CULTURAL TOURISM AS A STRATEGY TO ATTRACT CHINESE TOURISTS TO MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion and facilities that the Chinese government has granted to its inhabitants to travel abroad has brought benefits to the economies of the countries where these tourists travel. Due to the great economic spill that these tourists make in their travels and the great potential they possess, they become one of the most attractive segments in the world, causing countries to seek to attract them for the profits. The Chinese tourist is a tourist who seeks to know the culture, culinary experiences, traditions and folklore of the place where they travel, more than seeking sun and beach.

Mexico is a country that has a great mix of tourist products and services, which favors that the tourism offer focus on the satisfaction of the needs and preferences of the different segments of international tourists who arrive to Mexico: sun and beach tourism and also cultural tourism. Mexico has 51 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, of which 12 are natural, 37 are cultural and 2 are mixed.

Despite the great tourist attraction of the country and the strategic importance of the sector for the economy, Mexico has not managed to have a large number of tourists or income from international tourism for 15 years. One way to increase the travel industry is to attract the Chinese tourist to Mexico, which is considered a priority by countries like the United States, France and Spain due to the advantages they entail.

Therefore, this article will describe the tastes, preferences and habits of Chinese tourists coming to the most popular destinations in Mexico through a Likert scale and it will be described which

are the most attractive cultural factors in Mexico for the Chinese tourists and will be proposing strategies of attraction for Mexico and its destinations.

I. INTRODUCTION

TOURISM is a phenomenon that we can associate with the enjoyment or the accomplishment of activities in a place or destination and that counts with its own resources (natural, cultural); in addition, it involves a combination of activities and services that are provided by lucrative and / or non-profit organizations that provide an experience to tourists.

According to UNWTO [1] (2016), the tourism market that has had a greater development and a greater growth is the Chinese tourist thanks to the facilities that the government is giving to them to leave the country, turning them into an attractive market for the destinations due to the large economic expenditure that these tourists make on their travels and for which countries are competing to attract.

When the Chinese tourists travel, they like to know about culture, culinary experiences, traditions and folklore rather than sun and beach tourism.

Mexico has a large tourism offer that is widely segmented. This means that there are different types of tourism that can meet different needs, that is, different types of profiles are satisfied: cultural tourism, sun and beach tourism, adventure tourism, business, etc. Therefore, thanks to this large tourist offer, it is possible for the Chinese tourist to travel to Mexico to know all the traditions and culture that the country has to offer.

But, despite the above, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Mexico is low; in the first half of this year, 85,000 Chinese tourists arrived in the country, representing only 0.7% of international tourists (SIIMT, 2017[2]).

Despite Mexico has a wide and segmented tourist offer, it has not known how to attract Chinese tourists.

Therefore, it's important that Mexico knows and analyses its weaknesses and strengths and know the tastes, preferences and habits of the Chinese tourist in order to improve strategies to attract them.

II. TOURISM

For years, tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification, to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world.

According to UNWTO [3] (1998), tourism incorporate activities carried out by people during their travels and stays in places other than their usual environment, for a consecutive period of less than one year, with leisure, business and other tourist reasons, as long as it is not to develop a paid activity in the place visited.

Lanquar (1991) [4] mentions that tourism is a set of coordinated acts that works aimed at responding to the need for leisure and travel. It is a set of activities that aim at the exploitation of tourist wealth, as well as the transformation of resources as services or products.

This author mentions that systems theory can be applied to tourism, that is, to see tourism as a system or subsystems that allow the transformation of inputs (human, natural, capital, etc.) into outputs (products and services tourist).

Therefore, we can say that tourism is a system that relates the tourist to the destination, the companies and the intermediaries and that these relations are influenced by diverse environments: economic, sociological, political, and technological (Ochoa, 2017) [5].

Types of tourism

One of the characteristics of tourism is that the tourist participates in the production of the service; therefore, the tourist market is formed by different profiles and types of tourists that conforms different markets. The segmentation of the tourist markets attends more directly and personally the needs of each type of tourist, achieving greater satisfaction for the tourist.

Some of the tourism segments that can be mentioned are:

Alternative tourism: is the one that groups tourism-recreational activities that people make during their trips and stays, which revolve around nature.

Nature tourism that are those activities that are not sports, but uses natural attractions for the development of experiences and appreciation of nature.

And finally, cultural tourism, the central theme of this article. This type of tourism refers to the movement of people towards cultural attractions in order to acquire new information and satisfy their cultural needs and generate new knowledge and experiences (WTO, 2005) [6].

The main reason for tourists interested in cultural tourism is the interest in knowing, understanding and enjoying a set of distinctive, material, spiritual, affective and intellectual traits, habits and elements that characterize a society or social group of a specific destination.

Richards (1996) [7] suggests that the early approaches to the relationship between tourism and culture were based on the "sites and monuments" approach, whereby the cultural attractions of a country, destination or region were considered to be important for tourism. But gradually a broader view of tourism emerged that included scenic arts (Hughes, 2000[8]), handicrafts [7], cultural events, architecture and design (Richards and Wilson, 2006 [9]) and intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2017)[10].

Cultural tourism plays a very important role in publicizing, preserving and enjoying the heritage of a destination, satisfying the tourist and generating economic and social development in the destinations and, in addition, cultural heritage has become the essence of tourism in many tourist destinations around the world (Dallen y Williams, 2006) [11].

Heritage can be defined as the legacy we receive from the past, what we live in the present and what we transmit to future generations [7].

SECTUR (cited by Maciel, 2000[12]), divides heritage according to its characteristics into three categories: Natural Heritage, Monumental Historical Heritage and Cultural Heritage:

  -The Natural Heritage consists of physical and biological formations or groups of these formations that have an exceptional universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view. It also includes the elements that integrate the environment such as soil, air, water, flora and fauna.

  -Monumental Historical Heritage is constituted by sites, buildings, monuments and cities that the law considers Patrimony of the Nation, as well as real estate, furnishings, paintings and sculptures with similar characteristics.

The Cultural Heritage is composed of the set of expressions of the collective life that are manifested in the customs and traditions. It is also considered within the concept of Cultural Heritage to the natural realm where these expressions are manifested, that is, the population centers.

Therefore, we can say that the cultural heritage is composed of museums, archaeological monuments, crafts, arts, knowledge, festivals, customs, traditions and typical food. And in addition, culture and tourism have a mutually and beneficial relationship that can strengthen the attractiveness of destinations, regions and countries (Ochoa, 2017) [5].

III. MARKETING OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Tourist destinations are countries, places or geographical areas that have a set of natural resources, cultural, infrastructure, attractions, among others. That is to say, they are a space where a series of services and products are produced and supplied, planned, managed and also include an intangible element, that is, they are made up of the images and experiences that are generated in visitors from what exists in the place.

Therefore, tourist destinations offer a material space on which are located the services that integrate the offer and an immaterial space created from ideas, images and experiences of tourists. In addition, each destination has a set of cultural, environmental factors, which make them unique.

Destinations are tourism products that are difficult to control and commercialize due to the complexity of local community relationships and the diversity of interests involved in the development and production of tourism products. In this sense, marketing is a tool that helps to meet the needs of tourists and to plan and manage a destination properly.

The main objective of tourism destination marketing is to integrate and direct the efforts of the government and the private sector, aimed at promoting and commercialize the destination's tourism offer (Acerenza, 2006) [13].

According to Bigné, et al. (2000[14]), the main objectives of destination marketing are:

• Improve long-term prosperity at destination.

• Satisfy visitors.

• Increase the profitability of local companies and the multiplier effects in the economy.

• Optimize the impacts of tourism by ensuring a sustainable balance between economic benefits and socio-cultural and environmental costs.

Destination marketing will be define as a strategic tool to attract more visitors to a region and satisfy them; as well as generate higher profits based on the resources used for the production and development of tourism products and carry out an adequate marketing and distribution of products and services [5].

Each tourist destination satisfies a certain type of demand, therefore destination marketing needs to take in consideration the reasons for traveling to develop suitable offers for destination markets. In addition, destinations should take into consideration the potential markets they can attract.

Before traveling, tourists create an image about the destination, as well as a series of expectations based on previous experiences or recommendations from friends or relatives, advertising they have seen on the internet or some other medium. The image is a series of expectations and perceptions that a tourist has about a destination,giving the experiences, descriptions of friends and relatives and marketing campaigns.

The importance of the image of a tourist destination is present since it affects the perception of tourists, as well as their behavior and the process of choosing a destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991) [15].

Another criterion is the attractiveness of a destination, as it reflects the feelings and opinions of its visitors about the perception of the destination to meet their needs. The more able a destination is to meet the needs of tourists, the more it is perceived as attractive and more likely to be chosen. Mayo and Jarvis (1980) [16], define that attractiveness is the perceived capacity of the destiny to grant individual benefits. This capability is reinforced by the attributes of a destination, that is, the components that are part of a destination. The importance of these attributes helps people to evaluate the attractiveness of a destination and make their decisions to visit it or not.

Therefore, a tourist destination is related to the presence of tourist products and services that satisfy the needs of the tourists and generate an attractive offer and an experience. Then, a tourist destination should use destination marketing in addition to promoting and commercialize its products, and look for an appropriate positioning in the markets.

IV. THE CHINESE TOURIST IN MEXICO

The Chinese tourist is a market segment that has great potential due to the economic spill that it makes in the destinations where it travels and in addition, the Chinese population is a large population and has more facilities to travel.

The Chinese tourist arriving in Mexico comes mainly from Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong. The 62% of them prefer cultural tourism and 31% prefer sun and beach tourism (IPK International, 2015) [17]. In addition, 71% of the Chinese make their reservation with a tour operator; 69% of these tourists hire all-inclusive packages; 100% stay in 4 and 5 star hotels for periods of 5 to 8 days and spend an average of 2 thousand to 4 thousand dollars during their vacations. The places that are most visits are: Mexico City and Cancun (SIIMT, 2017) [2].

The 3 main international airports in Mexico where the Chinese tourists arrived in 2016 were:

Mexico City, Cancun and Tijuana, which accounted for 94.8% of total arrivals; the first two contributed with 72.6% of the passenger flow Chinese [2].

In general, Chinese travelers travel in groups of up to 15 people and visit three or four tourist spots in one day. In addition, the group of tourists travels accompanied by a tour-leader, who must make sure that the travelers will effectively return to China [17].

According to official numbers, in 2015, there were 97,800 Chinese tourists, representing a 29% change over the previous year [17].
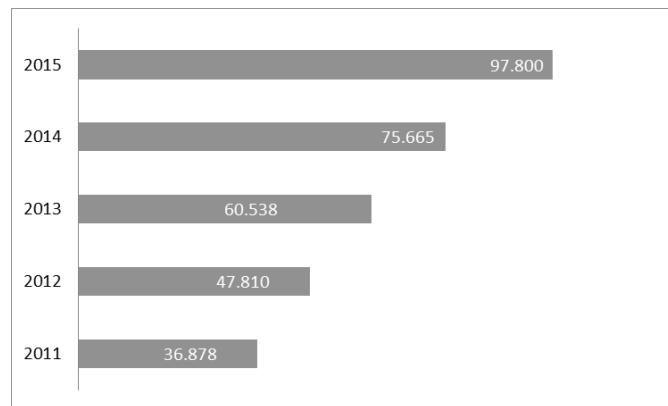

Figure 1. Arrival of annual Chinese tourists to Mexico 2011-2015.

As shown in the Figure 1, the number of tourists in 2011 was minimal, less than 40,000 Chinese tourists visited Mexico on an annual basis, and by 2015 more than doubled this number.

V. CULTURAL TOURISM IN MEXICO AND ITS HERITAGE

Cultural heritage refers not only to material goods with a particular archaeological, historical or artistic significance or value, but also includes intangible goods that refer to languages, music, customs, expressions, traditions, craft practices, intellectual property , among other manifestations of the culture of a nation [5].

Mexico has a large inventory of cultural attractions, both tangible and intangible. The attractions considered as a World Heritage Site in Mexico by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will be listed below [10]:

Cities and Monuments Heritage:

1. Historical Center of Mexico and Xochimilco, CDMX (1987)

2. Historical center of Oaxaca and archeological zone of Monte Alban, Oaxaca (1987)

3. Historic Center of Puebla, Puebla (1987)

4. Pre-Hispanic city of Teotihuacan, State of Mexico (1987)

5. Pre-Hispanic City and Palenque National Park, Chiapas (1987)

6. Historic city of Guanajuato and adjacent mines, Guanajuato (1988)

7. Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen Itza, Yucatan (1988)

8. Historic Center of Morelia, Michoacán (1991)

9. Pre-Hispanic city of El Tajin, Veracruz (1992)

10. Historic Center of Zacatecas, Zacatecas (1993)

11. Rock paintings of the Sierra de San Francisco, BCS (1993)

12. Early 16th century monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl (1994)

13. Pre-Hispanic city of Uxmal, Yucatán (1996)

14. Zone of historical monuments of Querétaro, Querétaro (1996)

15. Hospicio Cabañas de Guadalajara, Jalisco (1997)

16. Archeological zone of Paquime, Chihuahua (1998)

17. Area of historical monuments of Tlacotalpan, (1998)

18. Fortified historic city of Campeche, Campeche (1999)

19. Area of archaeological monuments of Xochicalco, Morelos (1999)

20. Franciscan missions of the Sierra Gorda de Querétaro (2003)

21. Casa-Taller by Luis Barragan, CDMX (2004)

22. Landscape of agaves and old industrial facilities of Tequila, Jalisco (2006)

23. Central Campus of the University City of the UNAM, CDMX (2007)

24. Villa Protectora de San Miguel El Grande and Sanctuary of Jesús Nazareno de Atotonilco, Guanajuato (2008)

25. Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (2010)

26. Prehistoric Caves of Yagul and Mitla in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca (2010)

27. Hydraulic system of the aqueduct of Father Tembleque, Edomex / Hidalgo (2015)

Intangible Cultural Heritage:

-The indigenous feasts dedicated to the dead (2008)

-The ritual ceremony of the Voladores (2009)

-Sites of memory and living traditions of the Otomí-Chichimecas of Tolimán: Peña de Bernal, guardian of a sacred territory (2009)

-The traditional Mexican cuisine, community culture, ancestral and living-The paradigm of Michoacán (2010)

-The pirekua, traditional song of the Purépechas (2010)

-El Mariachi, music of strings, singing and trumpet (2011)

- The parachicos in the traditional celebration of January of Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas (2015).

In addition, Mexico has 1,254 museums, having Mexico City the largest number of museums (152 recognized) in America, and more than Madrid, New York or Paris (SIC, 2017) [18].

VI. UNIVERSE OF STUDY AND DESIGN OF THE INSTRUMENT

The universe of this research will be the Chinese tourists who come to Mexico City because it is the destination they visit the most and because the culture offer by the city.

The evolution of the arrivals of these tourists in Mexico City has been the following:

TABLE I

ANNUAL ARRIVAL OF CHINESE TOURISTS TO CDMX 2012-2015

Year	Tourist
2012	18113
2013	22407
2014	26624
2015	31717

In the table above, it can be seen that the arrival of Chinese tourists to Mexico City has increased slowly, without even doubling the numbers, having a potential market untapped.

From the above universe, the random sample will be calculated using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (e^2(N-1)) \big/ Z^2pq} \qquad (1)$$

Z = confidence level (90%)

N = universe

pq = population variance

e = estimation error (10%)

n = sample size.

To calculate the sample it was necessary to analyze the arrival of the tourists on a monthly basis in order to have a more accurate calculation of our sample. In the month of November of the previous year, 2,400 Chinese tourists arrived; applying the previous formula, we obtain a sample of 244 tourists.

The instrument used was the Likert Scale, having 4 levels of response (totally agree-totally disagree) for respondents to choose one side of the scale and avoid obtaining neutrality responses. It was translated into English and Chinese and consists of 12 items.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, we used Cronbach's alpha and a pilot test to verify that all items of the instrument were understandable. Cronbach's alpha for the instrument was 0.701, being> .7, therefore acceptable (George and Mallery, 2003[19]

The variables that this instrument will measure are satisfaction level (item 1 to 6) and tourism marketing (items 7 to 12).

According to the answers obtained, the frequencies of responses of Chinese tourists were as follows:

TABLE 2

ANSWERS TO THE ITEMS

Item	Percentage of responses
1. I am totally satisfied with my trip to this tourist destination..	55% of respondents said they were fully satisfied with their trip.
2. The places where I made my purchases were of my like.	50% mentioned that the places where they made their purchases were of their total satisfaction.
3. I am totally satisfied with the travel agency that I contracted to make my trip to this destination.	55% were satisfied with the services of the tourist agency.
4. I consider that the purchases that I made during my stay in this destination are of luxury and quality.	55%, said that the purchases they made were considered luxury and of great quality.
5. The cultural tourist attractions that I visited in this destination were of my total pleasure.	50% of respondents, the attractions were to their total satisfaction.
6. The quality of the hotel where I stayed left me pleased.	50% agreed that the quality of the hotel where they stayed pleased them.
7. The perception I had before visiting this destination was good.	55%, said their perception before visiting Mexico City was positive.
8. My friends or family who visited this destination gave me a positive opinion.	59% had a favorable opinion of friends or relatives..
9. I can say that the image of natural and cultural sites is very good.	55% of the tourists interviewed agreed that the image of cultural and natural sites was very good.
10. The culture in this destination has seemed interesting to me.	95% said the Mexican culture has been of their total interest.
11. I enjoyed the gastronomy in this destination.	77% enjoyed the taste of gastronomy.
12. The museums, monuments, crafts in this destination were to my like.	64% enjoyed visiting museums, monuments and buying handicrafts.

According to the scoring ranges of the Likert scale, it has a maximum value of 48 and a minimum of 12, we have the following values for the variables:

TABLE 3

SCORING RANGES OF THE LIKERT SCALE

Very high influence on the increase	High influence on the increase	Low influence on the increase	Very low influence on the increase	Scale Score
48	36	24	12	

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                                    |            |
                                    ▼            ▼
              ┌─────────────────┐   ┌────────────────┐
              │ Tourist marketing │   │  Satisfaction  │
              └─────────────────┘   └────────────────┘
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The satisfaction variable had a sum of 21, indicating that it has a low influence on the increase of tourists. The total value for the tourist marketing variable was 27, indicating that it has a high influence on the increase of Chinese tourists.

Because strategies will be proposed to increase the number of Chinese tourists to Mexico, a SWOT analysis will be carried out based on the responses obtained and other observations made by Chinese tourists.

TABLE 4
SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths
1. Existence of attractions of all kinds, mainly cultural and historical, that can be integrated into circuits and routes.
2. Existence of a real and potential market for the tourist activity of the City.
3. Real feasibility - technical, political and economic - of structuring new products, services and activities according to the needs of the Chinese market.
4. International Airport
5. Growth of long-haul flights to and from Asia.
6. There is a solid complementary tourism offer (gastronomy, tourist guides network and tourism service providers).
7. Modern and cosmopolitan city
8. Strong position of the image of Mexico City.
9. It has ideal sites for luxury shopping.
10. Mexico is the second Latin American country that most Chinese travelers receive.

Opportunities
1. Growing interest of Chinese tourists towards cultural and gastronomic tourism. 2. Greater demand for quality, safety and certainty on the part of tourists. 3. Privileged geographical position. 4. Geographical proximity with the United States of America. 5. Improvement of tourist quality

Weakness
1. Partial knowledge of the characteristics and behavior of Chinese visitors arriving in the City. 2. Lack of coupling of tourism services according to the needs of the Chinese market. 3. Lack of training on tourism and its importance in the personnel that do not belong directly to the industry but that has a direct approach with the visitors. 4. Deficiency in public transport. 5. Insufficient research and specialized studies for this sector. 6. Promotion and publicity campaigns with low impact on Chinese tourists. 7. Destination with perception of remoteness for the Chinese tourist, even though they travel to the United States of America.

Threats
1. Perception of Mexico as an insecure country which affects the image. 2. Growing competition for international destinations geared towards cultural tourism. 3. Budget constraints for the development of tourism.

According to the SWOT, the strategic lines on which we will base the proposal for the increase of Chinese tourists to Mexico will be considered:

1. Communication and promotion

2. Creation and promotion of tourism products and destinations

3. Infrastructure and transportation

4. Training and business support

1 Communication and promotion:

The first strategic line seeks to improve the positioning of the destination. This improvement of the positioning is oriented to attract more tourists and of more quality, that is to say, that they have a greater capacity of spending. This destination marketing strategy includes the

repositioning of the "Mexico" brand in the minds of these tourists and that combines the tourist attractions of the capital.

Create publicity campaigns for the promotion of tourism products, as well as create campaigns focused on the gastronomic offer, places to make luxury purchases and develop mobile applications where they show these campaigns and benefits of visiting Mexico.

In addition, it is necessary to look for new channels to promote tourism products, as well as create a strategic marketing plan.

2 Creation and promotion of tourism products and destinations:

In the second strategic line, it seeks integration with other important destinations in America due to the privileged geographical position of Mexico, that is, to create tourist packages in conjunction with Chinese tourist agencies for tourists to visit Mexico and some other country close to Mexico.

In addition, it is necessary to diversify products (eg gastronomic routes, cultural theme parks) and make use of new technologies to increase experience, for example, to adapt a guide audio in Mandarin in museums, archaeological sites and other tourist sites, as well as adapting basic services in hotels, restaurants, tourist routes with signage and menus in their language.

3 Infrastructure and transport:

In the third line, connectivity and accessibility are necessary factors for the attraction of new Chinese tourists since they allow the displacements in the own destiny, as much aerial and terrestrial. It is therefore necessary to increase the number of direct air routes and the travel frequencies.

4 Training and business support:

For the fourth line, proper training and training of human resources in hotels, restaurants and other providers of Mexican tourist services will encourage Chinese tourists to feel satisfied in their visit to Mexico and to recommend the destination among their friends and family.

It proposes training actions aimed at professionals in the destination and people who have contact with visitors (transport, commerce, different services, etc.) with the aim of acquiring skills to improve the tourism experience. Among these actions will be the training in languages, in particular Mandarin and English.

It is also necessary to conduct focused research in this tourism market with the support of institutions and government.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The Chinese tourist is a tourist with great economic potential as well as great number of tourists that exist in the world. Mexico is a country that can offer to the Chinese tourist great cultural experiences but Mexico cannot progress to attract more tourist Chinese.

According to this research, the Chinese tourist likes to know the culture of the destination where he travels, as well as taste typical foods and make purchases. In addition, personal recommendations are the most influential for a tourist to visit a destination; therefore, it is necessary to properly implement destination marketing to attract and satisfy Chinese tourists to Mexico, as well as focus on tourism.

Therefore, the strategies that are proposed are long term, because it is necessary to manage these strategies between the public and private sectors of both countries.

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