

Preface

Travel and tourism have become a global industry and are widely considered to be one of the fastest growing industries. It ranks as the largest industry in the world in terms of employment (one out of every 16 employees worldwide) and ranks in the top two or three industries in almost every country on nearly every measure (Mowlana and Smith, 1993). Thus the travel and tourism industry has become a major contributor to the gross national product of many nations, with marketing tourist destinations and its products becoming a widely recognized practice for both public and private sector organisations.

However, the literature provides scant guidance about how public and private travel and tourism organisations develop marketing and distribution strategies to deal with the special characteristics of and changes within long haul markets. It provides general models, concepts and techniques for strategic marketing but there is no academic analysis of their application to the marketing of a country as a tourist destination. Thus the purpose of this research is to examine how tourist destinations should be marketed strategically by national travel and tourism authorities, with particular reference to intermediaries and target markets within and outside India.

This research is a review of the academic literature of strategic marketing in travel and tourism and establishes a range of important marketing issues. A rigorous case study methodology is established as the most appropriate methodology to address identified gaps in the literature. They are then analysed, using qualitative techniques such as cross-nation analysis, and data displays. Finally, the research identifies an extensive list of marketing and distribution strategies that are relevant to the markets.

The focus of this research is on marketing a country's tourism destinations as a whole rather than on marketing a particular tourism product such as an individual airline, hotel chain or resort. A national or federal tourism authority promotes a country's destinations, sometimes directly to tourists and sometimes through intermediaries; for example, airlines may play an important role in marketing tourist destinations in overseas markets.

Marketing management in travel and Tourism Marketing's contribution to travel and tourism has been undervalued by both policy makers and practitioners, leading to a misunderstanding of the nature and value of the marketing discipline for the travel and tourism industry (March, 1994). Several authors have noted the lack of detailed work in relation to strategic issues in travel and tourism marketing and distribution processes which require a more rigorous analysis of contextual factors (e.g. Bagnall, 1996; Chon and Olsen, 1990; Faulkner, 1993a,b). Indeed, there seems to be a need to emphasise a more strategic approach to travel and tourism, so that, for instance, a competitive advantage can be established in overseas markets (Boyd et al., 1995; Go and Haywood, 1990; Mazanec, 1994; Papadopoulos, 1987, 1989). Similarly, other authors have argued that the marketing concept is based on a "long-term commitment" to the satisfaction of travellers' needs and motives (Haywood, 1990) and for a more strategic approach to marketing instead of relying on operational measures such as marketing communication (Faulkner, 1993b).

This research addresses travel and tourism strategies to rectify these deficiencies. There are three approaches to strategy that may be used by the travel and tourism industry. The consumer-oriented approach dominates most current discussion of international marketing strategies. Another approach focuses on competition (Porter, 1980, 1990). However, these two approaches (or a blend of them) may be insufficient for they neglect the role of intermediaries in travel and tourism. Hence, a third approach to strategy, the trade-oriented approaches of intermediaries' desires, problems and demands needs to be investigated. Although each of these three approaches to strategic marketing will be discussed in turn below, they should not be regarded as alternatives, for they may be integrated into an overall strategy.