



Strategic Analysis of Coastal Tourism in Pakistan (A Case Study of Sindh Province)

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ABSTRACT

Coastal tourism is an activity that cuts across many sectors, levels and interests; hence, its' sustainability demands a comprehensive strategic planning. However, in Pakistan this vital need is not yet recognized. Therefore, this study has attempted to formulate a strategic planning framework for coastal tourism development of the country through strategic analysis (internal and external environments analysis). Internal analysis was carried out to identify the concerned organisation's (Tourism Ministry of Pakistan) strength and weaknesses, while, external analysis establishes which influences represent opportunities and which are, or might develop into threats. Internal analysis is presented as: background analysis and resource analysis; while, external analysis is presented as a STEEP (Socio-demographic, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political) analysis of the organisation. The data collected from strategic analysis is summarised through a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and strategic options are proposed for coastal tourism development in Pakistan through TOWS (Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Strength) matrix. The proposed strategic options integrated coastal tourism of Sindh province with national economy, society, and environment.

KEY WORDS: Strategic, Analysis, Coastal, Tourism, Sindh, Pakistan.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A strategy has been variably defined Andrews [1], Chandlers [2], Johnson and Scholes [3] and Mintzberg [4], however, in general terms it is a continuous process that has to be performed in order to close the gap between where the organisation currently exist and where it aims to be in the future. Johnson and Scholes [5] identified three distinct stages in the strategic process. The first stage: *strategic analysis* is concerned with understanding the strategic position of an organisation, while, the second stage: *strategic choice*, makes an intelligent and informed choice of the most appropriate courses of action for the future of the organisation. Finally, the third stage: *implementation* puts the selected options into practice. The first stage (i.e. strategic analysis) involves: an examination of organisation's internal environment (internal analysis) and external environment (external analysis). Internal analysis involves thoroughly analysing the internal process and structure of the organisation and identifying the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. While, external analysis examines macro or contextual environment of the organisation in terms of various influences like social, political, economic, environmental and technological that effects not only the organisation in an industry, but also the whole industry itself. The external analysis of an organisation therefore establishes that which influences represent opportunities and which are, or might develop into threats.

Pakistan covers approximately 803,940 km² and has a coastline of 1,050 km along the Arabian Sea. In 1989, the Pakistan Government upgraded the tourism sector to the status of an industry. However, the coastal zone of the country, regardless of its immense tourism potential [6], has never been taken seriously as part of the overall tourism development process. Therefore, this study was carried out with the intention to explore the possible strategic options for developing coastal tourism of the country.

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1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Methods Used for Data Collection and Data Sources

1.2.1.1 Internal Analysis

The aim of the internal analysis was to assess the concerned organisation (Tourism Ministry, Pakistan) in terms of its structure, functions and to obtain insight into its internal strengths and weaknesses. Background information was collected from General Manager, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Sindh province, Pakistan through informal interview. However, due to scarcity of information on Pakistan's tourism industry, secondary material supplemented primary data. Baseline information for resource analysis (natural and cultural) was initially collected through personal field visits, and informal dialogue with key informants of Government; Non Government and coastal communities' organisations. However, for ensuring information authenticity, primary data was cross-checked and supplemented with secondary documents. Wherever required, references were made to the sourced material. Pakistan's major coastal recreational plans/projects were considered as its major capital works. These were: Karachi Coastal Recreation Development Plan 1990-2000; Defence Officers Housing Authority (DHA) Water Front Development Project; Diamond Bar Island City Project and KPT- Port Fountain Jet Project. Information for capital works was informally collected from the resource persons of the concerned projects.

1.2.1.2 Macro or external analysis

The macro or external environment is also referred to as, a far or remote environment, because it tends to exert forces from outside the organisation's sphere of influence. This analysis served as an early warning system that provides time to anticipate both opportunities and threats and also to plan appropriate responses [7]. The required information (factors that affect both the Tourism Ministry and coastal tourism) was collected through semi structured interviews from 66 individuals representing 37 coastal stakeholders (organisations) in Sindh Province..

1.2.2 Methods Employed for Data Analysis

1.2.2.1 Internal Analysis

The data regarding internal environment was analysed through:

- Background Analysis: studying the organisation's mission statement, objectives, temporal analysis, organisation structure, cultural web and research and development and;
- Resource Analysis: investigating natural, cultural resources, and capital work programmes.

Both the background and resource analysis used different analytical tools and assessment criteria (for details see Appendix 1).

1.2.2.2 Macro environment analysis

In order to overcome the complexity of the factors in external environment this study filtered the collected information into five major areas: Socio-demographic, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political and audited the forces at work through STEEP analysis.

A SWOT analysis (Appendix 2) was used as a key technique for presenting the overall results of the strategic analysis. A TOWS matrix (Appendix 3) built directly on the SWOT analysis. This matrix can not only help generate strategic options but can also address their suitability for the organisation [8]. Each box of the TOWS Matrix identified options that address a different combination of the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and the external factors (threats and opportunities).

1.3 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

On the basis of TOWS Matrix (Appendix 3) four kinds of strategies are proposed for developing coastal tourism in Pakistan:

1.3.1 Weaknesses-Opportunities (WO) Strategies

These strategies focused on improving internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities. In order to overcome most of the organisational internal weaknesses like a lack of strategic direction for coastal tourism, lack of legal access to coastal land and lack of coordination with other coastal stakeholders would need to take advantages of external opportunities like: ecologically sensitive coastal areas' potential for alternative form of tourism (e.g. CBE-Community Based Ecotourism) and recognition of stakeholders' environment of coastal tourism as an inter-organisational and interdependent domain where sustainability can only be achieved through collaboration of stakeholders.

Strategic analysis criteria of suitability, feasibility and acceptability, also known as ‘SFA framework’ [9], has already confirmed that CBE is a suitable, feasible and acceptable option for coastal tourism development in Pakistan [10].

Interdependencies of stakeholders within the domain is considered to be a fundamental basis for collaborative problem solving efforts, because the acknowledgment of mutual dependencies in the domain ensures that each stakeholder will have some standing in future collaborative negotiation. Interdependencies are also thought to increase motivation to engage in collaboration, as also suggested by Gray [11], who stated that “*recognition by stakeholders that their desired outcomes are inextricably linked to actions of others stakeholders is the fundamental basis for collaboration*”. According to Gray [12] recognition by stakeholder groups that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders is a critical basis for collaboration. The greater the degree of recognised interdependencies among stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of initiating collaboration. Other research studies appreciating stakeholders’ interdependence for successful collaborative initiating include: Rogers and Whetten [13], Terrebery [14], Hooyma [15], Sarason and Lorentz [16], Williams [17], Emery and Emery [18], Gilmore *et al* [19], Sherif [20], Miles [21], Brown [22] and Walton [23].

The presence of stakeholders’ interdependencies and under-organized system (authors’, unpublished work) in the coastal tourism domain of Sindh can encourage stakeholders’ collaboration which can possibly help in promoting coastal tourism of the province.

1.3.2 Strength-Threats (ST) Strategies

ST Strategies make use of the organisation’s internal strength to minimise the impact of external threats. Good practice operations in tourism, for example, Felstead [24], Fazi and David [25], Op wall [26] delineate that organisations use different ST- strategies like: capital works programmes’ suitability to both local needs and existing natural/cultural tourism resources; promotion of alternative forms of tourism, such as CBE operating in niche markets; ensuring sustainability objectives in tourism operation; good governance; cultural assets realisation in coastal tourism; ensuring environmental standards etc. Such strategies have equal opportunities of application in coastal tourism of Pakistan. These strategies can efficiently utilize internal strengths (competences and resources) and can also assist in overcoming external threats like technological inefficiencies, threats to natural and cultural resources and to resolve community and other stakeholders’ conflict in coastal tourism domain.

1.3.3 Weaknesses-Threats (WT) Strategies

These are defensive tactics to reduce internal weaknesses and to avoid external threats. In case of coastal environment of Pakistan, conceptualisation of collaboration theory can assist in avoiding external threats such as, turbulence in the coastal tourism environment, coastal land ownership and communities’ conflicts and can also provide guide lines for establishing an organisation with a clear strategy, structure, objectives and stakeholders’ power/interest balance.

As a result of an exhaustive literature trawl, for example, McCann [27], Cummings [28], Susskind and Medigan [29], Parker [30], Jamal and Getz [31], Selin and Chavez [32], Caffyn [33], Mandell [34], this study recommends Jamal and Getz’s [31] model of collaboration as a WT- strategic option for coastal tourism development in Pakistan. This model can be considered as a viable option for a domain:

- characterised with turbulent environment, where conflict over planning and development exists or where mechanisms for sharing ideas and developing directions are required and;
- representing an under-organised system.

The prerequisites of the proposed model are sufficiently fulfilled in the coastal tourism domain of the Province, therefore, application of the selected model would be a sensible choice for coastal tourism development.

1.3.4 Strength-Opportunities (SO) Strategies

These strategies use organisation’s internal strengths to take advantage of external opportunities. In order to apply SO strategies the organisation should pursue WO, ST and WT strategies. Therefore, following the WO, ST and WT strategies would actually enabled for establishing stakeholders’ collaboration for coastal tourism development in Pakistan.

1.4 CONCLUSION

Tourism has an industrial status in Pakistan, however, at present tourism has confined itself to adventure (mountaineering, trekking) and historical sectors. However, coastal localities of the country and its associated natural and cultural resources were observed to be the most neglected areas of tourism. Strategic analysis carried out with an intention to identify strategic options for coastal tourism development in Pakistan. Internal environment analysis of the organisation identified its major weaknesses in terms of it's: objectives, structure, culture, tourism policy, coordination/collaboration, capital works and role in coastal tourism, although, untapped natural and cultural resources were recorded its major internal strengths. On the other hand , macro or external environment of the organisation offered opportunities in the form of: coastal visitors, the Maritime Policy of Pakistan (2002), coastal inhabitants' interest in tourism, coastal area status as an inter-organisational and interdependent domain, while major threats posed by external environment were: stakeholders' turbulent environment in coastal areas, rapid degradation of natural and cultural resources, political instability, community conflicts/dissatisfaction with respect to capital works, administrative jurisdiction and coastal land ownership conflicts.

In order to take advantages of the organisation strengths and opportunities and also to overcome its weaknesses and threats this study proposed four strategic options. The SO strategic option "stakeholders' collaboration for coastal tourism/CBE development" was recognised as a prime strategic option which can only be achieved by fulfilling the remaining three options i.e. WO, ST, WT as proposed by this study.

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Appendix 1. Criteria used within the internal analysis (background & resources) of the Tourism Ministry, Pakistan (Source: Original)

Background analysis:		
Analytical Tools	Description	Assessment Criteria
Mission statement (Future Intentions):	A generalised statement of the overriding purpose in line with the values or expectations of stakeholders (Johnson and Scholes, 2002)	Assessment of organisation's mission statement against its' essential components, as described in the literature (Sing, 2006)
Objectives:	Statements of specific outcomes that are to be achieved	Assessment of organisation's objectives against its' main features, as described in the literature (Johnson and Scholes, 2002 ;Sing, 2006)
Temporal Analysis:	Temporal changes in organisation	In order to identify any significant change or contribution of organisation over time
Organisational Structure:	Power pattern and the focus of an organisation	Vertical and horizontal differentiation of organisational structure (Hill and Jones , 2000)
Organisational Cultural	Taken-for- granted assumption or paradigm of an organisation (Johnson and Scholes, 2002)	Cultural web (Johnson, 1992) and; Handy's (1996) & Miles and Snow's (1978) cultural typology
Resource Analysis:		
Analytical Tools	Description	Assessment Criteria
Natural resources	Both tangible and intangible resources of coastal tourism interest	Identification and assessment of potential for competitive advantage (Fig. 3.3)
Cultural Heritage	Archaeological and cultural resource of the coastal areas	Identification and assessment of potential for competitive advantage (Fig. 3.3)
Capital work programme	Major coastal tourism plans and projects	SWOT analysis

Appendix 2 SWOT Analysis of Tourism Ministry, Pakistan (Source: Original)

Internal	
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of PTDC in coastal provinces • Natural & cultural resources • Capital works programmes • Organisation's competencies • Research and Statistic Section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of legal access to coastal land • Organisations' objectives lacking time frame • Sectoral management approach • Beurocratic form of Organisation Structure • Power & role culture • Unrealistic Tourism Policy (1990) • Lack of active coordination with other stakeholders • Passive role in coastal tourism
External	
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal visitors • Maritime Policy of Pakistan (2002) • Coastal communities' interest in tourism • Coastal scenery • Coastal area- inter-organisational domain • Interdependencies of stakeholders in coastal areas • Capital Works • The National Environmental Act, 1997 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' turbulent environment in coastal areas • Threats to natural & Cultural resources • Political instability • Capital Works • Community conflicts/dissatisfaction • Indebted economy • Coastal land ownership conflicts

Appendix 3 TOWS Matrix for developing strategic options for coastal tourism development in Pakistan (Source: Original)

	Internal Factors	
	<i>Strengths (S)</i>	<i>Weaknesses (W)</i>
External Factors <i>Opportunities (O)</i>	Potential for stakeholders' collaboration for establishing alternative form of tourism/CBE	in order to identify strategic direction, assessment for the potential of alternative form of tourism (e.g. CBE) & to promote integration, coordination and sustainability, recognition of stakeholders' environment of coastal tourism as an inter-organisational & interdependent domain
<i>Threats (T)</i>	Following good practices in tourism operation, efficient utilisation of competences and resources to overcome technological inefficiencies, threats to natural, cultural and scenic resources, and to resolve community conflict in coastal tourism	Conceptualisation of collaboration theory, in order overcome turbulence in the coastal tourism environment, should help resolve coastal land ownership & community conflicts and also provide guide lines for establishing an organisation with a clear strategy, structure, objectives and stakeholders' power/interest balance