ABSTRACT

According to the World Tourism Organization's forecast, China will be the fourth largest generator of outbound tourists in the world. Realizing the importance of this market, the objective of this thesis is an attempt to explore the prospect of this potential market for Macau SAR; to identify the existing problems in attracting visitors from this market; and to define proper strategies for developing this market.

A sample of 500 copies of questionnaires was distributed to visitors from Mainland China. The 209 returned questionnaires were analyzed in order to uncover the visitors' characteristics and travel patterns.

The key findings of the research indicated that visitors from Mainland China were generally satisfied with local transportation, cuisine, accessibility, quality of tour guides, service quality, hotel facilities and service, and sightseeing spots, whereas they were not satisfied with the manner in which they were received, entertainment, immigration services, price levels, shopping facilities, social safety, convention facilities and gambling facilities in general. Visitors did not agree with the theme that Macau is a "city of culture with events all year round", which expressed the tourism office's positioning.

By analyzing tourism products and target segmentation, recommendations have been derived for improving Macau's positioning in the China market.

First, Macau should be positioning itself by presenting an image of a short-break destination which is distinct from Hong Kong and other Southeast Asia countries; it should also be developed as a comprehensive entertainment center like Las Vegas, with more theme parks, new attractions and shopping areas in order to convince visitors to stay longer. Second, Macau should reinforce its role as a gateway to the Southeast Asian and Western countries, and strengthen its supervision of the tourism sector. Third, Macau should develop a more flexible and convenient immigration service, educate people as to the importance of the tourism industry to its economy, and improve its facilities and its capacity for being an international convention center. Fourth, it has also been found that sightseeing and holiday making groups should be the priority sector, with the Pearl River Delta region the target market.

This study aims at providing an alternative viewpoint for the local tourism authority and tour operators on policy-making and the development of this new potential market.