

Chapter 6

Interactive Strategies for Cultural Heritage Tourism and Macau City Development: The Tourists' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the cultural heritage resources of Macau in tandem with the city's development. The investigation encompasses the actual condition of Macau's cultural heritage tourism and the challenges and opportunities for its future development. Based on the experiences of other countries, the authors set strategic goals, provide an overall path and developmental strategies, and create a scientific structure with a framework built on theory and practice. The necessity and viability of cultural heritage tourism in cultivating and enhancing the city's competitiveness as a tourism destination is argued. Based on a survey of visitors to Macau, the researchers gain an understanding of the tourists' behavior, awareness and evaluation of scenic spots that are part of the cultural heritage tour.

INTRODUCTION

This study is designed as part of the whole research titled, "A Primary Study on the Interactive Strategies for Cultural Heritage Tourism and City Development: A Case Study of Macau". A part of

the study seeks to understand the perceptions of Macau local community residents, their evaluation and demands that influence of the development of Macau's cultural heritage tourism. It aims to identify the direction and ways for the betterment of the cultural heritage development in Macau from the local community residents' perspectives in order to promote the development of Macau

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with the hope of laying down a concrete foundation on the interactive development between cultural heritage tourism and city development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Heritage Tourism

According to Raivo (2002), heritage is the use of the past for the present through the ‘production, consumption and regulation of the cultural, political and economic meanings of the past’. Lowenthal (1994, p. 43) indicates that ‘heritage distils the past into icons of identity, bonding us with precursors and progenitors, with our own earlier selves, and with promised successors’. In this case, heritage is a set of ideas, symbols and events that establishes and strengthens social unity and identity, real or imagined, of a group of individuals.

It is crucial to be aware that heritage is not history. ‘Heritage has greater symbolic meaning than the object, time or place that is the historical reference’ (Edson, 2004, p.338). The term ‘heritage’ is naturally controversial since it implies at its best the offer of a new kind of interest in and understanding of the past and at its worst, and subjective and selective false history that underestimates the historical variety of social experiences of class, gender, and ethnicity (Johnson, 1996; Raivo, 2002). It is hardly surprising that heritage tourism is equally vexed.

Tourism is the ‘transformation of the object and place into attractions, their gradual movement from a setting to a representation of a setting’ (Wedow, 1977, p.201). Heritage tourism involves the connection of tourists with a sometimes constructed, often mythical, past by promoting ‘a vicarious experience that depends on using objects or locations as means of entering into or living in the past’ (Edson, 2004, p.337; Voase, 1999).

Tourism, as an international activity, is a defining characteristic of contemporary societies

(Jolliffe & Smith, 2001). The issue of understanding, exploring and conquering the mystery of the past and seeking answers to the questions posed by ancient monuments is something in human nature. For many people, the remains of the past provide a sense of security, belonging and continuity in an uncertain changing world (Darvill, 1987; Millar, 1989).

Historic resources - the surviving physical leftovers from past civilizations and past eras such as architecture, landscape, archaeological features and artifacts constitute some of the foundations for heritage tourism. Places associated with significant historical and religious or mythical events have always been points of interest (Burton, 1995). A number of these world heritage resources have been developed into attractions and opened to the general public. Worldwide attention has been given to the implication of human visitations on artifacts that have survived for hundreds of years; however, little attention has been given to the effects of such visitation on individuals and groups.

Visitors’ books generally represent a major source of feedback for site organizers. They permit the analysis of views and attitudes, since their communicative function consists in the expression of comments, remarks and suggestions of people visiting hotels, museums, and heritage sites. As Robinson (2001) states, they constitute a source of rich qualitative data in that they are unsolicited and spontaneous personal narratives. However, to our knowledge, few studies have examined this particular genre in tourism.

Heritage tourism is a reflexive action that both reaffirms and constructs identity and allows the telling of a “national story” through museums and other heritage sites (Light, 2000, p. 158; Worden, 2003). And heritage is itself the result of a discourse over ‘which representation (of a place) from a variety of interpretations of place, will dominate’ and the sites themselves are this discourse materialized (Hollinshead, 1997; Kruse, 2005, p. 90; Worden, 2003).

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