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Libyan Tourism and Rescuing Strategy ((Importance of Image))

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Abstract - The tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world since it employs "more than 250 million people worldwide" (Coshall 2003, p.4).

This industry, which includes transport, lodging, and catering, is expected to generate $12,119 billion of revenues and 279,346,000 jobs in 2016 (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

The tourism industry worldwide is also expected to indirectly and directly contribute 10.9% to Gross Domestic Product (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

However, the tourism industry is an extremely sensitive and vulnerable activity which can be impacted by important events such as terrorism, political insecurity, and natural disasters (Coshall, 2003).

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Libyan Tourism and Rescuing Strategy ((Importance of Image))

Hani Abdullah Ali

I. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world since it employs "more than 250 million people worldwide" (Coshall 2003, p.4).

This industry, which includes transport, lodging, and catering, is expected to generate $12,119 billion of revenues and 279,346,000 jobs in 2016 (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

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However, the tourism industry is an extremely sensitive and vulnerable activity which can be impacted by important events such as terrorism, political insecurity, and natural disasters (Coshall, 2003).

This is exactly what happened to Libya, it is a small country located in North Africa.

According to some, it is a "strategically irrelevant country" with no oil or natural resources, consequently, in order to boost the economy of Libya, the government and tourism authorities should examine the impact of the Libyan Revolution on the tourism industry in order to determine how the industry in Libya can recover from the revolution.

a) Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop recommendations on how the tourism industry in Libya can recover from the Libyan Revolution impact and get some inspirational methods of dealing with problems though in the market by the advertising ways to cross over the crisis.

b) Statement of Objectives

Since the Libyan uprising, the Libyan economy has experienced a severe decline. The tourism industry recorded a decline of 40% in the number of visitors compared to the Previous year. Investors are anxious about the political situation and Social situation in the country as violence and strikes have been very common since the revolution (Harvey, 2011). The recovery of Libyan's economy depends heavily on how the government and tourism authorities will manage the tourism crisis.

The Libyan tourism stakeholders have to adopt an efficient strategy to recover from the revolution because the tourism industry is very sensitive and depends heavily on security and political stability. So, what is the impact of an event such as the Libyan Revolution on a country which functions essentially thanks to tourism? How have other countries managed tourism crises and to what extent did they succeed? Finally, what should the Tunisian government and tourism authorities do to recover from the Jasmine Revolution?

c) Justifications

It is hoped that the recommendations for a successful tourism industry in Libya after the Libyan Revolution would be helpful for Libyan leaders to make the best decisions in order to attract potential travellers again.

Finally, analyzing the way other countries managed the previous tourism crises would support the paper's recommendations for successful tourism in Libya and result in significant outcomes.

Show the mine importance of concentrating on the advertisements methods as way to recover the image of this industry in future.

II. Discussion

a) Introduction

Libya "has for over 3000 years witnessed the passage of, Romans, Turks, Italians as colonizers. Libya, compared to the other Arabic and Muslim countries, has solid foundations (standards of health, education). The tourism industry in Libya offers many advantages to tourists such as: beautiful beaches, historical sites, and an excellent climate during the whole year, and comparing with Europeans.

After gaining independence in 1951, Libya was started getting more attention by the foreign investors for 30 years but after the uprising on 17 Feb. 2011 everything has changed.

It has been reported that over 50,000 civilians have been killed by Gadhafi's armed forces since the beginning of the turmoil in the country. The massacre in Libya has frightened the potential tourists of Libya, consequently, many of them have cancelled their trips (Sengupta, 2011).

However, Libya's political and economic weaknesses resulted in uprising and Political instability in the whole country. Consequently, the destination image of Libya, which is a vital component of the decision making of a potential tourist, was significantly damaged.

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In addition to the reports on newspapers and other mass media, have frightened potential tourists and significantly weakened the tourism industry.

Libya has recently suffered from high unemployment, particularly among university graduates where there has been a 20% unemployment rate In addition, the corruption grew significantly during the last 10 years.

But since tourism is a labor-intensive activity, this industry has played a significant role in reducing unemployment in Libya, in addition to the hotel industry's employees, tourism benefits the retailers of souvenirs, restaurants, producers of crafts, and newspapers and so on.

III. The Impact of Tourism Crises on Other Countries

a) The Case of Bali

In 2002, the island of Bali suffered a severe downtown in tourist numbers and bookings due to a series of bombings.

A year later, the number of international visitors increased significantly (Putra & Hitchcock, 2006).

In early 2005, the number of tourist arrivals exceeded all the expectations of the government (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006). Bali's authorities took steps to restore tourists' confidence by applying marketing strategies in order to improve the destination image (Putra & Hitchcock, 2006).

The situation of Bali in 2002 was extremely challenging because the bombings targeted tourists specifically, Just after the bombings, the Minister of Tourism established media centres and platforms in Bali and Jakarta in order to cope with the tourism crisis by providing accurate information to the press and the public. During an "Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Meeting," Indonesia's President asked other countries' leaders to remove travel prohibitions and advisories about Indonesia's destination. He stated that these bans only resulted in social panic as well as a sign of encouragement for the terrorists (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2005). In addition, the Minister of Tourism organized a trip to get in touch with the victims' families in order to share their pain. This visit was broadcasted to many households worldwide and had a positive effect on the image of the destination.

Furthermore, he held a prayer ceremony to share the sorrow of the victims' families. The quick capture of the terrorists helped the tourism recover quickly. The security norms implemented in the properties in Bali reassured tourists. In addition, the government tried to stimulate local touristic demand in order to show the whole media that everything had returned to normal (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2005).

The locals were offered discounts and special offers with national airlines (Carlsen & Hughes, 2008).

Perhaps one of the most important achievements of the government was to organize conferences and meetings with different tour operators worldwide in order to demonstrate a return to stability (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2005).

b) Media is a Key Player if a Destination is Willing to Recover From a Tourism Crisis

However, it has to be managed efficiently because it is the main intermediate between the industry and the potential travellers.

Although every destination has unique features, the ways destinations deal with tourism crises are similar (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

Recent studies demonstrated that the rapidity of improvement of the image of the affected countries "not only depend on the time taken to repair the initial damage, but also on an effective marketing message announcing that the destination is open again" (Carlsen & Hughes, 2008, p. 142).

c) The Case of SARS in Malaysia

In 2003, the SARS virus resulted in a loss of activity in major Asian countries. Specifically, Hong Kong, China, and Singapore experienced a decline of 41%, 25%, and 43% of their revenues. Malaysia's tourism, an important hard currency earner, experienced a dramatic fall, too. The number of tourist arrivals declined by 30%. The average hotel occupancy dropped to 50% compared to last year.

The Malaysian government implemented a development strategy composed of 13 measures which assisted economic sectors such as the tourism industry. In addition, $1.9 billion was allocated to manage the tourism crisis in Malaysia.

Promotion targeted the markets which were not affected by SARS such as the Middle East market.

As a result, a tourism campaign was organized to attract potential tourists from Qatar, Kuwait and other Middle Eastern countries. After one year, the industry experienced a full recovery in Asia in terms of arrivals and revenues (153 million arrivals in 2004).

This case study shows that cooperation between governments, agencies, and organizations has played a significant role to reinvigorate the tourism industry (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

In order to restore tourists' confidence in the destination, a three-month project called the Project Phoenix was created. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) undertook a proactive public relations campaign in order to deliver positive messages and improve the image of the destination through TV, radio, and online media. This media campaign exceeded past expectations and improved the destination image in only a few months.

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In addition, PATA worked closely with international offices in America and Europe. It also printed ads in well-known magazines such as Fortune Magazine (Europe and Asia) and Time Magazine (The United States).

In order to reduce the sense of panic among potential tourists, the Phoenix Project launched a "Welcome Back" campaign on CNN.

The commercial was estimated to have been broadcasted to 130 million households in different continents.

Other campaigns were launched in "BBC World" and "the National Geographic Channel". In addition, a new website of PATA was created. This website aimed to provide tourists with reliable information about the Asia-Pacific destination.

The website also gave travel offers to the members of PATA, tried to correct the misconceptions of potential travellers about the destination, and provided visitors with information concerning weather and maps (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2005).

IV. Conclusion

Through the previous case studies which are discussed, we clearly can recognize the high effect of the rescuing strategies which were established based on the multimedia and the intensive uses by the governments and cooperation with internal and external organizations, the direct impact was so affective specially with using the internet so they could get the credibility back of the customers around worldwide in short time.

V. Recommendations

In order to rescue the tourism industry in Libya after the damage which has happened because of the negative effect of Libyan civil war the tourism authority must start formulating (rescuing strategy) with focusing on the aspects which are mentioned below:

a) Increasing the Promotional Budget

For having a higher impact the government has to build the strategy of rescuing the image of tourism with using high and modern items of promoting and advertising such as making contracts with famous advertising foundations which have long experience of dealing the e_marketing and advanced technologies like digital works, and all of this is supposed to cost more expenses .

b) Creating Alliances with the Media

The tourism authorities have to be able to persuade tourists regarding the safety and stability of the destination.

The in-moment communication is very important, especially in the beginning of the crisis.

Consequently, the destination should act as fast as possible (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

As the destination is topping the news, the government and the different organizations have to cooperate and work together to attract investors and tourists again (CNN Task Group, 2009).

c) Providing Added Value to Tourists

The tourism Crisis Recovery Guide recommends the destinations give an added value instead of offering big discounts.

The added value may consist of benefits for dining and visits to attractions (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006).

Hoteliers may provide special welcome events for the travellers coming after a crisis, they may offer them a gift for their visit and other kind gestures of hospitality (Tafastrack, 2011).

d) Working on the Ground

In order to recover from the crisis effect, tourism authorities should organize familiarization journeys by inviting journalists, high profile celebrities, and tour operators to show them that the destination became safe.

This sort of strategy appears simple to be created. However, the steps are more complicated then how they seem.

e) Cooperate with Private Agencies

It needs more engaging with private the tourist agencies for many reasons:

i. The private agencies have more flexibility against the sudden changes of the customers' desires.
ii. They usually connect with the individuals faster and easily.
iii. The main aim of the private agencies is gaining profits so they often hire expert advisers and tour consultants.

f) Targeting Growing Markets

Libyan's tourism authorities should also target the most promising markets in its recovery plan. For Instance such as Asian markets which is increasing itself smoothly and concretely by following the exchange travel trips for the tourists from Libya to Asia and doing the same in opposite way.

g) Promoting Events and Openings

The destination which has faced a tourism crisis should look for positive news to broadcast all over the world such as arranging reopening for historical sites and making huge events to attract the attention to places and special areas in Libya.

VI. Limitations of the Research

a) This research has faced several limitations of the information sources because of the condition in Libya , most of the data was away of hands and the

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data on internet was not updated since the beginning of the revaluation.

b) The number of studies about the same topic is not that much.

c) External events in neighbour countries may also have a significant impact on some aspects of the paper.

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