



The Development of Theme Parks for Tourist Destinations : the Case of Escape Cameron Highlands, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Theme parks are star actors in the tourist industry and play a unique and crucial role in driving tourism demand. Theme parks are the primary drivers of tourism to several destinations and integral components of the tourism product. In addition to a growing number of parks, competition in the market for theme parks is intensifying compared to other leisure activities. In many regions, however, the need for theme parks appears to be reaching saturation, and parks must accommodate increasingly demanding guests. This case study examines the development of new theme parks in Malaysia concerning the planning and implementation of tourism policies for Malaysia. Given the trends of a growing number of theme parks, environmental limits, and increasingly discerning consumer demand, it can be argued that they must optimize their operations to survive in this competitive market.

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Introduction

Malaysia has a plethora of exciting family activity sites, making it an ideal destination for both local and international visitors. Visitor arrivals in Malaysia declined from 25.95 million in 2016 to 25.95 million in 2017. (25.83m). The travel and tourism industry is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing, with revenue growth in 2017 (4.6 percent) outpacing the global economy (3 percent) and all other major industrial sectors for the seventh year. This means that the travel and tourism industry's GDP growth was 50% more than the global economy's. It employed 313 million people worldwide in the same year, accounting for one out of every ten employees, and generated 10.4 percent of the global GDP (ICAO, 2018). Understanding Malaysians' interest in their chosen tourism destination, one place that regarded well-planned management, outstanding ambiance, well-thought and maintained infrastructure and facilities, and customer support all appear to be part of the atmosphere conception that gives rise to satisfied customers, which is required in order to remain competitive and sustain their business into the future. This might be used to create theme parks for tourist destinations. By 2020, Malaysia could be the largest theme park center in Asia. 2020 (Abd Razaka, Shamsudinb, and Abdul). Malaysia currently has 20 theme and water parks, with an additional 20 planned by 2020. These parks include ESCAPE Park, Twentieth Century Fox Studios, Ubisoft video game theme park, Matta Fair, Legoland, and others. However, in this study, the researchers are focusing on the Development of Theme Parks for Tourist Destinations, with a particular focus on ESCAPE Cameron Highlands in Malaysia.

Backgrounds

The Cameron Highlands is a tropical highland resort in Malaysia's state of Pahang, some 150 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur. At 1,500m above sea level, it has a temperate environment all year, with temperatures seldom exceeding 25 degrees Celsius and rarely dropping below 12 degrees Celsius. Tanah Rata, Bringchang, and Ringlet are the minor settlements that make up the Cameron Highlands. Tanah Rata has the most outstanding tourist amenities, including a lot of apartments and eateries. Visitors like the difference in climate and speed. As a result, the activities are natural and pleasant, with various attractions. Tanah Rata, the principal town in the Cameron Highlands, has a population of over 7,000 people. Most of them work in the hotel and service industries. In the recent decade, the Cameron Highlands saw considerable growth and expansion related to agricultural, hydroelectric power generation, urban and infrastructure development, and tourism activities (Rozimah, and Khairulmaini, 2016). The Cameron Highlands Region's growth and expansion have benefited both the state of Pahang and the country as a whole. This study aims to give a database on the development of theme parks for tourist destinations in Malaysia's ESCAPE Cameron Highlands. ESCAPE is a theme park in PJ and Penang known for its challenging obstacle courses. Their theme park in Penang also has the world's longest tube water slide, as recognized by Guinness World Records. ESCAPE Cameron Highlands, a new Escape theme park, will open in town in 2023. This new park, nestled in Pahang's cold highlands, will open with five European-themed towns and over 20 activities, including a ski lift and dry ski slope so that Malaysians can experience skiing in our constant summer weather. Those who visit Cameron Highlands will almost certainly not pass up the opportunity to see a tea plantation or a strawberry farm. Once 2023 arrives, there will be a new attraction in town: ESCAPE is planning to establish a new theme park, ESCAPE Cameron Highlands, here in the first half of 2023. Sim Leisure Group, the developer of well-known theme parks such as ESCAPE Penang, LEGOLAND Malaysia, and Universal Studios Singapore, will oversee the park's development.

Research Objectives

This study has several objectives in mind, which consist of as below:

- a) To observe the development of a tourist attraction, specifically the development of a Theme Park.
- b) To analyze a tourist's attraction towards a pleasant tourist destination, specifically Cameron Highlands, Malaysia.
- c) To examines the development of new theme parks in Malaysia concerning the planning and implementation of tourism policies for Malaysia.

Research limitations

In every research study, there will be limitations that will be drawbacks upon every research. Hence, within this study, several limitations will be followed upon the development of Theme Parks for Tourist Destinations in the case of ESCAPE Cameron Highlands, Malaysia. The research will only focus on developing a new tourism destination that is planned to be opened in 2023, the ESCAPE theme park that will be developed in Cameron Highlands, Malaysia. Moreover, as the tourism destination of this research will only be based on Cameron Highlands, Malaysia, the sample size will be limited to the area's tourists. Furthermore, this study has implications for the integrated and more holistic management of developing a theme park as a tourist destination in Cameron Highland, Malaysia.

Internal Analysis

As part of the entertainment industry, theme and amusement parks have created an effective form of modern tourism to satisfy customers' desire for a variety of entertainment options. It combines distinct topic ideas with a virtual environment and a landscape setting to pique the interest of customers. In addition, both the theme and the amusement park serve as leisure entertainment venues. As a result, the internal study revealed the development's strength: the ability to acquire a number of large and distinctive prizes. Moreover, the price will be comparable to their theme parks, making it an affordable tourist destination. As theme parks are developed in Cameron Highlands, the area will be characterized by a natural and eco-friendly experience context. In addition, it will include facilities and equipment. However, the cost of admission eliminates several games, and safety measures are lacking at some stations. The food and beverages are overpriced and run out too quickly without replacement. The entrance fee is mandatory, and the staff appears unfocused on their duties and uninterested in assisting visitors. Finally, Monkey Business Station will lack an emergency staircase.

External Analysis

The technological content of the amusement park would be continuously enhanced. Improve customer relations by enhancing the communication between technology, art, and photography. In addition, managers should develop a mobile application that includes a tour route, the most recent activity message, and member-preferred rules to help consumers learn about parks. The external analysis of this study concludes that visitors will be fearful and concerned for their safety. In addition, the theme parks will face a multitude of formidable rivals (LEGOLAND, Sunway Lagoon, Genting Highlands). Due to the high volume and number of resorts, the operational budget is substantial. Theme parks will require continuous technological advancements. There will always be employment opportunities for recent graduates and job seekers.

Furthermore, Cameron Highlands will be the best family attraction for family time because it is well-known for being visited by groups or families. The expansion of tourism and travel offers theme and

amusement parks abright future. The entertainment industry has extensive operational experience and a global reputation in the marketplace. Create an image that is more eco-friendly. Introduce and develop new and successful stories and characters. Tickets may be purchased online for a discount of up to 30 percent. Due to globalization, there are now more travel options available to the audience.

PESTLE

Below is the PESTLE Analysis that has been observed within this study:

➤ Political

As a possible management entity, the government is in charge of theme park safety and environmental issues (Benn, Dunphy, and Griffiths, 2014). Strict restrictions govern product safety—for example, meals and beverages. Tax laws and competition rules are also significant factors in a company's success. Preferential policies benefit the animation business. Theme Park development cannot be independent of government funding (Wilensky, 2015).

➤ Economic

The entertainment business has the potential to create a considerable number of job opportunities while also enhancing economic development and income development. Such include security guards, lifeguards, and technicians. Furthermore, consumer purchasing power propels economic growth. For example, theme and amusement park admission fees and consumer buy products fees.

➤ Social

The population of theme and amusement parks is primarily made up of families with children and young people.

Technology

Theme and amusement parks must always be informed of new technology and use them in their experiences that attract customers (Fotiadis & Stylos, 2016). Consumers, for example, utilize digital displays in parks or download applications for cell phones. However, technological advancements have an impact on theme park marketing. Furthermore, new marketing strategies emerge from social media and digital marketing advertising technologies.

➤ Environment

Theme and amusement parks are large-scale, high-risk undertakings (Damodaran, 2016). As a result, select a place that is scientific and sensible. To begin, this entertainment company should select a location with a huge tourist market and a larger population. Furthermore, examine the consuming abilities and habits. Second, park managers should consider the weather. Finally, diverse geographical elements may impact the theme park's development and price.

Literature Review

According to the United Nations, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the strategy for attaining a better and more sustainable future for everyone. They address current world problems such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. To ensure that no

one is left behind, it is recommended that all 17 Sustainable Development Goals be achieved by 2030. 2020 (United Nations) The SDGs, which consist of 17 objectives and 169 targets, are intended to address a multitude of intractable human issues. Nevertheless, hidden connectivity and conflicting interactions between SDGs may result in varying outcomes (Prajal Pradhan, 2017). Malaysia launched on the path to sustainable development in the 1970s when the New Economic Policy (NEP) was implemented to eliminate poverty and realign social imbalances. All successive five-year national development plans have stressed the elements of sustainable development, such as equitable and sustainable economic growth, balanced development, access to basic infrastructure and utilities, education and healthcare services, and environmental conservation. The Cameron Highlands amusement park would be the largest ESCAPE park in Malaysia, encompassing a 60-acre valley at an elevation of 220 meters (Chin, 2021). The park will also be the first in the region to offer an outdoor ski attraction in a tropical setting.

ESCAPE Cameron Highlands merges the retro-eco essence of the brand with Cameron Highlands' natural terrain and surroundings (Chin, 2021). The amusement park will take ESCAPE's Gravity play and Adventure play activities to new heights by exploiting the entire 220m height differential, which was a significant reason for its selection. In addition to ESCAPE's distinctive downhill rides and adventure-based activities, the park will feature the world's first outdoor ski facility in a tropical environment, with a ski lift and a 1.2km dry ski track that will take skiers through picturesque pathways and locally themed villages (Wong, 2021). ESCAPE Cameron Highlands will be divided into five unique European communities at varying altitudes, beginning with the Iberian hamlet at the lowest point, followed by the British, Balkan, and Nordic villages, and ending with the Alpine village at the highest point (Jayne, 2021). ESCAPE's fundamental values are sustainability and carbon footprint reduction. Unlike other global amusement parks, ESCAPE Cameron Highlands will conserve the natural ecology, establishing the benchmark for the long-term development of a theme park. According to international business standards, ESCAPE Cameron Highlands will revolutionize the sector. ESCAPE Cameron Highlands would boost the country's theme park tourism business to new heights by allowing guests to relive their childhood in a natural setting. It will target domestic and ASEAN vacationers wanting to escape the tropical heat and experience something extraordinary. Escape In Pahang's most popular tourist destination, Cameron Highlands, a new nature-based adventure park will be established. The first phase of the theme park, which would encompass a 24.28- hectare (60-acre) valley at the height of 220 meters, is slated to open in the first half of 2023, according to Lim (2021). The European-themed Park will be the first in the region to offer an outdoor ski attraction in a tropical setting when it is built. Consequently, the construction of ESCAPE Theme Park in Cameron Highlands will create a prominent tourist destination.

Recommendation

As observed in this study, which is the case of ESCAPE Cameron Highlands, Malaysia, Theme Parks for Tourist Destinations should be developed with adequate planning, such as the management of ESCAPE Park in Penang, which includes retro-style as it needs to go green and be built and operated in a low impact and place more emphasis on a more natural approach—begun with the intention of repairing any environmental damage caused by the park. In addition, they created a low-impact community by constructing with shipping containers and incorporating energy-saving features such as a wave pool and solar system. Geopolitics, terrorism, the uncontrolled spread of diseases, data sharing, and security are the most significant threats to the global travel and tourism industry. These threats can have severe repercussions for the tourism industry, whose growth is contingent on providing safe travel

experiences. Security-related incidents have had a substantial impact on the affected tourist destinations, most notably in the form of a decline in the number of tourists and a substantial decrease in the revenue generated by this economic activity. As a result, it focuses on local, regional, and national innovation and technical and infrastructure development to enhance travel conditions and security measures. Although theme park products play an important role in experiencing consumption, there is a lack of emphasis on theme park experience components in the experiential consumption framework. As the background of the tourist attraction is a cold hill, it is suggested that future researchers conduct additional geographical and environmental research. In addition, the theme park can use the acquired data to keep track of their business strategies when identifying potential new tourism attractions, increase the likelihood of repeat guests, and attract potential tourists to their theme park.

Conclusion

As a result of the substantial amount of revenue it generates, the travel and tourism industry occupies a prominent position in the economy of the majority of the world's nations. Tourism development strategies are growing in importance for developing nations around the globe. In addition to establishing a new industry in the country's economy, they also achieved macroeconomic goals. As a result, most nations concentrate on attracting foreign tourists to increase their foreign reserves. Tourism is particularly important for satisfying the material and spiritual needs of people. It serves as a method of education and facilitates the exchange of ideas and information between visitors and the local community. Tourism has positive and negative effects on the environment and its components; therefore, tourists must learn how to protect the ecosystem. At the same time, it works to strengthen ties between nations, promote global peace, and familiarize people with one another.

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