Perspective of Tourism Marketing in the Post-War Jaffna District: A Phenomenological Research

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Abstract

Deficiency of research on tourism marketing and the extant research on tourism marketing packages lacks in phenomenology based frameworks that explains what managerial implications are appropriate for the marketers in the Jaffna district post war marketing context. Present study explored managerial implication for hoteliers and public in Jaffna market. Using qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected from 3 hoteliers in Jaffna and one foreign tourist from Basque country by using preset questions based on a primary interview question as open- ended question format and codes were developed by the researcher. This paper is a key resource for marketing practitioners wanting to focus on future potential areas and also marketing academics interested in tourism marketing that want to stay at the forefront of their research area of expertise. Through the concepts development, the researcher has found that vast gap is there in tourism marketing in Jaffna district.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, development, tour package, post war

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamic economic activities in the present age that plays an important role in local sustainable development. Tourism industry is rapidly expanding (Gilaninia et al,2011). This industry by combining and utilizing both internal and external sources will lead to lot benefits of social, environmental and economic and cultural and environmental. (Cooper et al,2008)

Nowadays In many countries tourism is considered the main force to promote and economic development of the country and by providing a strategic opportunity is caused diversify in the local economy, employment, income and increased resources entered into the local environment.

So the first option in the development of regional is tourism development. (Khodadadi, 2011).The importance of this industry and its role in economic development has caused many local, regional and national managers and planners everywhere efforts and plan to expand it.

Sri Lanka, known as the "Pearl of Indian Ocean" has its unique features to attract the tourists. Once, Jaffna Peninsula, the capital of Northern Province was a famous place for cultural, tourist places, but for last 3 decades it was affected by the civil war prevailed in the country. The development of the area was also highly affected by this.

But now, during the post war period Jaffna has been developed significantly. It has rebuilt its tarnished image again. Even though, Jaffna has many of its industries for the development of the area, tourism is the most powerful element industry which could be increase the development of the area quickly.

RESEARCH GAP

A variety of researches related to tourism marketing have been done by academic researchers and they focused on following topics; Marketing sustainable development and international Tourism (Gavin Eccles,1995), Diverse developments in travel and tourism marketing: a thematic approach (Clark Hu,1996), The role of electronic commerce in creating virtual tourism destination marketing organizations (Adrian.P and Patrick.M, 2000).

In Sri Lanka also, researchers have done researches related to tourism Sustainable tourism and its potential for Sri Lanka (Tilly Jarvis,2013), Potentials for regional development of tourism industry- Post war at Jaffna district in Sri Lanka (Mathivathany and Sasitharan, 2013).

But there are no such researches on the topic of tourism marketing. Still there is a deficiency for researches on the tourism marketing topic which is very helpful for the Jaffna tourism marketers to develop themselves in tourism industry. By developing themselves they could be able to contribute to the regional development as well.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

From 2010, Jaffna is a mostly visited place by the tourists in Sri Lanka. Jaffna has caught the eyes of thousands of people who are keen to know what the once war-affected areas have in store. The war has ended and the roads have been opened for the people. In short, Jaffna has become a tourist attraction to many who visit. But the tourism marketing in Jaffna is at the initial phase. The hotels do not have much awareness about the tourism marketing. So it is important to explore this problem in Jaffna market during post war period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has become a global industry and is widely considered to be one of the fastest growing industries, if not the fastest growing industry in the world (WTTC, 1995). It ranks as the largest industry in the world in terms of employment (one out of every 16 employees worldwide) and ranks in the top two or three industries in almost every country on nearly every measure (Mowlana and Smith, 1993) Andreas M. Riege. To ensure that the tourism product is recognized and accepted by the public, organizations need to spend more of their business time focusing on marketing, and in particular promotion (Gavin Eccles, 1995).

However, there are many challenges that have to be faced, opportunities that have to be exploited and a re-positioning of the region as an attractive destination for travellers. (Chandana Jayawardena,2008) On the other hand, Brooker and Burgess (2008) state that it's a big mistake to expect continuous growth without continually implementing incremental and revolutionary innovations in a destination (Chandana Jayawardena,2008).

Tourism has become a very important and dynamic sector both in the world economy and particular in the developing country like Sri Lanka. Ishita Ahmed and Nusrat Jahan (2013) conducted a research about "Rural tourism" which popular in the developing countries in the recent time. They stated that Sometimes rare plant or animal species work as the main motive behind rural tourism; sometimes traditional food, handicraft or historical places become the prime attraction. However, with the changing pace of time and environment the concept has captured a wide range of potential activities include touring, water-based activities, land-based activities, conservation activities, cultural and educational activities, health and fitness activities and gastronomic activities (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003) . To maximize the potential of tourism and attract a wider segment of the national and international tourism community there is a need for significant investment to enhance existing and build new facilities (Tanzina Chowdhury, 2013).

Tourist destinations make extensive use of emotions in their promotions. Vacationers are always seen to be happy and relaxed and are often depicted as being served by equally happy locals (Wheeler, 1995).Promoters also have to address harmful behaviors such as tourist harassment that would impact negatively on tourism. Tourism promoters are therefore faced with the daunting challenge of managing the emotions and attitudes of an entire population (Anne p Crick 2003).

The tourism sector has been impacted by a variety of external forces which range from high fuel prices, fluctuating currency exchange (Beech, 2007), global warming, terrorism threats, changing passport regulations, SARS, hurricanes, tsunamis, a slowdown in the US economy, bland destination image (Haywood, 2007). Tourism has become more important as a source of foreign exchange and employment (Anne p Crick, 2003).

Tourism development is seen as a way of improving a country's economy and social wellbeing, but if this development is not handled carefully, tourists will migrate to competing destinations or attractions. In the future, there will be mounting pressures to develop tourism products with a sustainable focus, helping to fit in with the local environment and ensure its preservation (Gavin Eccles, 1995).

Thus the tourism marketing planning process ends with the clients when post-implementation of strategies information flows back to practicing marketing executives through a continuous market research and feedback mechanism, so that new marketing strategies and tactics can be developed.

In Sri Lanka, despite the global financial uncertainties since 2008 having a significant impact on the travel and tourism industry in many countries, the industry has, overall, shown remarkable economic resilience (Papatheodorou et al 2010). The travel and tourist industry contributed US$6.6 trillion to the world's GDP in 2012 (WTTC 2013) so the capacity for tourism to generate income is not disputed. However, in Jaffna tourism is at an infant stage and is poorly organized. In most of the farms, hotels, infrastructure facilities are not sufficiently available.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method is selected for this research study, because there is lack of qualitative method researches in Jaffna regarding the tourism marketing. But in this research phenomenological approach has been used by the researcher as this is the appropriate method for this study.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that:

- seeks answers to a question
- Systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study

Qualitative research shares these characteristics. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (Natasha Mack, 2005).

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals.

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (Nouria Brikci andJudith Green, 2007).

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the players in a situation (Stan Lester, 1999). The researcher determines if the research problem is best examined using a phenomenological approach. The type of problem best suited for this form of research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon. It would be important to understand these common experiences in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon.

Population

The population for this study consisted hoteliers in Jaffna and foreign tourists who came to visit Jaffna Peninsula.

Sampling Technique

One of the most common sampling strategies is purposive sampling. According to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question sample size, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection depend on the resource & time available. Purposive sampling is therefore most successful when data review & analysis are done in conjunction with data collection (Natasha Mack, 2005).

This research was consisted a purposive sample. Sample was restricted to 3 hoteliers in Jaffna and one foreign tourist from Basque country.

Instruments

Data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Often data collection in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants. Polkinghorne (1989) recommends that researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon.

This qualitative approach using in depth interviews with hoteliers and tourists were conducted. In depth interviews is an appropriate method for capturing & understanding informants' lives, experiences or situations in their own experiences & words (Taylor, 1994). In depth interviews are most suitable for the phenomenological research. The respondents share their opinions and viewpoints without any interruption.

This study fully concentrated on in depth interviews by using preset question based on a primary interview question as open- ended question format.

Data analysis method

Phenomenological data analysis steps are generally similar for all psychological phenomenologist who discuss the methods (Moustakas,1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). Building on the data from the first and second research questions, data analysts go through the data (e.g., interview transcriptions) and highlight "significant statements," sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) calls this step horizonalization. Next, the researcher develops clusters of meaning from these significant statements into themes. These significant statements and themes are then used to write a description of what the participants experienced (textural description). A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes journals, documents, artifacts, photographs, video, websites, e-mail correspondence and so on (*Saldaña*, 2003). They are also used to write a description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon, called imaginative variation or structural description.

Moustakas (1994) adds a further step: Researchers also write about their own experiences and the context and situations that have influenced their experiences and reflect these personal statements at the beginning of the phenomenology or include them in a methods discussion of the role of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Commonly there are four steps in qualitative analysis, such as; interim analysis memoing, data entry & storage and coding & developing category system. At the same time there are some forms do qualitative data take. Such as; field notes, audio recordings & transcripts (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this room, researcher conducted in depth interviews and those interviews were digitally recorded, translated & transcribed.

Questions for In-Depth Interviews

Questions were asked as open ended where opinion was sought and the respondents were urged to share their experience. This was done to give scope to the respondents to express themselves generously about their feelings regarding tourism marketing in Jaffna district, the possibilities to develop tourism marketing in Jaffna, the tourist

spots in Jaffna, the progress of Jaffna district through the development of tourism marketing and the ways to start the tourism marketing.

Reliability and Validity of Analysis

The outside researchers experienced in qualitative methodology were asked to conduct an audit of our empirical processes to insure the dependability of the data. This outside researcher went through our field notes, coding schemes, random samples of focus group transcripts and documentation to assess whether the conclusions reached were believable.

To insure validity, present study followed five interrelated procedures recommended for qualitative research (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008): (a) respondent validation, (b) refutability, (c) constant comparison, (d) comprehensive data treatment, and (e) deviant-case analysis.

Respondent validation, also known as member checks (Creswell 2007), requires that researchers go back to the respondents to validate the findings that emerge from the data. To do so, researchers shared the findings with the study participants and asked them to offer their views on our interpretations of the data and the credibility of the findings. The data collection and analysis begin with a relatively small data set which is subsequently expanded based on the emergent categories.

Data collection was stopped when no further new findings emerged after reaching theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Comprehensive data treatment means that the researchers examine the data thoroughly and comprehensively prior to drawing conclusions. Since all the interviews were translated, transcribed and corded by the researcher.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

This research study has some limitations and recommendations as well for the future researchers. The first and foremost is the area limitation. The research has been done only in Jaffna Peninsula. It can be done in other parts of the Jaffna district like Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu as well as in the whole country.

This research only concerned on the views of some hotel managers and tourists. It could include the general public and the professionals related with the tourism studies, because their knowledge and perceptions would be different from the population. So in the future there is a possibility to include these populations as well.

As a student researchers due to the time constrain, any software was not used in this research. This is also a limitation of this study. This study could be explored with the use of NVivo software.

CONCLUSION

This study tries to find the perspective of tourism marketing in Jaffna district during post war period. It cannot be achieved within a short term period but it's a continuous process for long term period.

The tourism marketing can be technologically advanced. Now there is a deficiency in tourism marketing awareness and it is not in practice in Jaffna nowadays.

> *"In Jaffna, there is lack of knowledge in strategic marketing. In this manner, there is no tourism marketing in Jaffna. But in 5 years it can be developed"*
> *(Bastian Hotel Manager)*

Researcher has found out huge opportunities for tourism marketing in Jaffna through these research findings. In the post war scenario there is a better development in the infrastructure like road development, communication, hotel accommodation, travelling, banking etc. Therefore, hotels have more opportunities for tour packages in Jaffna district.

> *"Yes there is lot of possibilities. You get e-marketing, and in all the foreign magazines you can put about Jaffna, and tourism magazines can carry out about Jaffna. So that type of marketing can be done. If you do that kind of marketing the tourism in Jaffna can be improved…. Definitely. See the climate, there is no rain here. Foreigners like this climate. There is no rain. But we need rain for cultivation. But these are the things foreigners like, because they like sun light. In their countries they have too much rain."*
> *(Tilko Hotel manager)*

According to Mathivathany and Sasitharan (2013) there are many tourist places in Jaffna. They are historic places and buildings, parks and forests, religious places, natural areas and beaches.

> *"Yeah Hindu temple in the island – Nagadeepa…… Interesting culture.. Tamil culture.. Interesting people the tamil people. The beautiful sea. Ah yeah..we visited Library in Jaffna"*
> *(Tourist from Bosque country)*

Through tourism marketing phenomenological research it has been found out that there are so many advantages to the Jaffna district. The increase in employment for the local people, development of local businesses, foreign income, development of local areas along with this the hotel industry will be developed as well.

> *"There are so many opportunities for tourism marketing…. I don't know exactly.*
> *. I took the tourists to the sangiliyan kingdom. But they don't know it. They go inside and took many snaps"*

(Treat Ooo Hotel Manager)

Jaffna people must get together as a team to develop the places so that we can show the places to the world in an attractive way. The tourism marketing should be in a creative and effective way. The best way is to be the adventurous motion. When the tourists go back to their homes they should feel happy and satisfied.

"Yeah you can develop in many ways. You can have local tourist, you can have foreign tourists.....by email by magazines by leaflets by awareness program. We are going to do from the Northern Hoteliers Association. We already had a campaign like this in July @ BMICH. And then we gave leaflets to everybody. Like that the Ceylon tourism board also must involve and do these things. Because then only people will know that its safe to travel to Jaffna, there are hotels like this, there are facilities like this."

(Tilko Hotel manager)

Jaffna, after its post war situation has more opportunities for tourism. The destination has more power to attract foreign tourists as well as the locals who are in the other part of the island. Most of the people didn't visit Jaffna for 30 years because of the civil war. Now it is the real door opened for everyone to visit Jaffna. The beaches, historic places and buildings, the atmosphere and the local products attract tourists from all over the world.

Jaffna Peninsula needs more development in tourism. Tourism marketing should be developed to encourage more tourists to come and spend their vacation in Jaffna frequently. Jaffna tourism marketing needs a sustainable development so that it will last for a long time period as well as helpful to the coming generation.

Managerial Implication

According to Jie Wang (2008) introducing the "Tourism course" in the academic institutions in Jaffna, specially at University of Jaffna. This course will help to disseminate the tourism marketing knowledge among the students as well as the hoteliers in Jaffna.

The arrival of Sri Lanka Tourist Board to Jaffna is inevitable. There is a huge need for the Sri Lanka Tourist board in Jaffna for the area development. They only can give the authority to the Northern Hoteliers association to develop the tourism marketing. Sri Lanka Tourist Board has to urge the public to contribute for the creation of tourism marketing in the post war Jaffna district.

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Examples of Coding: Three tables.

(Source: Author constructed)

IQ1: What do you think about tourism marketing in Jaffna district?

1st coding/open coding	2nd coding/axial coding	Findings/concepts
1. Not enough 2. Have to market more 3. More tourists coming in 4. Have travel agent 5. Be meant only for travel agents 6. Don't have a tourism package 7. Can earn more 8. Very low /poor 9. There is no tourism marketing 10. Can be developed 11. Economy development 12. Culture 13. Income 14. Reach a balance 15. Tamil culture 16. No one knows about it 17. Help of internet	1. There is no tourism marketing 2. Can be developed 3. Don't have a tourism package 4. Have some basic facilities 5. Can earn more	1. Have to develop 2. Perspective of tourism marketing

IQ2: Is there any possibility to develop tourism marketing in Jaffna?

1st coding/open coding	2nd coding/axial coding	Findings/concepts
1. Lot of possibilities 2. E-marketing 3. Tourism magazines 4. Can be done 5. Can be improved 6. They market jaffna 7. Train possibility 8. Can see in jaffna 9. No drawbacks 10. After the conflict 11. It's clear enough a bit 12. Must start the marketing 13. Its attractive 14. Jaffna is developing 15. Banks are coming up 16. 2 or 3 years time 17. Jaffna will be popular than Colombo 18. Definitely 19. Foreigners like this climate 20. They like sun light 21. Yes there are 22. Our main problem is shyness 23. Don't know what is marketing 24. Interested in Tamil culture 25. Space & facilities 26. Cannot implement immediately 27. Not attractive 28. Enjoying 29. Earlier it was not like that	1. Lot of possibilities 2. Cannot implement immediately 3. Jaffna is developing 4. Must start the tourism marketing 5. After the conflict	1. Have the fundamental facilities 2. Definitely

IQ3: How we can start the tourism marketing in Jaffna?

1st coding/open coding	2nd coding/axial coding	Findings/concepts
1. To push them to do it 2. Have foreign & local tourists 3. Create tourism marketing 4. By email 5. By magazines 6. By leaflets 7. By awareness program 8. Going to do from the northern hoteliers association 9. Already had a campaign 10. Ceylon tourism board also must involve 11. Safe to travel to jaffna 12. Hotels like this 13. Facilities like this 14. We must get together as a team 15. They are not developed 16. Since it's a public asset 17. Government must get involved 18. Must get together 19. Must have a committee 20. Can do that 21. In the process 22. Together and do it 23. Here they have new foods 24. Jaffna style chicken curry 25. New adventure for them 26. The appearance 27. Researchers do research 28. To take steps to develop 29. Way to reach them 30. Can give the instructions 31. Have grown better than earlier 32. From the airport 33. Capture them at the airport 34. Until the end of their visit 35. That's the package 36. Set the charges	1. Create tourism marketing 2. Government must get involved 3. To take steps to develop 4. Grown better than earlier 5. We must get together as a team 6. To push them to do it 7. Tourism packages 8. Can do that	1. Develop in many ways 2. We can't do this alone 3. Tourist board, the hoteliers should get together

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