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Analysis of Destination



EXPRESS DISSERTATION

Introduction

This project aims at examining the tourism features available in Dubai. Dubai, is a well established tourist destination with a number of luxury hotels and leisure activities. It is one of the seven emirates of UAE and has a harbour in the Arabian gulf making it one of the vital Middle East trade centres. The following figure identifies the map of Dubai. This report will first examine the different types of tourism features in Dubai, the motivation for tourism in Dubai, the tourism industry and the promotion of tourism.

Figure 1: Dubai Map (Google Maps, 2013)



Ecotourism features

Ecotourism is defined as the type of tourism that helps in fostering the appreciation of the natural environment by promoting conservation and learning within the associated cultural context of tourism. In Dubai, the Ras Al Kohr Wildlife Sanctuary, part of the Dubai creek, is part of the internationally important wetlands which is home to a number of indigenous wildlife and birds including the Flamingos and the raptors. The government has opened a visitor information centre at the region to help improve eco-tourism in the region (Ryan et al., 2012). In the sanctuary the visitors can go bird watching and are provided with binoculars and a description of the different species of birds which visit the region., Another important eco-tourist spot is the Al Maha, which is a luxury desert resort complex which was promoted as part of the Emirates Group. This complex provides an unbroken view of the desert and offers guests camel riding, horse riding, and travel over dunes and seeing falconry. The complex is built and maintained using renewable resources and sustainable tourism means.

The aim of this complex is to provide comforts of a luxury hotel while maintaining an ecotourism perspective (Ryan and Stewart, 2009).

Culture and Society

According to James (2010), the cultural tourism of the 21st century has evolved with tourists visiting destinations to experience the culture and the societal traditions of the people they visit. Dubai, is defined as a city of contrasts with a mix of modern (the famous city skyline) and tradition (old neighbourhoods and souks) (DTCM, 2011). The culture, arts and heritage are vital aspects of Dubai's economic growth and hence strategies are undertaken to promote culture and art renaissance in the region. Most of the citizens at Dubai as Muslims and hence Islam is the basis of a number of cultural events including Ramadan, Eid Al Fitr and others. During Ramadan, visitors are expected to refrain from eating and drinking in public to respect those who are fasting (DTCM, 2011). Another cultural aspect of Dubai is their clothing with men and women wearing the traditional Arab dress. Tradition and family is central to the Emirati way of life. Men wear kandoura or Dishadasha while women wear the Kandoura and a Gishwa to cover their face. Other cultural attractions in the country include their pastime activities. The country strongly follows the traditional sport of falconry, camel races and horse races (Elshestawy, 2010). It is therefore argued that Dubai has a diverse and rich culture which attracts the attention of foreign tourists visiting the place.

Heritage Tourism

According to Monaghan and Dunstan (2012), Dubai has over 50 historical buildings and hence is a primary determinant of heritage tourism in the country. The biggest heritage place in Dubai is the Dubai Museum. This museum is housed in the Al Fahidi Fort which was built to defend the city against invasion from intruders. The fort was renovated and converted into a museum which helps display the culture and tradition of the city. The museum contains certain realistic models of Arabic houses, souks and mosques. In addition, the tourist is shown the traditional occupation and culture of the city by explaining dhow building, fishing and pearl diving. The museum also portrays different parts of life in the desert and therefore reflects on the ancient tradition. The visitor is shown realistic models of traditional houses built with palm trees, clay and rocks. In addition, the nomadic tents, clothes and jewellery which were retrieved from excavations are portrayed. These help understand the history of the place and help the tourist connect with the culture of Dubai.

Another important historical location in Dubai is the Heritage and Diving village which is part of the Bur Dubai region. This village helps provide visitors with an example of the Bedouin lifestyle by identifying with the local culture. The village organises performance arts festivals

including traditional dances like Al-Megrafah (Monaghan and Dunstan, 2010). In addition, this village shows the traditional medicine and clinics which were used to treat patients. Therefore it can be argued that the history and tradition of the region is well promoted for the purpose of tourism and attraction.

Tourist Attraction and Motivation

The development of a tourism destination is a central theme associated with tourism literature as it helps understand the strategy and motivation behind promoting an economically viable industry. According to Coombe and Mielke(2012), the primary strategy of Dubai development is hinged on the promotion of its service industry. The identification of six sectors across Dubai including travel and tourism, financial services, logistics, trade, construction and professional services helped improve productivity, human capital and quality of life. Peter and Anandkumar(2011) argue that the focus on tourism was vital to the Dubai Strategic plan which promoted tourism solutions and provide economic viability to the region. The tourism attraction of the region was established by the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing which took efforts to promote tourism in Dubai. Through the years, Dubai promoted their tourist attraction by promoting business as well as leisure tourism by providing excellent service, feeling of security and stable political climate.

According to Prayag and Ryan (2011) the motivation of tourist visit can be categorised as push or pull factors. Push factors are associated with the Maslow hierarchy of needs and can include exploration, evaluation, enhancement of kinship, novelty and education. The push factors identify the choice of tourism and the type of experience that tourists want.

The primary push factors governing tourism to Dubai include accessibility (explorative options) which provides tourists with the need to visit novel places while maintaining security, social interactions and need for prestige. Dubai has a well established international airport and an effective duty free shopping zone. Furthermore the city spent USD 4.1 million in 2010 to upgrade which helped Dubai handle over 40 million passengers. In addition, Dubai promotes itself as a cruising hub and destination (Lohmann et al., 2009). Elsheshtawy(2010) on the other hand indicates that the tourism appeal to Dubai is centered on the promotion of value for money offer by positioning itself as an exotic but safe tourism location (novelty). In addition, Dubai houses some novel tourist attractions which helps improve the tourist prestige in visiting these regions. One example is the Burj Al Arab which is the tallest hotel in the world and is part of the world's top super projects. This hotel is the world's only 7 star hotel and is quite exclusive in its approach. Furthermore Lis(2010) argue

that the hospitality, service and friendliness of the place is a significant factor which contributes to extensive social interaction (social interactive nature).

According to Prayag and Ryan (2011), pull factors of tourism include the perceived factors of the tourism site which help in promoting the attractiveness of the destination. The various pull factors which govern tourism may include benefit expectation, unique experience, luxury and services available as well as the traveller perception. The primary pull factors which govern tourism to Dubai include the availability of amenities, unique tourist experience and variety seeking.

The amenities available in Dubai are most effective. The service industry in Dubai has seen a significant increase in number of hotel rooms. It is observed that between 1990 and 2010 there was a 40% increase in the number of hotels rooms from 20,000 to 80,000. In addition, the presence of global hotel groups representing the city help pull travellers to the city. According to Monaghan and Dunstan (2010), another vital aspect which pulls the attraction of tourists is the variety in tourist experience. Dubai has developed itself to provide tourist attractions including nature tourism, culture tourism, heritage tourism and others. An example of one such attraction is the three palm islands and the world islands. These islands are human man made islands which is self declared as the eighth wonder of the world. Another attraction is the first underwater hotel in the world, the Hydropolis and the construction of one of the largest leisure malls in the world (DTCM, 2011). By providing a unique tourist experience, Dubai provides pull motivation to its visitors. Another primary pull factor of tourism is the variety of attractions available. As detailed earlier in this project, Dubai promotes nature tourism, heritage tourism, culture tourism, shopping and leisure as well as provides excellent facilities to do the same. Therefore, it is considered that there are multitudes of pull factors which determine the tourism promotion in Dubai.

Dubai Tourism Industry

The previous section described the motivation of tourism, the growth of tourism attraction and the various forms of tourism in Dubai. This section will present a detailed examination of the tourism industry of Dubai.

Tourism Merchandise in Dubai: Dubai is well established as one of the world leaders in providing shoppers with a unique experience. The Dubai Shopping Festival which is conducted in January of every year is found to attract over 3 million visitors to Dubai. The destination is regarded as one of the world leaders offering variety of merchandise and duty

free products in their extensive airports (Peter and Anandkumar, 2011). Apart from this, this project identifies four products which are unique to Dubai and can be identified as souvenirs available in the Middle east including Arabic perfumes (exclusive range of oil based perfumes using incense (Bakhoor), Khanjar (a traditional dagger used in the middle east, replicas of the Khanjar are used as show pieces), cosmetics made of camel milk and dates (edible sweet fruit from the date palm indigenous to Dubai). All of these products are unique to Dubai and will remind the visitor of the rich cultural heritage and uniqueness of the region.

Tourism growth in Dubai: Within the Middle East, UAE is found to account for 33% of travel and tourism demand. In 2011, it was reported that Dubai had an estimated tourist arrival of 8 million with over 75% of them visiting the country for the purpose of leisure (Euromonitor, 2012). In addition, in 2011 there was a 10% increase in the number of tourists in 2011. There was an increase in income to Dubai hotels, with a yearly increase in average length of stay to 3.6 days in 2011 (Di Foggia et al., 2012). This recorded a 12% increase over the previous year. According to ETN (2013), there are 140 travel agencies and 250 tour operators who handle the large tourism industry in Dubai. The data from World Travel and Tourism Council identifies that the contribution of the tourism industry of Dubai to GDP of UAW was Dh182 billion which is set to rise 4.3% annually to Dh277.8 billion by 2022. This will ultimately contribute 14.6% of the country's GDP. Therefore it is understood that the tourism industry in Dubai is growing and contributes to the growth of the country's GDP.

Tourist Accommodation in Dubai: The tourism industry in Dubai is well established by the choice of hotels and accommodation which is available. This project has previously highlighted some unique hotels in Dubai including the Burj Al Arab and the World of Islands region. According to DTCM (2011) the total number of guest arrivals in hotels across Dubai increased by 7.7% in 2012. It is also observed that in 2012 there were 57,345 hotels and 23,069 hotel apartments in Dubai. Furthermore, it is observed that total income that is made from hotels across Dubai was AED 18,819,257,000 in 2012. This recorded a 17.9% growth over 2012. According to Di Foggia et al., (2012), Dubai is well known for its luxuries hotels by providing a range of five star hotels and one seven star hotel. The hotels are well staffed and provide the guests with a unique stay experience. The following table shows the revenue growth from hotels across Dubai. The Burj Al-Arab is the best known hotel with a unique design similar to a billowing sail with a height of 321 m. The property is built on a man-made island is established an important spot of tourist attraction (DTCM, 2011)

Table 1: Dubai Hotels and Hotel Apartment Revenue

Dubai Hotels & Hotel Apartments Revenue

Establishments	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Hotels	4,016,075	5,597,588	7,912,492	9,668,354	11,696,765	13,241,480	10,566,320	11,284,305	13,666,731	16,031,996
Hotel Apartments	512,856	608,161	914,196	1,167,109	1,565,982	2,027,065	1,895,697	1,988,025	2,298,280	2,787,261
TOTAL	4,528,931	6,205,749	8,826,688	10,835,463	13,262,747	15,268,545	12,462,017	13,272,330	15,965,011	18,819,257
% Change	-	37.0%	42.2%	22.8%	22.4%	15.1%	-18.4%	6.5%	20.3%	17.9%

* Data in '000 AED

Source: DTCM (2012)

Transport for Tourists in Dubai: The primary forms of transport into the city include the airport and the cruise ships. The Dubai International Airport is a luxury destination with a variety of restaurants, spas and duty free shopping. This airport helps serve 125 airlines and has a network of over 201 destinations making it an important and busy airport (DTCM, 2011a). The second airport, Al Maktoum International presented a 13.6% percent growth in international passenger traffic bringing the total passenger traffic through Dubai airports to 46 million in 2010. The Dubai cruise terminal which was established in 2010 was to host atleast 90 cruise ships while welcoming atleast four ships simultaneously. Over the last three years, a number of visitors to Dubai prefer to enter the city using cruise ships. Transportation within the city is well maintained by metros, buses as well as privately chartered buses or cars (DTCM, 2011a).

Tourists and Food in Dubai: There is growth of gastronomic tourism in Dubai. It is observed that Dubai has a well established food economy including promotion of local foods like the Bedouin Feast and the Dune dinner. These feasts include the traditional Shawarma, falafel, Arabic bread and other lamb dishes. The city also boasts a well established international cuisine by providing dishes from Italy, France, mediterranean as well as fast food chains from the U.S (Monaghan and Dunstan, 2010).

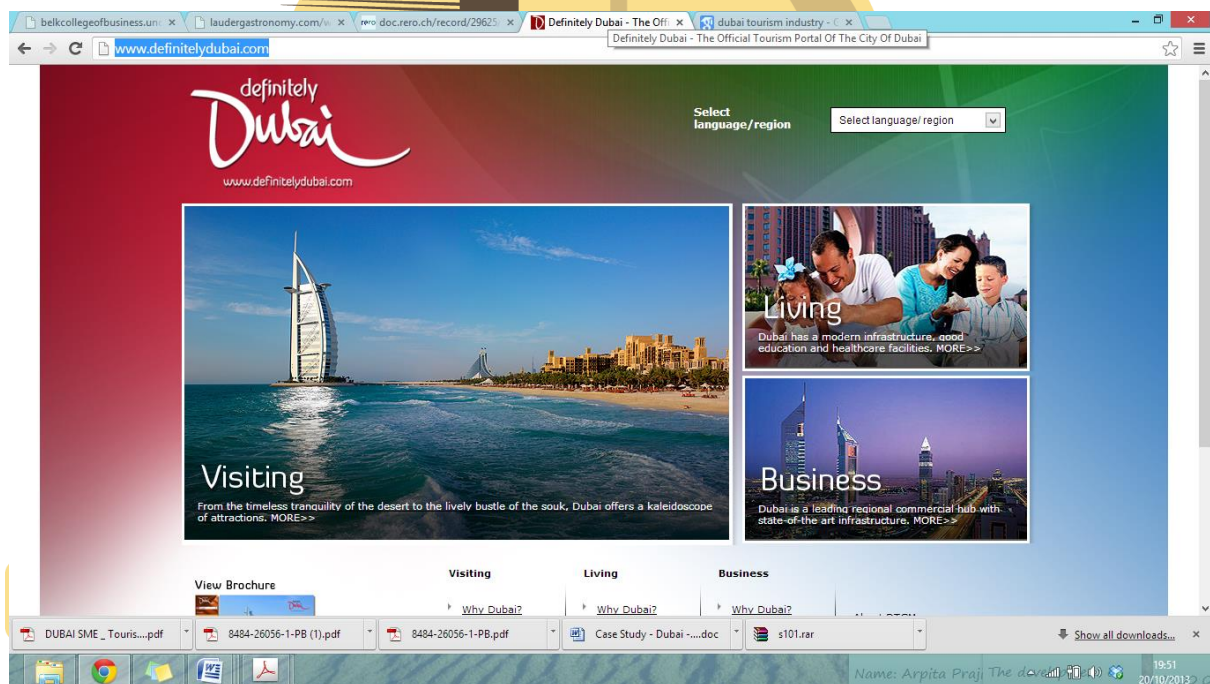
Tourism Promotion

The promotion of tourism is important to a destination for a number of reasons. As observed earlier in this project, tourism is an important contributor to the GDP of the country. Prayag and Ryan (2011) argue that the promotion of tourism is vital in enhancing the tourist numbers to the place. The use of different promotional channels to promote tourism has helped increase the tourism input into Dubai by using local news channels in the 18

countries in which the DTCM is present, the promotion of brochures and by presenting culturally unique events like the Dubai Shopping Festival.

The one website which helped clearly understand the destination of Dubai most effectively and promote its uniqueness to the tourists is the Definitely Dubai webpage (DD, 2013). This page established the brand signature for tourism to Dubai. This page also highlights the different tourist spots in Dubai, the opportunities and the experiences that the place has to offer. The website is found to cater to three different types of audience including the tourists, business travellers and the leisure travellers. The aim of this website is to provide a single information centre for all visitors and residents. It is argued that the website is well represented and provides effective information about the city and its tourist spots. The following figure shows the home page of the Definitely Dubai brand.

Figure 2: Definitely Dubai Home Page (DD, 2013)



In the preparation of the tourism brochure the following chart provides the information that would be included.

Figure 3: Preparing Tourism Brochure



Getting there	Places to see	Where to stay	Things to do	Getting Around
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•International Airport•Cruise Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Ecotourism (Wild-life sactuary)•Man-Made islands•Dubai Shopping Malls•Heritage tourism (Museum, Diving village)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Hotels•Hotel Apartments•Unique hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Discovering wrecks in the ocean•Seeing the world's tallest tower•Feasting on an mouth-watering Arabic buffet in the desert•Swimming with the dolphins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Car•Bus•Taxi•Boat

Conclusion

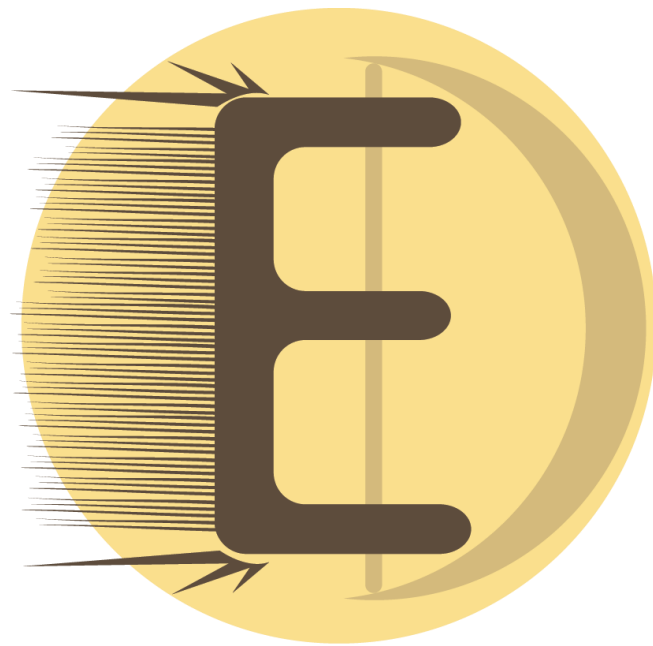
Through this project it is concluded that Dubai is well established tourist spot in the Middle East. The promotion of effective tourist strategies has helped in the emergence of the city as the world leader in shopping and retailer as well as an alternative destination for cruise lines. The city has also a wide range of tourism offers including nature, history, culture and food.

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