

Sustainable Tourism Sector Development in Negara Brunei Darussalam: Application of Total Quality Management Approach as Strategic Option

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Abstract

Tourism has been considered as one of the promising sectors for development that influences the achievement of sustainable growth through large scale employment generation and other related developmental initiatives. Tourism development requires sagacious plans and its implementation with effective coordination and communication among the tourism players. In the blueprint of World Travel and Tourism Council, 21st century travel plans should bring balance among the government priority, economical aspects, environmental issues and socio-cultural implications. For obtaining competitive and sustainable tourism sectors applying systems approach to change management with total quality management orientation has been considered as an important option. Present study aims to explore the prospects of tourism industry, identifies important problems and suggested strategies to harness utmost potentials through this sector. As methodology along with citation method some unstructured interview has been conducted on some policy experts, government officials in the relevant ministries, tour operators in the field level and some local people in the host destinations. Finally, data collected from the interview and literature review has been integrated into the final paper. The study found that although Brunei has an immense prospect for development as a unique tourist destination due to different attractions but in spite of that it could not reap expected benefits from this sector due some factors, such as, gap in the coordination among the various institutions, lack of promotional measures and the quality management problems etc. Thus, to improve the overall performance of tourism sector and make the sector more competitive, sustainable and vibrant present study suggests applying the Total Quality Management with special focus on Lean thinking and Kaizen approach as strategic options.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism; Competitiveness; Total Quality Management; Lean thinking; Kaizen; Systems approach

Introduction

Tourism has been considered as one of the promising sectors for development that influences the achievement of sustainable growth through poverty reductions, large scale employment generation, fostering tolerance and other complementary activities. It continues to makes a real difference in the lives of the millions of people [1]. Tourism development requires effective plans and its proper implementation with right coordination and communication among the tourism players. In the blueprint of World Travel and Tourism Council, 21st century travel plans should bring balance among the government priority, economical aspects, environmental issues and socio-cultural implications [2]. Successful implementation and viability of a sustainable development plan requires collaboration among various stakeholders such people, governments and social institutions innate into the social learning processes to bring positive changes through ecological balance, attainment of economic benefits and integration into the overall societal systems. For framing and implementing sustainable tourism development plan there should have collaborative and networking nexus between global, national, intermediary level organizations and local host community. For obtaining competitive and sustainable tourism sectors applying systems approach to change management with effective institutional networks and coordination among the multilevel institutions [3] along with total quality management orientation has been considered as one of the prime strategies for tourism development in a country. In this present study it has been found that Asia-Pacific nations are the most promising nations in the ensuing days for the development of the sustainable tourism industry.

Present study aims to explore the prospects of tourism industry in Negara Brunei Darussalam and to harness its utmost potentials how Lean Thinking and Kaizen Approach can be used in its different levels from national policy determination to the operational levels

implementation through applying the proper coordination mechanism and systems approach to management. This study is based on reviewing the present literature along with conducting interview on some policy experts, government officials in the relevant ministries, tour operators in the field level and some local people in the host destinations. Finally, data have been integrated into the final paper.

Significance of Tourism Industry in ASEAN Countries

Tourism has been considered as one of the potent industries for generation of the income and employment. Compared to the rest of the economy tourism continues to grow in value and importance relative to the other parts of the economy throughout the world. According to World Travel and Tourism Council economic impact research 2016, 9.8 percent of the total GDP in the world context has been counted from the contribution of travel and tourism industry in 2015 inter-alia with the effects of investments, supply chain, indirect and induced income effects which accounts for USD 7170.3 billion which is expected to grow by 4 percent pa and reach to USD 10986.5 billion (10.8%) of total GDP by 2026. Again, this sector has contributed total 9.5 percent of the total employment that accounts for (283,578,000 jobs) that is expected to rise by 2.5% pa (total 370,204,000 jobs in 2026) having the contribution of

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11.0% of total employment generation by 2026 [4]. However, this sector is more promising as per as ASEAN economy concern as compared to the other regions of the world. In this period, contribution of travel and tourism sector in GDP among the ASEAN countries are 12.5 percent of the total GDP due to multiple factors like favourable climate, proximity to large outbound markets of China, good infrastructure, connectivity to markets, and price competitiveness by the standards of developed economies make ASEAN countries as highly attractive travel destinations to the world tourists. Other reasons why Asia-Pacific region as one of the fastest growing and vibrant tourism markets for the last decade is due to rapid economic expansion, growing affluence, and a burgeoning middle class who are increasingly choosing for travel as a leisure activity. Compared to the growth of global travel industry which grew 4.5% from 2010-2014 by compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of international tourists' arrival, the growth rate in ASEAN grew at 8.2% as compared to the greater Asia-Pacific region's growth rate of 6.4% in the same period.

Above Table 1 shows that ASEAN member states contributed for the generation of US\$ 301.7 billion value added in 2015 from the travel and tourism sector which is almost doubled compared to the year 2000 when the contributions were US\$ 141.1 billion. While for the last 15 years almost all the ASEAN nations obtained growth rate of tour and travel industry ranged from 4.2% to 12.8% except Brunei Darussalam where real tourism contributions over that period has been declined although the country has the immense prospect for tourism sector development [5].

Developing an Enabling Environment and Expediting Competitiveness for Tourism Industry Development in the Asia-Pacific region

Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 set important factors and policies for sustainable industry development that also contributes towards increasing the country competitiveness. Important factors in the Enabling Environments are business environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, human resources and labour market and ICT readiness. Under the travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions prioritization of the travel and tourism industry, international openness, price competitiveness and environmental sustainability are notable. The availability and quality of physical infrastructure includes air transportation, ground and port and tourist service infrastructure. Natural and cultural resources constitute the vital reasons to travel. By considering all the yardsticks Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 identified five Asia-Pacific economies where this industry

has flourished mostly. Out of these mostly flourished countries recent improvement of the Japan, Korea, India, Vietnam and Bhutan are commendable.

Overall Asia-Pacific region have the more prospects for development of the travel and tourism industry in ensuing days due to their outstanding natural resources, skilled labour force and government that understand and support the industry. Although ASEAN countries are mostly inclined to prioritize tourism in the development agenda still infrastructure (air, road and tourism service infrastructures) and ICT readiness gap becomes one of the constraining factors on the ways to expected development of this sector. Among the countries in the region Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are in the commendable position. Again environmental sustainability and security become one of the prominent factors in almost all the countries due to political instability. However, South-east and South Asian Nations are considered as more price competitive destinations. Improvement of the regional visa policies for furthering travel and tourism industries is another augmenting factor. With the expansion of the fourth industrial revolution digitalization become the basic requirements to become competitive across the travel and tourism industry. Countries embracing the technology, increasing telecommunication infrastructures and enhancing connectivity will be in the forefront of travel and tourism industry development (Table 2).

East Asian and the Pacific countries are the developed part of Asia that share different strengths and has been considered as the best performers in the region. These are some of the expensive destinations having strong safety and health conditions, world class infrastructure and globally suitable readiness of ICT infrastructure that enable balancing offers based on cultural resources. ASEAN nations offer competitive price and have the advantage of natural resources. South Asia remains less developed in almost all the dimensions particularly in infrastructure, ICT readiness and health and hygiene conditions. If development trends in Asia-Pacific region expected to continue in future it could be developed as powerhouse of tourism and attractions for the international travellers. Especially, political stability, safety and security along market readiness make the more prospects realization in the travel and tourism industry development in this greater region. However, collaboration and sharing of information among nations of these regions can help to exploit the benefits of synergy in tourism industry development in this region (Table 3).

South Asian region needs to provide more focus on the infrastructure development. However, in this greater Asia-Pacific region the data of Negara Brunei Darussalam is not available in the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017 even though it is commented in this report

Country	Value-added (US\$ in billion)	%of GDP
Maldives	2.6	96.5%
Macau	33.2	71.2%
ASEAN	301.8	12.4%
Hong Kong	60.6	19.5%
New Zealand	29.2	17.4%
Australia	132.2	10.8%
China	853.8	7.9%
Japan	326.1	7.9%
India	129.5	6.3%
South Korea	69.5	5.1%
Asia Pacific Average		8.5%
World Average		9.8%

Source: WTTC, 2016

Table 1: Tourism's Contributions to ASEAN and Selected Region (2015).

Country/Economy	Global rank	Enabling environment				
		Business environment	Safety and security	Health and hygiene	Human resource and labour market	ICT readiness
Eastern Asia and Pacific						
Japan	4	5.3	6.1	6.4	5.2	6.1
Australia	7	5.1	6.1	6.1	5.1	6.0
Hong Kong SAR	11	6.2	6.5	6.6	5.4	6.5
China	15	4.2	5.0	5.4	5.2	4.6
New Zealand	16	5.6	6.3	5.7	5.5	6.0
Korea, Rep.	19	4.7	5.8	6.4	4.9	6.2
Taiwan, China	30	5.2	6.0	6.1	5.3	5.5
Mongolia	102	4.4	5.7	5.8	4.5	4.0
Eastern Asia and Pacific		5.1	5.9	6.1	5.1	5.6
South-East Asia						
Singapore	13	6.1	6.5	5.5	5.6	6.1
Malaysia	26	5.4	5.8	5.2	5.2	5.2
Thailand	34	4.7	4.0	4.9	4.9	4.8
Indonesia	42	4.5	5.1	4.3	4.6	3.8
Sri Lanka	64	4.7	5.5	5.3	4.5	3.7
Vietnam	67	4.4	5.6	5.0	4.9	4.2
Philippines	79	4.3	3.6	4.8	4.8	4.0
Lao PDR	94	4.7	5.4	4.3	4.6	3.1
Cambodia	101	3.7	5.1	4.0	4.1	3.6
South-East Asia Average		4.7	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.3
South Asia						
India	40	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.4	3.2
Bhutan	78	4.7	6.1	4.6	4.3	3.9
Nepal	103	4.1	4.8	5.0	4.2	2.6
Pakistan	124	3.9	3.1	4.5	3.1	2.5
Bangladesh	125	4.1	3.7	4.3	3.8	3.1
South Asia Average		4.2	4.4	4.6	4.0	3.1

Source: The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

Table 2: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017: Asia and the Pacific.

that Brunei could be one of top potent countries for tourism industry development in future by 2026.

Characteristics of the Economy of Brunei Darussalam and Prospects of Tourism Industry Development

Having the land area of 5270 sq. km. (2035 sq. miles) its present population is 430639 (according to the United Nations estimates of 14 November 2017) predominantly dependent on crude oil and natural gas, but in the dwindling face of oil and gas reserves, government is looking for diversifying the economy through innovations in different portfolio of services with high-value tourism [6,7]. Culture of Brunei is derived from Old Malay Civilisation with focus on 3M or MIB (Malay, Muslim and Monarchy or Melayu, Islam, Beraja) make its distinctive entity with other nations in the ASEAN countries. Brunei has been growing as a unique tourist destination due to different attractions, such as, abundance of flora and fauna in the tropical rain forests extending from coastal plain to hill forests ecosystems including inland waters of lakes and rivers, famed water village (Kampung Ayer) on the river, a unique lifestyle of the peoples with distinct combination of the practices of official Islamic religion, long rooted Chinese culture with moderate blending of the western cultural practices. It provides natural habitats for a diverse range of wildlife, such as, many small animals, tropical birds, reptiles and amphibians exist in the rainforests, around 100 non-flying mammals including Proboscis Monkey characterised by a very long nose. Preservation and the proliferation of the arts and crafts of the

bygone days make Brunei a rich place of artistic heritage with unique combinations of boat making, silver-smithing, bronze tooling, cloth weaving as well as mat and basket weaving. Combinations of some other relics and crafts are Malay weaponry, wood carvings, traditional games and musical instruments, 'silat' (the traditional art of self-defence) and decorative items for women etc. Gulintangan is the traditional musical instruments with a wide array of native folk music and dance may also create attractions to the tourist. Brunei is also a rich place for mosque tourism. In analysing the travel and tourism index 2017 in the Asia and the Pacific region it is anticipated that between 2016 to 2026 top ten fastest growing leisure travel spending destinations are expected to be India, Angola, Uganda, Brunei, Thailand, China, Myanmar, Oman, Mozambique and Vietnam [1]. Thus, Brunei Darussalam has immense prospects for travel and tourism industry development for expediting the highest potentials of job opportunities, promoting local culture and products and thereby achievement of the overarching goals of enhancing social progress, peace and human rights.

Achieve Competitiveness through the Application of Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry of Negara Brunei Darussalam

Total Quality Management (TQM) is the philosophy of management for continuous improvement of the quality of products, services and processes aiming to ensure superior productivity, profitability and ultimate satisfaction of customers [8]. It refers to

Country/ Economy	T&T policy and enabling conditions				Infrastructure			Natural and Cultural Resources	
	Prioritization of T&T	International openness	Price Competitiveness	Environmental Sustainability	Air Transport Infrastructure	Ground and port Infrastructure	Tourist Service Infrastructure	Natural Resources	Cultural Resources and Business Travel
Eastern Asia and Pacific									
Japan	5.4	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.6	5.4	5.3	4.3	6.5
Australia	5.1	4.8	3.8	4.5	5.7	3.6	6.1	5.2	5
Hong Kong SAR	5.8	3.9	4.2	4.3	5.5	6.4	4.4	3.5	3
China	4.8	3	5.3	3.2	4.3	4	3.2	5.3	6.9
New Zealand	5.6	4.5	4.4	4.7	4.7	3.7	5.7	4.5	2.3
Korea, Rep.	4.6	4.2	4.7	4.2	4.3	5	4.6	2.3	4.9
Taiwan, China	4.7	4.2	5.2	4.1	3.5	5.2	4.5	3.4	3.2
Mongolia	4	1.9	5.7	3.4	2.2	2.1	2.7	2.7	1.8
Eastern Asia and Pacific Average	5	3.9	4.7	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.6	3.9	4.2
South-East Asia									
Singapore	6	5.2	4.7	4.3	5.3	6.3	5.4	2.4	3.1
Malaysia	4.7	4.1	6.1	3.5	4.5	4.4	4.7	4.1	2.9
Thailand	5	3.8	5.6	3.6	4.6	3.1	5.8	4.9	2.8
Indonesia	5.6	4.3	6	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.1	4.7	3.3
Sri Lanka	5.2	3.1	5.6	3.9	2.6	3.9	3.2	4.1	1.6
Vietnam	4	3	5.3	3.4	2.8	3.1	2.6	4	3
Philippines	4.8	3.4	5.5	3.6	2.7	2.5	3.4	4	1.9
Lao PDR	4.7	3	5.7	3.8	2.1	2.4	3.5	3	1.3
Cambodia	5.1	3.5	5.1	3.3	2.1	2.4	2.9	3.2	1.6
South-East Asia Average	5	3.7	5.5	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.8	2.4
South Asia									
India	3.9	3.7	5.8	3.1	3.9	4.5	2.7	4.4	5.3
Bhutan	5	2.9	6	4.6	2.7	2.5	2.7	3.5	1.3
Nepal	4.8	2.8	5.6	3.4	2	1.9	2.3	4.2	1.3
Pakistan	3.4	2.2	5.4	3.1	2.1	3	2.3	2.2	1.9
Bangladesh	3.2	2.5	4.7	3.4	1.9	3.1	1.9	2.4	1.6
South Asia Average	4.1	2.8	5.5	3.5	2.5	3.3	2.4	3.3	2.3

Source: The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

Table 3: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017: Asia and the Pacific (Cont'd).

both management of quality and quality of management. Ensuring the quality is the responsibility of everyone who is involved with the development and/or use of the products or services. TQM focuses on improving the operations and performance by approaching the problems collaboratively and culturally. The 'KAIZEN' means today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today. Besides, 'LEAN' refers to a collection of principles and methods that focus on the identification and elimination of non-value added activity (or wastes) in any process. Through the application of Lean principles values are identified from customers viewpoints, values are streamlined by setting the activities to be performed, value flows are ascertained by eliminating non-value added activities and values are pulled together to

seek perfection by the quality movement. On the other hand Six Sigma as a quality approach is a process-focused data driven methodology aimed at near elimination of defects in all processes which are critical to customers. It is a disciplined method of using extremely rigorous data gathering and statistical analysis to pinpoint sources of errors and ways of eliminating them [9]. Quality management aims to perform all the activities to satisfy the customers and continuously improve the processes through elimination of the 'MUDA' wastes, 'MURA' variability in processes and 'MURI' strains on the job. Elimination ensures the effective performance of the activities and achieves expected quality by satisfying the customers through quality, services, safety, reduction of the costs and timely delivery of the outputs and thereby improving the

productivity of the organization. Objectives of the quality management in tourism are to fulfil the legitimate product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer, at an acceptable price, in conformity with the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment. Understanding customers provide knowledge on the experience expected by the customers and helps to determine the effective positioning, promotion and communication strategies. TQM is achieved through maintaining and improving the quality by applying the concept of SDCA (Standardize, Do, Check, Act) and PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, ACT) cycle. Applying the quality cycles provide the feedback for process improvement in the organization learning cycles are used for continuous improvement of the processes and performance. In another study to obtain the goals in the TQM processes emphasizes on the systems consistency from 'apex' policy and strategy levels to the 'operational' levels of the organizational performance [3].

To attain the competitiveness in the tourism sector in the Negara Brunei Darussalam present study suggested applying the KAIZEN and LEAN quality management approach through applying the concept of systems approach. So that at every level from Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism to the Tourism Development Department and Institutions/organizations involved in organizing tours and travel agencies and at the very ground level host communities, integration will be achieved throughout the processes and systems by continuous improvement and adaptability within the organization itself and inter organizational relationships. For achieving the quality goals training will be provided in the different levels of the policy and strategy determination as well as operational levels including host communities. Every levels needs to attain the continuous improvement through applying quality and learning cycles, systems design, development and implementation and getting feedback by obtaining data on experiential learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the above discussion it is evident that Brunei Darussalam has many of attractions tourists destination but it could not reap expected benefits from the tourism sector might be due to gap in the coordination among the various institutions in different levels of tourism management, lack of marketing initiatives especially the promotional measures and last but not the least the quality management problems. So, to improve the overall performance of tourism sector and make the sector more competitive and sustainable present study suggests applying the Lean thinking and Kaizen approach as strategic options. Relevant to the study some suggestions and recommendations have been made corresponding to the competitiveness framework used in the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017 that can be applied for improvement of the quality and competitiveness in the tourism sector of Brunei Darussalam for its sustainable development:

- To improve the competitiveness of the travel and tourism industry priority should be given to the development of policies and strategies by keeping consideration of tourists needs and implementing them with proper coordination through cascading approach in the different operational levels.
- Using other nations in the Asia Pacific region as benchmark who are growing very rapidly such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, India and China and achieving competitiveness in various dimensions of the competitiveness framework by continuous improvement of the quality and dynamism.

- Reducing all the barriers and protectionist measures that hinder the attraction of burgeoning tourist groups from across the world specially China and other growing countries and providing them expected services by achieving continuous feedback through customer research and updated market data.
- Encouraging increased tolerance and understanding through providing personal and social experiences and enhancing connectivity among the nations by stimulating travels and cultural exchange and liberalization of the visa process to obtain more competitiveness.
- Stimulating growth of entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as sources of economic diversification, as well as major job creations across the complementary sectors and enhancing network of the enterprises in the light of the fourth industrial revolution.
- Applying the digitalization strategies for sharing more and better information, through an integrated platform for facilitating and rapid providence of the travels and tourism related services built on biometrics to help protect and verify travellers' identity and reduce the risk of stolen papers falling into the wrong hands.
- Obtaining sustainable growth of the industry by upholding ecological balance, upgrading natural environment and preserving the cultural heritage and religious values. Branding Negara Brunei Darussalam as an attractive destination by involving Brunei embassies and consulates in different countries.
- Creating an enabling environment, framing policies and strategies for improvement of the travels and tourism industry and creating an endowing conditions, development of the globally standard hard and soft infrastructures related to tourists services and focusing on continuous improvement of the quality and reduction of the costs and wastes at every level of operations. And upholding heredity, heritage and cultural resources.

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