Sustainable Development Strategy for Casino Industry of Hualien Area

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[ABSTRACT]

Been long a controversial issue, Gambling proponents usually took the gambling industry in Las Vegas as example and argued that casino liberalization at Las Vegas, has attracted tremendous tourism benefits and brought economic prosperity to the surrounding region. They questioned why Hualien shouldn't follow the path to success in Las Vegas to resolve poverty and economical depression commonly occurred in Hualien area. In Taiwan, Hualien enjoys the best development in infrastructure and various industries; visiting crowd of millions of every year, match every large-scale activity that the government of Hualien County plans elaborately (such as the main road of star light, the activity that the aboriginal holds a memorial ceremony for in bumper harvest year, etc.) Due to tourism downturn in recent years, as a result aggravating the budget deficit of local government, casino establishment is urgently considered as a way to prosper local economic activities. The policy and legislation of Taiwan government towards this issue remain conservative, Howe, most advanced countries in the world view liberalization and legalization of gambling as an effective method to regulate the long-existing, problematic industry. It is believed that casino liberalization in Taiwan is about a matter of time. Casinos will be legally established at the time of ripeness in the near future. Based on this assumption, this study summarizes preliminarily a number issues potentially present on the development of gaming business at Hualien with respect to infrastructure and tourism development at Hualien according to the analyses of reviewing the literature on the definition and categories of casino, influence of gaming industry in all aspects, and current situation and perspective of tourism development at Hualien. This study firstly employed Participatory Local Appraisal (PLA) to form a consensus from local resident for sustainable development of Hualien area. Then, SWOT, TOWS matrix analysis, expert judged Fuzzy Delphi method to determine the most valuable issues on the development of casino industry at Hualien in both respects.

Key words: Fuzzy Delphi Analysis, SWOT, Sustainable Development, Casino.

1. Introduction

Hualien County, which consists of mountains and rivers, is located in the eastern Taiwan, with the
Pacific Ocean to its east, Yilan County to its north, and Taitung County to its south. It faces the Central Range of Taiwan on the west and surrounded by Taichung County, Nantou County and Kaohsiung County. Hualien County with an area of 4,628.57 km² (about 13% of the total area of Taiwan) is the largest country of this island. And the 13 cities and townships in Hualien County are: Hualien City, Fenglin, Yuli, Hsinchung, Chian, Hougong, Kungfu, Rueisuei, Fuli, Fengpin, Hsitulin, Wanjung, and Chohsi. Besides, Suao–Hualien Highway, Hualien–Taitung Highway, Coast Highway, The Central Cross–Island Highway, and the railway system are all the main intercity transportation. Also, Hualien County has the only international harbor and airport in the east Taiwan.

"Tourist Industry" shows country’s national power, society, and economy most (Ho–imberg, 2000). And the main development is basing on the tourism around the world, and it combines recreation, tourism, leisure, shopping, playground and casino (Li, 2003). Nowadays, the newest trend is that the casino combines with the recreation. Taiwan is an island country, and casino industry has a close relationship to sightseer. Recently, Hualien County’s tourist industry which is the fastest in Taiwan, and there are millions of sightseer goes to Hualien to join activities which are planed by Hualien Government, such as Walk of Fame, The Harvest Festival, and so on. Finally, to draft an industrial sustainable development strategy basing on three main parts: protect the tourist resources, promote tourist industry, and let Hualien become international leisure villa is an important influence on the tourist development in Hualien.

II. An Analysis of Present Situation on Tourism Industry in Hualien County

1. The Marketing Status of Tourism

According to the survey of citizens' travel from Tourism Bureau in 1999, the proportion of citizen tourism and the time of traveling in a year have been increasing very quickly in Taiwan. The proportion of traveling for citizens in Taiwan has increased from 57% in 1988 to 82.4% in 1999, it has increased up to 25% and the time of traveling has grown up to 8% per year. Considering of time and seasons for traveling, domestic travel in Taiwan matches well with seasons and weather patterns, it is separated in the whole year, and is divided into four peak seasons for traveling, February (winter vacation and spring holiday in lunar calendar), June (summer), the end of August to September (summer vacation), October (national holidays), etc. Most of the tourists are from retirees, people are older than sixty years old and the age of students from twelve to nineteen years old, and others are from people on business or group travel (Benson, 2004).

Because the proportion of family travel is about 55% in domestic travel, traveling activities and the planning of travel routes have to meet different needs from family members, including adults and children. Moreover, there are 48% people choose to travel with partners, most of them have full-time jobs and use their spare time to be relax when traveling in the off-peak seasons. Thus, deep travel and specific location travel can attract tourists who have full-time jobs.

People prefer going on a trip to natural landscapes in Taiwan, and seeing activity characteristics as the most important factor when traveling. According to the survey of top ten sightseeing in Taiwan, nine of them are natural scenic spots, including East Coast National Scenic Area, Taroko National Park, East Rift Valley National Scenic Area.

On the view of national tourism, according to the report of expenditure and traveling direction for tourism from Taiwan in 1999, it indicated that the reasons why tourists from other countries will come to visit Taiwan are ranked from historical objects (54.3%), scenery (51.8%), food (47.0%), to near visitors’ countries (30.6%). After they came to Taiwan, people in Taiwan are friendly, food, and historical objects have a higher reputation than we predicted forward, while the status of transportation has a worse reputation than we predicted forward.