

Chapter 67

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.

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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

Table 1. International tourist arrivals and receipts of BRICS nations

Destinations Series 1	International Tourist Arrivals								International Tourism Receipts				
	(1000)				Change (%)			Share (%)	(US\$ Million)				Share (%)
	2010	2012	2013	2014*	12/11	13/12	14*/13	2014*	2010	2012	2013	2014*	2014*
Brazil TF	5,161	5,677	5,813	..	4.5	2.4	5,702	6,645	6,704	6,843	2.5
Russian Federation TF	20,262	25,727	28,356	29,848	13.5	10.2	5.3	5.1	8,831	10,759	11,988	11,759	2.3
India TF	5,776	6,578	6,968	7,703	4.3	5.9	10.6	2.9	14,490	17,971	18,397	19,700	5.2
China TF	55,665	57,725	55,686	55,622	0.3	-3.5	-0.1	21.1	45,814	50,028	51,664	56,913	15.1
South Africa TF	8,074	9,188	9,537	9,549	10.2	3.8	0.1	17.1	9,070	9,994	9,238	9,348	25.7

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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