

Peggy Huth

Where are the Danish tourists? - An explorative study of destination image and target group awareness

Danish tourists at the coastline of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania

Master's Thesis

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“Where are the Danish tourists?”

**An explorative study of destination image and
target group awareness of Danish tourists at the coastline
of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania**

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without whose love, trust and support, my studies
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Preface

In 2007, the biggest sea side resort of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, the town of Kühlungsborn, welcomed circa 209 Danish visitors.

Between January and April 2008, the number of Danish visitors had already doubled the above stated number. Consequently, this was attributed to the direct marketing activities of the destination's private tourism businesses on the Danish target market and had resulted in a sudden increase of bookings from potential Danish guests.

Thus, this thesis takes its point of departure in the existence of an observable phenomenon of the tourism industry of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania (MV), namely the very low density and almost absence of Danish tourists at the MV Baltic coastline, although they present a highly profitable and potential target group.

The main objective of the present thesis is the demonstration of an explorative insight view into the existing level of perceived destination image and awareness of Danish tourists in regard to their potential holiday destination at the Baltic coastline of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania (MV), in order to emphasise the enormous potential of the Danish target market for the tourist destinations at the MV coastline. Additionally, the lack of target group awareness by the MV destination marketers will be demonstrated, as, presently, this potential seems to be rarely recognised and in particular, not fully utilised.

The theoretical frameworks used in order to analyse the above stated phenomenon will derive from destination marketing theories and theories of destination image formation as well as destination brand image, also in a local and international context. Additionally, theories of general tourist behaviour and particularly the importance of target group awareness by destination marketers will be discussed in the tourism context of the MV coastline.

Following the theoretical considerations, a recent situation analysis of the MV tourism industry will be provided. The main problems of MV regarding its position on the

international tourism market will be discussed including the crucial demand for the development of an international image and brand.

Additionally, the lack of target group awareness and intercultural competencies by the tourism businesses will be highlighted as major requirements for improvement in order to strengthen the inbound tourism market, particularly in relation to Denmark.

Therefore, the major characteristics of the sea side resorts and spa towns at the MV coastline will be highlighted in order to demonstrate their unique and special attraction for the Danish target market.

An empirical survey in the form of written questionnaires was conducted in order to give an explorative insight view on the existing destination image, as it is currently perceived by Danish visitors that already spend their holidays at the MV coastline. Through an additional analysis of the respondent's general travel behaviour, an explorative insight view on Danish holiday preferences will be given in order to compare them to the actual offers and tourism services already available to Danish visitors at the MV coastline.

Ultimately, the thesis will conclude that the tourism destinations of the MV coastline must strengthen their image by improving target group awareness and cross-border marketing activities in Denmark, as the country possesses the major preconditions for a proper and enormously profitable inbound tourism market, which the MV coastline is, in turn, in urgent need of.

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