



TO DEVELOPE TAIWAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES BASED ON THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE IN THAILAND

Tzong-Ru (Jiun-Shen) Lee*, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan
Email address: trlee@dragon.nchu.edu.tw

Hui-Chu Tung, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan
Email address: icedhj@gmail.com

Cheng-Chun Hsieh, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan
Email address: g101044001@mail.nchu.edu.tw

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to propose tourism development strategies in Taiwan based on author's travel experience in Thailand for past 10 years. Back in these years, one of the authors traveled from Taiwan to Thailand for more than 15 times, mainly in Bangkok and Chiang-Mai. The main task of these travels is to offer lectures in Kasetsart University and Chiang-Mai University. After lectures, the faculties in these two universities usually took the author to visit local spots to introduce the culture of Thailand. Based on the author's observation, tourists attracted by Thailand are because of the following reasons: first, Thailand's government put lots of effort in tourism. Second, People in Thailand are nice and friendly to new comers. Third, the nature environment is being preserved well, and last, the local culture with religion attracts people to visit. Later on, we propose several tourism development strategies for Taiwan.

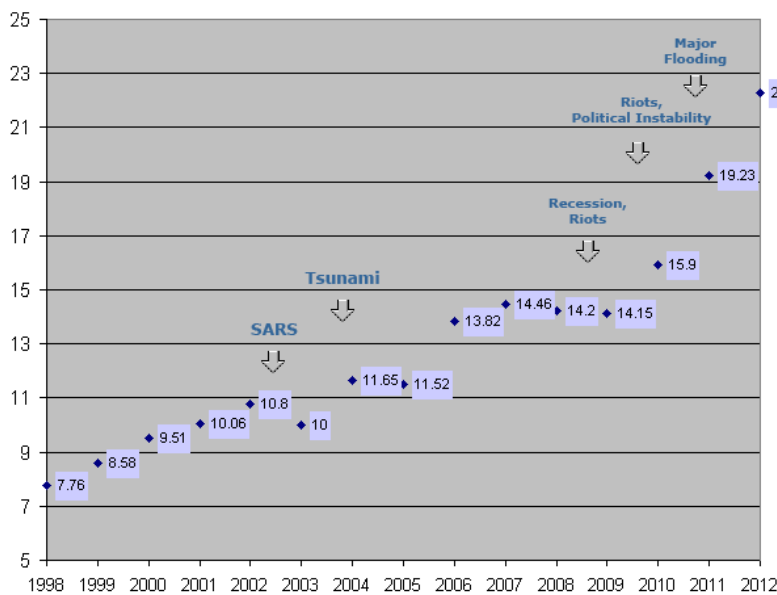
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WHY DOES THAILAND DEVELOP TOURISM

In a time that the technology is improved and transportation well-developed, the global village is not a new concept anymore. From October to February, many residents who lived in the Northern Hemisphere will go to low-altitude tropical countries to stay away from freezing weather. As for the visitors visiting these countries, most of them will choose Thailand compare to other Southeast Asian countries to stay. This is why we came up with the motivation to research this issue.

According to the introduction of Thailand from the Thailand tourism bureau, Thailand used to be called Siam. Thailand’s land area is about 5 million square kilometers, with around 69 million people. It’s located in the central part of Indochina Peninsula between China and India. Most people in this country worship Buddhism and this country always has been the gathering place of religions, cultures, and many races in the Southeast Asian, which brought up Thailand’s special culture and the best attraction to foreign tourists.

Lai (2006) pointed out that since the Vietnam War in 1960s, many American soldiers spent their holidays in Thailand increasing foreign exchange earnings and also improved the development of Thailand’s architecture and facilities. Thailand’s politics and economy didn’t go as smoothly as always, though. Chen (2010) said that the financial crisis in 1997 impacted the environment of economy in Thailand heavily. But government combined the resources of private and public bureaus efficiently. It soon led Thailand’s tourism out of the shadow of financial crisis by holding large international marketing activity “Amazing Thailand”, plus spreading medical tourism and starting to use new airports. The data provided from the Office of Tourism Development (2013) displayed that although the political was unstable in 2009 and 2010, the financial bounce back and the flooding in middle Thailand in 2011, causing the number of tourists decrease, Thailand reaches its highest point of arrivals in the fourth season of 2012 which is 6.33 million, which makes the highest record in the last 15 years.



Source: www.thaiwebsites.com/tourism.asp, accessed on 2013/3/1

Figure 1 Yearly Tourist Arrivals to Thailand 1998-2012



Summing the above contents, the reason why Thailand develops tourism is not only that Thailand is the gathering place of politics and economy among the near Southeast Asian countries, but also the solution to deal with the impact of Vietnam War and financial crisis, which also speeded up the government's awareness and promotion to tourism. This research note is mainly to discover why Thailand's tourism is attractive and what Taiwan can learn from it. To answer this question, I'll use my own experiences back in these 10 years traveling to Thailand Bangkok and Chiang-Mai to discourse my observation and record them, in order to make the reference for this researches.

THE REASON WHY THAILAND'S TOURISM IS PROSPEROUS

Up 2013, many Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia all devote in promoting tourism. This research sorts out possible reasons why Thailand is able to attract foreign tourists after the long-term traveling experiences through Thailand, and divided them into four categories as Thailand's government, natural environment, the people in Thailand, and local culture, as follows:

(1) The Government of Thailand

- Thailand promotes the long-term travelers residency program to people who expected to reside in Thailand for up to a year, such as retirees or other specific groups.
- Thailand's government encourages tourism, and has real action, such as the huge international promoting activity called "Amazing Thailand".
- Thailand develops tourism earlier: From 1977, Thailand's government had started tourism development plan. The tourism has become the main income of Thailand's exchange, which makes Thailand's government more emphasize on developing tourism.

(2) Nature Environment

- Thailand has tropical weather with fruitful natural resources..
- Community—There are numerous rivers and to develop good water transportations. Local residents take bamboo raft as transportations.
- Geographic location—Thailand is located in the middle part of Indo-China Peninsula, the hub position of Southeast Asia. As the International Shipping Center, there is more than 80 airlines pass through. This made people around the world going to Thailand easily and conveniently.



Thailand gave a good foundation for tourism because they understood its superiority and made good use of resources.

(3) People in Thailand

- Most merchants in main tourism area can speak business English and European languages in order to make better communication with people from different countries.
- They use smile to interact with people, Thai is also called the country of smile because of that.

Thailand is a friendly country. With kindness greeting, Thailand makes tourists feel at home.

(4) Local culture

- Loyalty to Kings: Thailand has a unique and significant royal tradition, Thailand kings are esteemed by people and the king's posters and statues are visible everywhere.
- The Religion of Erawan Shrine: Buddhism is the national religion in Thailand, they believe Erawan Shrine is the god controlling prosperity in the human world and to praise harmonic.
- Provide Services of Releasing Stress, such as the Tai massage.
- Special Industries are Open. For example, Lady Boys and red-light districts.
- Special Spot: Merchants sale variable products in hot spots, such as Thailand night market, floating market, Thailand palace, and Erawan Shrine Altar.
- Special Show: Lady Boy show, crocodile show, elephant show and etc., become assigned package tours.
- Special Festival: Traditional Songkran Festival of April always attracts lots of tourists.

Summing the above possible reasons that Thailand can attract tourists to come to take a vacation, it can be classified into three parts: First, the local culture of Thailand is special. Second, travel plan is smooth and provide many shows. Third, government pays attention to tourisms. These factors make Thailand best choice of traveling in Southeast Asia.

SUGGESTION TO TOURISM RELATED INDUSTRIES IN TAIWAN

Taiwan used to emphasize on manufacturing and export processing. Taiwan government should change its focus on economy development by tourism or cultural and creative industries' diverse development to advance the economics. As for that, we listed the solutions Taiwan can



refer to do by the former stated observation how Thailand attracts tourists as follows:

(1) For Government of Taiwan

- As for the role the government should play, it can compare the visa passing solution in Thailand to provide faster visa and passing to attract tourists to have long-stay in Taiwan.
- Different from Thailand, Taiwan is located in the hub position of East Asia, the numbers of flights are considerably large every day. Taiwan should construct more high quality flying environment.

(2) For Nature Environment

- Climate— Taiwan has subtropical weather. The climate is mild and suitable for tourists all year.
- Geographic Location—Taiwan is an island country surrounded by sea. The topography of Taiwan is various and cause high biological diversities.
- Taiwan's land area is just 36,000 square kilometers. No matter you want to go to high mountains or the blue sea, you can arrive there within two hours. Compare with other countries, traveling in Taiwan to visit mountain or sea is more convenient.

Although the city of Taiwan has well developed traffic infrastructure; major attractions are located in remote regions. Hence, tourism industry in Taiwan can be further developed by having different types of tour packages around this island. In terms of Marketing, what Taiwan can do is that when tourists arrive at an attraction, they can check into places on a register and get one point. After collecting 10 points, they can get a souvenir for free.

(3) For People in Taiwan

- Taiwan should find its own soft power to find special point of Taiwan. Such as Taiwanese's enthusiastic which is always arouse foreigner's surprising.
- Taiwanese has good reputation in terms of friendly and mercy internationally. When serious disasters happen around the world, Taiwan's assistance always come thick and fast.
- Tourists from Europe and US prefer tidy and clean place to consume, Taiwan should enforce the train of cleaners to keep a nice homeland impression.

The recommended method of our research:

The government can provide different kinds of subsidies and educational training to



improve the quality of service of stores. The government can also train more young people to serve tourists in different languages. By doing this, we can show Taiwanese' hospitality.

(4) For Local Culture

- Taiwan has been dominated by Holland, Spain and Japan in sequence, so we fuse characteristics of multiple cultures.
- Performing Arts: Almost all of the adjacent countries have their unique performing shows; Taiwan needs to strengthen own traditional performing arts to make them become our traveling highlights. The traditional performing arts include aborigines' singing and dancing or "Din Tao", etc. By doing so, Taiwan's performances will gradually be on the world's stage.
- Snacks Culture: Snacks possess special cultural meanings. Taiwanese' will prepare occasional snacks for special festivals, such as sticky rice balls for Lantern Festival and zongzi for Dragon Boat Festival, etc. These phenomena show the simple life style of civilians.
- Night Market Culture: Night markets not only provide cheap but high-quality snacks, such as oyster omelets and steamed dumplings, but also provide different kinds of scarce products. Night markets are the place that you cannot miss while visiting Taiwan.
- Traditional Festivals: Taiwan can expand the scale when holding Taiwan's special festivals, such as Lantern Festival. For example, to invite travelers all around the world join with us to celebrate the festivals, making these festivals become international activities.

CONCLUSIONS

This research views the process of Thailand developing its tourism, and discovers that Thailand really makes the resources of the country into usable resources. Thailand's government noticed the strong potential of tourism a long time ago, which becomes the strategic motivation of Thailand to fulfill its national goal. Besides, because tourism is a service industry that involves with many other things, and to develop service industry is helpful of raising the efficiency of other industries, so tourism is an ideal leading industry. Based on the external effects that developing tourism can bring up, it relies on government to lead the process as the leading role. And regarding from Thailand's experiences, tourism is helpful to mediate the stress from financial impact.

The reason of Thailand's prosperous tourism industry is that the government can use their



resources correctly to show Thailand's distinctive fascination. Taiwan is a country with multi-culture; Taiwan composite environment is as good as Thailand. If Taiwan can find out Taiwan's core value by comparing transnational, be clear of Taiwan's position, grasp the advantage of the industry (For example, the quality of Taiwan's ICT industry is famous around the world, so we can apply it to the tourism industry in many ways.), show the beauty of Taiwan to the world, the tourists will naturally come to Taiwan in an endless stream.

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