Chapter 5

Exploring the Food Tourism Effectiveness of Official Websites of BRICS Nations

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ABSTRACT

BRICS is the association of five major developing national economies named Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. These five nations are synchronically rising up for ameliorating their economies. Occupying more than 25% of the total land area of the world and also more than 40% of the world population, these five BRICS nations have only a little share of world travel as compared to occidental world. Being rich in natural, cultural and food and culinary heritage, these five nations have bright future to become top most tourism destinations across the world. The proper marketing and promotion via internet marketing tool like websites can be of great help to promote culinary heritage of any destination and therefore, helps to improve the tourism graph of the destination. Discerning the significant importance of the websites in the promotion of food tourism for any destination, the present study aims at the comparative content analysis of the official tourism websites of BRICS nations to evaluate their performance in the context of promotion of food and culinary heritage on world-wide web. The modified Balanced ScoreCard (BSC) approach is incorporated into the evaluation by taking into consideration four perspectives: technical, user friendliness and site attractiveness, tourism effectiveness and food tourism effectiveness. A set of 88 critical success factors representing these four perspectives is then used to investigate the websites. The present study ponders upon the relative strength and weakness of the tourism websites of BRICS nations in promoting food tourism and as well help suggesting the remedial measures in mobilizing the food tourism promotion through websites.
INTRODUCTION

UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2015 have highlighted Tourism as key to the development and prosperity citing the opening of myriad of destinations across the globe that leads to amelioration of their socio-economic growth via generation of large number of jobs and businesses. It is also expected that the number of International Tourists arrival be increased by 3.3% during the decades 2010 to 2030 (UNWTO’s long term forecast Tourism towards 2030). There is an upsurge in international tourist arrivals from 1087 in 2013 to 1133 in 2014.

A close observation of data depicting international tourist arrivals and receipts of BRICS nations a consistent increase from year 2010 to 2014 (UNWTO,2015) but sensing the rich cultural and culinary heritage of these BRICS nations, it is felt that they are yet to tap the full potential of tourism in their countries (Table 1).

A survey on food tourism marketing promotion revealed that the internet marketing tools like websites have been effectively utilized by the destinations to promote food tourism (The Global Report on Food Tourism, UNWTO 2012). The significant importance of the websites for the promotion of food tourism in any destination has led us to undertake the present study that aims at the comparative content analysis of the official websites of BRICS nations pertaining to information regarding food tourism by incorporating Balanced Score Card Approach. The study is also important from the perspective of promotion of food and culinary heritage on the World Wide Web.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Food Tourism

The food and culinary heritage and culture of a destination contribute prominently into making a decision for choosing a particular destination by the tourists. Nowadays, the destinations are putting in lot of efforts into product development and marketing seeing the tourists’ attraction towards local produce.

Table 1. International tourist arrivals and receipts of BRICS nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DestinationsSeries</th>
<th>International Tourist Arrivals (1000)</th>
<th>Change (%)</th>
<th>Share (%)</th>
<th>International Tourism Receipts (US$ Million)</th>
<th>Share (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil TF</td>
<td>5,161 5,677 5,813 .. 4.5 2.4 .. ..</td>
<td>3.7 5.3 5.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5,702 6,645 6,704 6,843 2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>20,262 25,727 28,356 29,848 13.5 10.2 5.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8,831 10,759 11,988 11,759 2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India TF</td>
<td>5,776 6,578 6,968 7,703 4.3 5.9 10.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>14,490 17,971 18,397 19,700 5.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China TF</td>
<td>55,665 57,725 55,686 55,622 0.3 -3.5 -0.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>45,814 50,028 51,664 56,913 15.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa TF</td>
<td>8,074 9,188 9,537 9,549 10.2 3.8 0.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>9,070 9,994 9,238 9,348</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©.
(Data as collected by UNWTO May 2015), * = provisional figure or data; .. = figure or data not (yet) available; l = change of series; n/a = not applicable.)
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