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A Study of Strategic Planning of MICE Tourism in Khon Kaen based on SWOT Analysis

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Abstract. The Division of Meeting, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition (MICE) is increasing around the world, especially in Khon Kaen. It is featured as the high consumption, high profit, little seasonal difference and strong industry relevance, so it plays an increasingly important role in the economic development. The city could hold the MICE tourism to improve the visibility and reputation effectively and there is a large room for revenue growth from the business, exhibition, incentive tourism of the foreign visitors and local large-scale team building in Thailand. The local area and region are investigated for the impact of Khon Kaen on the MICE tourism. Most tourists are concentrated in urban areas and such tourism is mainly applied to the exhibition groups, enterprise groups and institutions. However, the local MICE convention and exhibition faces the opportunity and challenge, so the sufficient preparation shall be carried out. In this paper, the authors take the MICE tourism of Khon Kaen as the research objective and the SWOT is selected to judge the management of the local MICE tourism for analysis. The authors will define the development trend and scale based on the basic characteristics of the strategic planning, and determine the area to be studied, to highlight the strength of MICE.

Keywords. SWOT analysis, MICE tourism, Strategic planning

Brief introduction:

With the relaxation of epidemic control in Thailand in 2022, a large number of the foreign tourists enter Thailand. Located in the northeast Thailand, Khon Kaen is the capital of Khon Kaen Province. It has a 450km valley to implement the economic corridors development. Besides, it is also the first "MICE city" in the northeast region, the hometown of culture and the birthplace of local wisdom, the capital of education in Northeast region. It could provide the services of the transport, conference, trade and exhibition venues and accommodation, including the standardized service for the MICE industry, which is full innovation and new aspects. Its vision is to become the tenth MICE destination of ASEAN and the visitors could take a plane to the airport of Khon Kaen, take the train or the bus from Mo Chit Bus Terminal. The activity highlights include: Khon Kaen International Silk Festival AND Food and Agricultural Technology Exhibition, etc. The favorable geographical position and complete infrastructural facilities make Khon Kaen as one of the main MICE destinations for official promotion, and the tourism is taken as a national mission. In addition to Bangkok, Phuket, Chonburi and Chiang Mai are also the main destination cities, but Khon Kaen in the northeast

region is excluded. Taking Khon Kaen as the center, some cities with more tourists may become the tourist cities or that with the development potentials. The flights and regional expansion are increased after the world tourism day events in previous years

2. Literature review

Hence, this paper aims at studying the tourism form of Khon Kaen and the supplies are researched based on the current tourism sources. It shall determine the identity of the strategies that are suitable for tourism of Khon Kaen and the implementation plan according to the local, regional and national strategies. Hence, one development frame shall be determined for the theoretical support of the further research and results. In terms of direct expansion and indirect stimulation of tourism, the number of the tourists is counted for the provinces with the tourism potentials. Although there are few tourists in Khon Kaen, its urbanization promotes the tourism growth and the tourists are concentrated in the urban areas due to the constant growth of the tourism and growth trend of the tourists.

MICE

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing/Conventions and Exhibitions/Exposition is a kind of tourism that is usually planned in advance for large groups to gather together.

M: Conference

The meeting is usually held in the hotel's conference room or conference center. It is a single-day event and the professionals are gathered to respond the key challenges or set the goals for the organization.

I: Incentive travel

The incentive travel is an incentive provided by the company due to the outstanding and professional performance of the employees, teams or partners.

C: Conference (large business conference)

The conference brings it to a high level and it is specially designed for the large group, so that the knowledge could be shared in the following few days.

E: Exhibition

In essence, it is the trade exhibition, which is organized to publicize the main products and services. They are highly-concentrated events, which could promote the business and assist the employees to establish the network and long-term professional relationship, such as: Khon Kaen International Agricultural Machinery Exhibition and Sugar Industry Technology and Equipment Exhibition in 2022

As the founder and the Managing Director of MICE & Communication, Mr. Rut Jiroajvanichakorn is an expert in the event organization, including the conference, incentive travel, large enterprise conference and event exhibition. Besides, he is also involved in the IT company and the business has expanded to the sports management company. ---- (Hall of Fame in Thailand, 2018).

The MICE tourism is beneficial to the economy of the destination. Besides, it also provides the abundant opportunities for the individual company or the organization that yearns for the international stage. (Haley Stanton, 2021) proposed the benefits of MICE tourism.

The benefits of MICE tourism including:

It is conducive to acquire the new technologies.

EWEC is the East-West Economic Corridor of the Government of Thailand. The EWEC project will connect Thailand with four neighboring countries --- China, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar through Khon Kaen. It will be created as the hub that integrates the business,

investment and transportation and it will become the center of MICE of China-Indochina Peninsula and Southern China.

1

It attracts the high-spending tourists.

They could explore the most famous scenic spots of Khon Kaen through the day, including Bueng Kaen Nakhon, Bang Saen Beach and Ton Taan night fair, which could be connected to attract the high-spending tourists. It could provide the high yield and return per capita, enhance the economic connection with the international community.

2

It creates more economic multiplier effects and competitiveness.

The rapid growth of Khon Kaen's tourism industry increases household income and government revenue through multiplier effect, improve the local economic environment and occupies the certain proportion among the important tourism cities of Thailand with the strong competence.

It could enhance the non-peak tourism.

The most appropriate period in visiting Khon Kaen falls from November to April in the next year, while the remaining months are the rain reason. July, August and September are the worst months of the rainy season. According to data, the Silk Festival will be held in the early December. The traditional performances and local products fair in several days will enable the tourists to learn about the city, and it is one of the main revenues.

In the regional aspect, the MICE mainly aims at promoting the development policies. The MICE tourism policies are combined with the local strategic planning to file and analyze the relevant information, which is crucial to the strategic development of the MICE industry. It will urge Khon Kaen to fully prepare the local MICE industry. In general, the MICE tourism includes the convention and exhibition tourism, incentive measures, conferences and exhibitions. The MICE tourism is beneficial to the economy of the destination. Besides, it also provides the abundant opportunities for the individual company or the organization that yearns for the international stage.

SWOT

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning and strategic management technology to assist the individuals or organizations to identify the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat related to the business competition or project planning. Sometimes, it is referred to as situation assessment or situation analysis, forming the acronyms of SWOT. The main objective of the SWOT analysis is to improve the understanding of the factors that develop the business decisions or strategies.

S: Strength

In the MICE tourism, it refers to the capacities of the government to surpass its competitors, or something unique to the government that can improve its competitiveness.

W: Weakness

The current weakness is analyzed based on the internal and external competitive environment and conditions.

O: Opportunity

¹ <https://www.businesseventsthailand.com/cn/support-solution/success-story/detail/30-khon-kaen-thailands-5th-official-mice-city>

² <https://12go.asia/en/thailand/khon-kaen>

It refers to the opportunities in the external competition, including the new products or demands.

T: Threat

The new competitors include other regions of Thailand, and the foreign and industrial policy changes or economic recession.

Hence, it forms an analysis model and constructs a matrix, including: strength and weakness analysis (SW), and opportunity and threat analysis (OT).

Strength and opportunity analysis (SO)

As a whole, the government and the enterprises could utilize the favorable conditions in the organizational environment due to the extensive strength, to achieve the objectives.

Weakness and opportunity analysis (WO)

Other substitute products may bring the threats or opportunities to the government and enterprises.

Strength and threat analysis (ST)

The strength could be adopted to avoid or alleviate the impacts brought by the external threats.

Weakness and threat analysis (WT)

It refers to a defensive analysis to reduce the weakness and avoid the threats of external environment.

The SWOT analysis method (also known as the TOWS analysis and Dawes matrix) is also called as the situation analysis method, which was firstly proposed by Weihrich in early 1980s, a professor of management in University of San Francisco. It is often applied to the development of enterprise strategies and analysis of the competitors.

Strategic planning

The strategic planning is a process, in which the organization defines its strategies or directions, and determines its resources to achieve the strategic objectives. It could also be extended to the control mechanism that guides the strategic implementation. It is a process, in which the organization leaders define the vision on future and determine the organizational objectives and purposes. This process includes the orders to determine the objectives, so that the organization could realize the vision. (Mary K. Pratt, 2022)

The development of strategic planning could enable you to track progress towards the objectives. When each department and team to learn about the larger strategy of your company, their progress will directly affect the success, so as to create a top-down strategy to follow the KPI (Catherine·Kotter, 2020). Its purpose is to set up the overall objectives and develop the plans. It involves taking a step back from day-to-day operations and inquiring what should be the business's direction and priorities.

Difference between the strategic planning and 'plan'.

(Surbhi S, social development specialist, 2018) proposed that the strategic planning focuses on the long-term objectives in realizing the business. In addition, the operation plan shall be carried out to realize the short-term objectives of the company. It is adopted to set up the priority and adjust the resources, so as to achieve the business objectives.

The difference is shown in the figure below:

COMPARISON BASIS	STRATEGIC PLANNING	PLAN
Significance	The plan to realize the organization visions is the strategic plan.	The plan refers to a process, in which the things are pre-determined to realize the tactical objectives of business.
Time scope	Long-range planning	Short-range planning
Method	Extroversion	Introversion
Modification	In general, such plan will last a longer period.	This plan will change every year.
Implementer	Top management	Middle management
Scope	Wide	Narrow
Emphasis	Vision, Mission and Objectives	Daily activities of the enterprise.

3. Research method

Secondary data method

According to the key information and secondary data method, the authors will take advantage of the current data or that could be sorted out and extracted through the scattered text. In this paper, the authors carry out the retrieval and screening of CNKI, Wanfang Data Network, journals and magazines, and Google Academic, to compare the strategic planning of MICE.

Case analysis method

The cases of other provinces in Thailand (MICE) are analyzed to study the feasible scheme and motivation. The authors will compare with the measures of other provinces and enterprises through the specific cases, and combine with the change of local economic development, to analyze the strategies of the MICE strategic planning research of Khon Kaen from multiple perspectives.

4. Research achievements

(1) Current situation of the MICE tourism development of Khon Kaen

Khon Kaen has the favorable conditions in the ecology, interpersonal relationship, zone, traffics, tourism resources and tourist source. The MICE tourism is largely developed. To better promote the convenience and importance of the MICE tourism of Khon Kaen, Khon Kaen was open in Dec. 2017 and it became the fifth official MICE city. During this period, it held the international automobile exhibition, energy technology and agricultural innovation technology conferences. With the sufficient supply of the materials and energy, the superior supporting facilities and the geographic positions, the enterprises, associations and companies held the annual meetings and exhibition events. A total of 350 government authorities and local entrepreneurs join the project, to promote the growth of local economy and support Khon Kaen to the international conference and exhibition center in the northeast Thailand. Khon Kaen is the largest commercial city and the industrial development center in this region. It is also the core of the EWEC program that connect Thailand with four neighbouring

countries -- China, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, to create it as the hub that integrates the business, investment and transportation and the center of MICE of China-Indochina Peninsula and Southern China. In Apr. 2022. KICE consolidated the leading position in the exhibition industry in Northeast Thailand and gained the TWVS.

(2) SWOT analysis of MICE tourism of Khon Kaen

The SWOT analysis is an important way to analyze the economic activities and strategic position. The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat are analyzed for the regional economic activities, to provide a comprehensive and systematic judgement and clear idea in developing the strategies to improve the competitiveness in the economic activities. In this paper, the authors will take this method to conduct the basic analysis and judgement of the MICE tourism in Khon Kaen.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the data are combined as follows:

(I) S: Strength

Strength of Khon Kaen MICE

Rich tourism resources: 1.1 The Khon Kaen province has more destinations that attract the tourists, including the natural and cultural scenic spots and religious temples. (the famous tourist sites are phra mahathat Nakhon and Tontan market).

1.2 The night life is attractive to the tourists in the downtown. (Located in the south of Khon Kaen University, CENTRAL PLAZA and Denton night market).

1.3 The festivals and traditional activities are held here every year.

Favorable supporting facilities: 2.1 There are the hotels with various prices.

2.2 Convenient public transport means.

Superior geographic position: 3.1 Khon Kaen is the center of education, economy and government of the Khon Kaen province.

(II) W: Weakness

Weakness of Khon Kaen MICE

Insufficient organization and coordination: 1.1 The government, private sectors and community lack of the sound coordination in the development and public relations.

More competitors: 2.1 The competitors of Khon Kaen include those of other provinces and countries.

The tourism areas have the high cost and inadequate service: 3.1 The international culture makes local culture fade away.

3.2 The tourist attractions of Khon Kaen are far apart.

3.3 The personnel lack of the skills required for services in the MICE tourism, including the translation and other services.

3.4 Inadequate development and promotion of urban tourism

3.5 Under the normalization of epidemic situation, the tourists' cost is higher than previous years.

(III) O: Opportunity

Opportunity of Khon Kaen MICE

Support of local authorities: 1.1 The government authority and private sectors promote the tourism development and offer the support.

1.2 Expand the potential and preparation of MICEC businesses through the plan development.

Importance of MICE tourism of Khon Kaen in Thailand: 2.1 Khon Kaen is the central area of the northeast region.

2.2 TCEB selects Khon Kaen as the fifth MICE city of Thailand.

2.3 KICE is equipped with the modern conference devices.

Relaxed policy in Thailand: 3.1 In Oct. 2022, with the policy development of the government of Thailand, the rain season is coming to an end and its effect on the tourists dramatically decreases.

The supporting facilities are sufficient and perfect: 4.1 There are more choices available for the customers in Khon Kaen and the prices vary (hotel and apartment).

4.2 The number of hotels and guesthouses that can support large-scale MICE tourism.

(IV) T: Threat

Threat of Khon Kaen MICE

Competitive threat: 1.1 Strong competitors from surrounding cities and international markets

Unclear cooperation policy: 2.1 Unclear policies of the government-enterprise cooperation in supporting the MICE business.

Low safety and high cost under epidemic: 3.1 Higher MICE tourism cost in the post - pandemic era

3.2 Underdeveloped tourist attractions and low safety efficiency

3.3 Decreased purchasing power demand

5WHY Analysis Table		
	S: Strength	W: Weakness
Internal factors	<p>S1: The Khon Kaen province has more destinations that attract the tourists, including the natural and cultural scenic spots and religious temples. (the famous tourist sites are phra mahathat Nakhon and Tontan market).</p> <p>S2: The night life is attractive to the tourists in the downtown. (Located in the south of Khon Kaen University, CENTRAL PLAZA and Denton night market).</p> <p>S3: The festivals and traditional activities are held here every year.</p> <p>S4: There are the hotels with various prices.</p> <p>S5: Convenient public transport means.</p> <p>S6: Khon Kaen is the center of education, economy and government of the Khon Kaen province.</p>	<p>W1: The government, private sectors and community lack of the sound coordination in the development and public relations.</p> <p>W2: The competitors of Khon Kaen include other provinces and countries.</p> <p>W3: The international culture makes local culture fade away.</p> <p>W4: The tourist attractions of Khon Kaen are far apart.</p> <p>W5: The personnel lack of the skills required for services in the MICE tourism, including the translation and other services.</p> <p>W6: Inadequate development and promotion of urban tourism</p> <p>W7: Under the normalization of epidemic situation, the tourists' cost is higher than previous years.</p>
External factors		
O: Opportunity	Strength and opportunity analysis	Weakness and opportunity analysis
O1: The government authority and private sectors promote the tourism development and offer the support.	SO1: The promotion of exhibition services and the strength in MICE tourism enable the cooperation with others. The number of the international	WO1: Increase the convenient and safety urban rail transit system. Although there are more transportation facilities, it is chaotic from afternoon to evening. Most of the exhibition visitors

<p>O2: Expand the potential and preparation of MICEC businesses through the plan development.</p> <p>O3: Khon Kaen is the central area of the northeast region.</p> <p>O4: TCEB selects Khon Kaen as the fifth MICE city of Thailand.</p> <p>O5: KICE is equipped with the modern conference devices.</p> <p>O6: In Oct. 2022, with the policy development of the government of Thailand, the rain season is coming to an end and its effect on the tourists dramatically decreases.</p> <p>O7: There are more choices available for the customers in Khon Kaen and the prices vary (hotel and apartment).</p> <p>O8: The number of hotels and guesthouses that can support large-scale MICE tourism.</p>	<p>conferences in Khon Kaen of Thailand, creating more consumption markets.</p> <p>SO2: Insist on developing the EWEC project, construct the completed hub.</p> <p>SO3: Increase and promote the activities of MICE tourism, because Khon Kaen is the fifth MICE city.</p> <p>SO4: Flexibly apply the strength in the geography and supporting facilities to enhance the position of Khon Kaen MICE city in Thailand.</p>	<p>pay attention to punctuality, so it is crucial to complete it.</p> <p>WO2: Increase the cooperation between the government and local authority, and coordination in the policy and welfare, so that it is possible to develop and expand the MICE tourism.</p> <p>WO3: Train the specific skills, marketing and innovation knowledge of the service personnel. With the opening of the national policy in October 2022 and the government's promotion of tourism development, this expectation is possible.</p>
<p>T: Threat</p>	<p>Strength and threat analysis</p>	<p>Weakness and threat analysis</p>
<p>T1: Strong competitors from surrounding cities and international markets</p> <p>T2: Unclear policies of the government-enterprise cooperation in supporting the MICE business.</p> <p>T3: Higher MICE tourism cost in the post-pandemic era</p> <p>T4: Underdeveloped tourist attractions and low safety efficiency</p> <p>T5: Decline in purchasing power demand</p>	<p>ST1: Although it has the strength in the geography, the cost is increasing in the post-pandemic era, the exchange rate is decreased, so the protection shall be enhanced and the appropriate and flexible discounting or promotion may be adopted.</p> <p>ST2: In promoting tourist attractions and developing tourism, draw lessons from the loss and accidents, promote and develop the physical environment and scenic spots that are more suitable for the elderly and disabled tourists.</p>	<p>WT1: In the post-pandemic era, the MICE events may be held based on the current characteristics by considering the cost, government and local aspects.</p> <p>WT2: The government and local authority shall agree to increase the efficiency for the determined program, to increase the competitiveness of Thailand at home and abroad.</p>

Through the research of MICE group and SWOT, it is found that it consists of five components: (1) Environmental season (2) service translators (3) planning process (4) implementation plan (5) final process.

The economic entity and MICE activity create the values for the individuals and enterprises to organize the activity. MICE promotes the network, relation, learning and knowledge sharing. When the organization provides the incentive travels, the cities will increase brand exposure. Such industry will ensure more knowledge is shared to people around the world, which is conducive to establish the cultural understanding. The strategic planning structure and development strategy planning must include the public and private sectors and power structures that can be used to operate tourism directly and indirectly. There are five key aspects for development. The result strategy is as follows:

- (1) Promote the tourist attractions and develop the tourism, draw the lessons from loss and accidents;
- (2) Promotion and quality control
- (3) Publicize and support public attractions and highlight the stories behind them;
- (4) Promote and develop the physical environment and scenic spots that are more suitable for the elderly and disabled tourists;
- (5) Promote sustainable positive strategies. (Chaitawat Siribowonphitak,

Jinnapas Pathumporn, Ranees Esichaikul 2018)

Hence, the authors study the tourism form of Khon Kaen and the supplies are researched based on the current tourism sources. The identity synthesis and implementation plan are determined according to the local, regional and regional strategies. The relevant strategies are developed that are suitable for the tourism of Khon Kaen.

5. Summary

There are some aspects that need to be improved according to the case study of MICE involving the exhibitions in Thailand. The characteristics of the long-term strategic planning is adopted to achieve the vision, mission and objective, including the support, tourism time, infrastructure and traffic order. MICE contributes a lot to the tourism and most enterprises pay more in the team building and incentive travel than the leisure travelers. In addition, such industry will ensure more knowledge is shared to people around the world, which is conducive to establish the cultural understanding. The MICE industry has stimulated revival, economic and cultural development, as well as the creation and strengthening of unique destination brands and economic diversification. However, the MICE tourism of Khon Kaen is another tourism, such as cultural tourism, agricultural tourism and ecological tourism. Hence, it may determine the position of the MICE tourism of Khon Kaen in Thailand and international community.

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