneyland. Walt Disney was firstly running a cartoon studio.

By the success of the films, more and more people would like to visit his studio. For avoiding disturbance, Walt Disney imagined to build Disneyland in Anaheim, California. It is where the magic lives and home to Disney's beloved characters, such as Mickey Mouse, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White. It now has 5 Disney destinations around the world, which includes 11 theme parks. Namely Disneyland Resort in California, Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, Tokyo Disney Resort, Disneyland Resort Paris, and Hong Kong Disneyland.

It is well known that Disneyland is usually divided into five themed sections: Main Street USA, Adventure land, Frontier land, Fantasy land, and Tomorrow land. Visitors can have different experience in different themed areas. Disneyland has developed significantly during years; it has become one of the most famous theme parks in the world. Millions of people come from the whole world are attracted by the fantastic theme park each year. By the end

of 2000, the park has attracted about 90million visitors. (Fyall, Garrod& Leask 2005: 42)

The Ocean Park is the first theme park in Hong Kong opened in 1977; it has an average 4. 3 million visitors per year. The park is ranked 7th in " The World Most Popular Amusement Parks". There park is divided into two parts, upper land and low land, they are connected by a cable car system and the world's second longest outdoor escalator. The Ocean Park is also the first institution in the world to have success in artificial insemination of bottle nose dolphins and developed numerous new breeds of goldfish. The park contain 13 rides and a number of natural see-life viewing such as dolphin, seal, sea lion, sharks, octopus and more.

Market segmentation

For a successful business, market segmentation is required in order to facilitate the right group of market. According to Gabbott (2004: 151), the effect of dividing a large market into segments is to create a series of micro-markets, each with its own particular set of desired benefits and outcomes. Beside, Hill (2004: 83) suggested that market can be segmented geographically, demographically and psychologically. For a theme park, categorized visitors into different age groups, marriage status, and number of children are the most common ways to understanding the market.

" The market segmentation information is of considerable value in the development and operation of theme parks" (McClung 1991: 132). Most of the visitors to Disneyland and the Ocean Park are looking for relaxation and simulation; therefore, both parks contain numbers of ride and shops for kids,

teenagers and adults. However, due to the time change, the motivation of visitors may also change. For instance, nowadays parents are more considerate on learn while play rather than just play, in result, theme parks are working hard to convert itself to a more educating role rather than just entertaining.

Motivations and Market Segment

It is proven that the relationship between the tourist motivations and market segment is important, after knowing the visitors' pattern, the theme park will also realize what are the " pull" factors attracting visitors. The theme park can also adjust the contents and facilities base on the targeted market to increase the " push" factors from visitors.

A theme park is " a family entertainment complex oriented towards combining the continuity of costuming and architecture with entertainment and merchandise to promote a fantast provoking atmosphere" (Fyall et al. 2005: 40). Both of the Disneyland and Ocean Park were firstly target itself as an entertainment facility for adults and kids when it was first open. Walt Disney were visiting a park with his daughters, he came up with an idea to build a place that both adults and children could enjoy.

The Ocean Park was built with donations from the Hong Kong Jockey Club to provide a place for amusements and natural animals viewing. Until the 90s, the average level of education of visitors has raised, the Disneyland and the Ocean Park realized that there are needs to transform the park nature to education as well as entertaining. Crompton (1979: 430) stated that the "

positive influences of pleasure vacations on children's education was the primary consideration in the selection of a destination".

Therefore, the Disney Corporation has " moved beyond fantasy to encompass learning experience" Fyall et al. (2005: 40). Disneyland and the Ocean Park emphasis itself as a place for learn and play, thus, the word " edutainment" (Fyall et al. 2005: 40) has been coined. The Disney has launched the Youth Education Series to show teenagers how fun is learning science and physics. The Ocean Park Academy is dedicated to bring out the best educational value using its resources and facilities.

Since the theme park is a " family entertainment complex" (Fyall et al. 2005: 40), family with kids, teenagers, students, adults and couples are the targeted market for Disneyland and Ocean Park. The motivations of these segments are looking for relaxation /bodily needs, relationship, escape, experience and education. Therefore, both of the theme parks provide a broad range of activities from " soft" to " hard" riding attractions to swimming, dining, shopping and enjoying live entertainment.

There is " push" and " pull" factors influencing the visitation of the theme park, for the case studies of Disneyland and Ocean Park, the " pull" factors are always greater than the " push" factors. Different age segments market will be motivated by the theme park's " push" factor because the theme park is a place for family, relax, home escape, holiday breaks and fulfillment. On the other hand, different age segment market will also be motivated by the theme park's " pull" factor because of the theme park's facilities and resources. Disneyland attracts visitors by its most famous and success

animate characters such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Winnie The Pool and more.

Every ride in Disneyland is related to a specific animate character and fulfills the need of stimulation from visitors. The live parades during the day are also the most significant " pull" factor of the park, there are visitors going Disneyland to just enjoy the parade. The " pull" factors for Ocean Park are slightly different from Disneyland, people visiting the Ocean Park because of its exciting rides. Beside, the natural resources are the most significant " pull" factors such as the four pandas, artificial dolphins, new breed of goldfish, an aquarium and the world's second longest escalator.

Novelty is also an important motivation attracting visitors to the destination. In the case of theme parks, McClung (1991) suggested that theme parks should " offer new rides and attractions every year, introduce live entertainment and institute special promotions". By doing this, visitors tend to re-visit the park in a certain period of time because of their novelty on the new rides, attractions, performances and promotions. Disneyland introduces new animate characters and related rides every year such as the buzz light year, The Cars and The Stich. The Ocean Park keep innovates new breed of goldfish, constructs new rides, expands park's site, adding new parade during the day time and fireworks at the night time.

Future

The future of Disneyland will still attracts visitors from kids to adults by the current and new animation characters, not to mention the new rides; the Youth Education Series will continue to expand as the education as

motivation is becoming more significant. The Ocean Park aims to be a world-class theme park as well as attract a broader segment of visitors, for instance, more international visitors by expanding the site, the construction will be finished by the end of 2010 and the area of the park will be doubled. The Ocean Park Academy will continue to provide more opportunities for teenagers to learn about natural sea life.

Conclusion

There is motivation(s) for every single traveler, take theme parks as an example; visitors may have one or more motivations which drive them for the visit and visitors tend to have more than one motivation when they are older and more experienced. It is an advantage for the tourist attraction to understand the relationship between the tourist motivations and the market segmentation because tourists' motivations may change over time or any time by any reasons; if the attraction has a good understanding on the tourist motivations, the attraction can react effectively to cope with the changes. The example from Disneyland and the Ocean Park Hong Kong are very good example to show how an attraction should react to the changes of expectation on visitors, therefore, an understanding of tourist motivations is definitely an advantage for a tourist attraction.