The CNMI Tourism Industry

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For the research essay, the student researcher looked for various articles, studies, and anything that could help for her research. The researcher used keywords such as Saipan tourism, and Tourism in the CNMI. One article stated and contain information to why Saipan economy has started to increase. It listed various reasons to why the CNMI was able to increase its tourism industry in the past years. One of the most promising devolvement in the CNMI is being ranked as the third-fastest growing tourist destinations in the world by the United Nations World Tourism Barometer. The report indicated that the CNMI’s tourism arrival grew by 37.3 percent, with 531,000 visitors, in 2016 (Cabrera, 2017).

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, fiscal year 2017 closed with a huge influx of tourists, marking an arrival of 653,150 tourists and resulting in a 30-percent increase in arrivals over fiscal year 2016. This is the fourth highest fiscal year arrivals in the CNMI’s history, the record being 726,690 in fiscal year 1997. MVA managing director Chris Concepcion said that for the last 18 months, arrivals have been consistently up. Arrivals from Korea increased 30 percent in September to 25,691 visitors. Korea was also the top-performing market for the year, registering a 66-percent growth rate to comprise over half of all visitors. Another factor for the CNMI tourism success is accessibility. Currently, the carriers that fly people in and out of the CNMI are Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Jeju Air, Jin Air, HK Express, HK Airlines, Beijing Capital, T’Way, Eastar, China Eastern, and Philippine Airlines. Nine of the carriers fly direct from Korea to Saipan and China to Saipan (Cabrera, 2017).

Another literature, that the student researcher found is an article about the decline of the CNMI tourism industry. MVA’s projected revenue for the tourism industry was $1.22 billion as of March 2015. With the loss of $55 million, this will go down to $1.17 billion, a 4.6-percent reduction. Despite Asiana Airlines and MVA stating earlier that CNMI’s largest source market—Korea—is not dwindling, the unexpected outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in South Korea recently might become another factor that may possibly lower travel of Korean tourist to the CNMI. “With the decrease of flights from Asiana and now MERS, we are expecting slightly lower occupancy rates. We also have to remember that a large number of our Chinese visitors transit through Incheon Airport [Korea] and take both Asiana as well as Jeju Air,” said Cavanagh, who is the general manager of Mariana Resort & Spa (Camacho, 2015).

As projected by the Marianas Visitors Authority, total visitor arrivals to The Marianas for the fiscal year are showing a dip compared to the same period last year at 458,960 visitors, 4.7 percent off last year’s mark. Visitor arrivals to The Marianas fell 14 percent in June 2018 compared to June 2017 in the first full month of no direct flights from Japan. Arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 47,341 visitors in June 2018, compared to 55,096 visitors received in June 2017. Arrivals from Korea dropped 14 percent to 24,018 visitors, yet the country retained its position as the top performing source market. This decline is largely due to fewer flights than in June 2017 from both Seoul-Incheon and Busan. T’way Air continued its daily schedule that it resumed in June and has also announced plans to operate additional charter flights with a combined 1,500+ seats from Sept. 21-29 during Chuseok, the Korean Thanksgiving holiday week. Also, Jeju Air will launch daily charter flights from Aug. 3 until Sep. 2 (Press Release, 2018)

These newspaper article helped the student researcher understand more on the airline closing being a big part of the reason to why the CNMI tourism industry has been decreasing. Despite the flight being cancelled, the CNMI still manages to keep the tourism industry high.This newspaper articles also gives more insights about the CNMI tourism throughout the years. Like how the CNMI was mentioned to be the 3rd fasting growing country.

References

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