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The Role of Tourism marketing in achieving a competitive advantage for Egypt as a therapeutic destination

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The interest in tourism has been increased recently due to its great impact on countries development. Therefore; there must be a parallel interest in the creative decisions and excellence in marketing the serving product for the tourist market. The developed countries have started practicing and applying distinguish marketing concepts for attracting an increasing number of tourists and doubling the possible tourist benefits. Marketing is one of the effective weapons in achieving development and progress. Hence, marketing gives a good idea about what happens in the environment of works and how to take advantage in achieving the aims of the organization . Tourist marketing is considered as one of the specialties of the general marketing science as well as being submitted to the same special principles of marketing generally . Egypt is considered as a pioneer country that could achieve high economic returnee from therapeutic tourism due to its natural advantages and if such advantages are enough for making Egypt a successful market, they need an integral planning guarantee activating such touristic pattern. The development of therapeutic tourism requires making propaganda for spreading such type of tourism as the marketing materials ,e.g., the electronic websites and booklets giving the possible patients information about the opportunities for tourism ,the medical options within the destination as well as the necessary information concerning the patient .

The marketing plan for the therapeutic tourism depends on studying the size of the international requirement on the therapeutic tourism as well as studying international famous models, determining the size of the inbound movement for them and also how to compete in such field .

The Problem Of the Study:

Egypt is a pioneer country that could achieve high economic returnee from therapeutic tourism due to its merits represented in the variety of the sources of the natural treatment. Consequently, there must be a clear strategy for marketing such pattern that would make Egypt a successful market for the therapeutic tourism .There is no inclusive marketing policy requiring all the markets exporting tourism to aim at developing such pattern as well as the limited number of the propaganda campaigns inside and outside for making the necessary propaganda for therapeutic tourism concerning the environmental treatment in Egypt and besides, individuals' lack of awareness about the significance of such pattern. Additionally, there are no booklets or brochures or any marketing means used in many developed countries, adding a powerful competitive merit.

Accordingly, there is a number of research questions for the study as follows:

1. Is there a clear strategy for marketing the therapeutic tourism in Egypt?
2. Do the tourist companies make propaganda for the therapeutic tourism?

3. What are the marketing policies followed in marketing the therapeutic tourism in Egypt?

Study Delimitations:

The study depends on the following delimitations:

First: Place limitations:

the present study focused on the tourist companies; group (A) working in the tourist Egyptian market & the employees of the General Egyptian Authority for Tourist Activation as well as the employees within the Therapeutic tourism Unit.

Second: Objective Limitations:

The present study depends on the therapeutic tourism as the latter stands as one of the types of the therapeutic tourism. Egypt owns various medical natural constituents, achieving a powerful competitive advantage among the world countries, but there is a lack of marketing appropriate for it effectively.

Third: Time limitations:

The study was limited to the period in which all data was collected from its primary and secondary resources since 2011 to 2014.

Objectives of the study:

The present study is geared towards studying the marketing tourism generally as a tool for achieving a competitive advantage for Egypt as a medical destination and specifically it aims at the following:

1. Studying the constituents of therapeutic tourism in Egypt.
2. Studying the possibility for marketing the therapeutic tourism in Egypt, whether inside or outside.
3. Identifying the role of the tourist companies and the General Egyptian Authority for Tourist Activation in making propaganda for the medical tourist programs.

Study Hypotheses:

The study aims at testifying the following hypotheses:

1. The effective marketing for the therapeutic tourism contributes in widening the cycle of the tourist requirement on Egypt, adding a competitive advantage for the Egyptian tourist product.
2. There are no medical programs at the tourist companies as included within their different tourist programs.
3. The weak marketing efforts concerning making propaganda for the therapeutic tourism affect the interest of the tourist companies for organizing the medical programs.

Significance of the study:

The importance of the present study is represented in identifying the policies followed in marketing the therapeutic tourism.

Study Methodology:

The descriptive research (the statistic method) was employed in order to testify the study hypotheses, achieving the extend of the capacity of the therapeutic tourism in Egypt as well as analyzing all the data collected for abstracting the results.

Sample of the Study:

- The present study depended on the style of randomly selected sample for the tourist companies, group (A) working within the tourism sector.
- The style of randomly selected sample for the employees of the General Egyptian Authority for Tourist Activation as an Official organization responsible for making furtherance for such unique touristic pattern.
- Personal interview of the employees within the Therapeutic tourism Unit.

Resources of Data:

The study basically depended on two resources for collecting data as follows:

1).Secondary Resources:

- Books, studies, periodicals related to the topic of the study.
- Reports, brochures, published and unpublished data.

2).Primary Resources:

- The primary data that was collected throughout using questionnaire related to the study applied on the same sample.

Results of the Study:

1. The therapeutic tourism is one of the tourist pattern found in Egypt in which all the developed countries were interested, resulting in the increase of the incomes for the tourist destinations due to the increase of the rates of spending money . Additionally, the increase of technological progress as well as the age diseases, such as pressure, heart diseases and others; have encouraged the therapeutic tourism as many people return back to nature throughout employing its natural constituents in medicine and treatment.
2. Egypt enjoys the medical constituents that has made it an international destination for medical tourists, including the warm sands , mild climate, mineral and sulfur springs ,and the medical silt.
3. There are some countries in competition with Egypt in the market of therapeutic tourism, e.g. Jordan, Turkey, Israel and others, resembling a powerful treat for Egypt.
4. The limited number of the statistics related to the movement of the therapeutic tourism in Egypt which resembles a defect committed by the Ministry of Tourism and General Egyptian Authority for Tourist Activation as well as the tourist firms. Thus, the lack of enough data and information about the therapeutic tourism movement passively affects the scientific studies in this field
5. Most of the tourist countries do no organize medical programs for different causes.

6. A small number of the companies organize medical programs according to requirements and there are no regular programs as a result of the weakness of the rate of the requirements on the therapeutic tourism.
7. There is no specific marketing plan for marketing the medical programs.
8. There are many obstacles facing such companies in marketing the medical programs.
9. The effective marketing for therapeutic tourism contributes in widening the cycle of tourist requirement on Egypt ,adding a competitive merit for the Egyptian tourist product.

Recommendations:

1. Encouraging the private sector to invest in the field of therapeutic tourism and establishing medical centers and treatment spas, facilitating the license procedures for such centers.
2. Establishing tourist firms specialized in therapeutic tourism, such as firms of environmental tourism.
3. Caring for the infrastructure in the places of therapeutic tourism and promoting the quality of the medical services in Egypt.
4. Editing brochures related to therapeutic tourism in different languages with explaining the types of diseases that could be cured, the treatment ways, accommodations and spreading them on certain directions.
5. Studying the request on the therapeutic tourism, whether it is local or international and making the private market related.
6. Providing the information related to the therapeutic tourism product in Egypt as one of the marketing elements is the product, Therefore, there is must be a completed data base about the medical constituents and its places in Egypt.
7. Making the medical programs included within the different programs of the tourist companies.
8. Making market researches for identifying the target markets and trying to put a marketing strategy for attracting tourists.
9. Organizing training courses for the employees in the field of therapeutic tourism throughout scholarships to the European countries for making use of their experiences in such field.