

COMMONALITIES IN INTRA-ASEAN TOURISM: HARNESSING THE POWER OF 10¹

*Mohammad Raduan Mohd Ariff
Mala Selvaraju
Mohd Erwan Bin Md Yusop*

ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the emerging intra-ASEAN tourism cooperation that is contributing positively towards the growth of the region's economy. An analysis of ASEAN tourism statistics and its potential will be looked into. Apart from that the paper will explore the commonalities that the region possesses. These commonalities play an important role in attracting tourists from Europe, China, Taiwan and the Middle East and it is believed that it can contribute in attracting tourists from the South-East Asian region as well.

INTRODUCTION

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) describes travel and tourism as the world's largest industry, generating more than US\$4.4 trillion in economic activity and supporting 231 million jobs, directly and indirectly, around the globe. It is also predicted that this industry will grow to US\$10 trillion in total demand and contribute 328 million jobs by 2010.²

The World Tourism Organization also notes that in 1994 receipts from International Tourism soared by 14 percent to reach \$59 billion. Asia is the world's fastest growing tourism region with East Asia and the Pacific (China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Australia, Macau and Taiwan) setting new International tourist arrival and receipts records. Tourism in these countries grew fast, an increase of 7.6 percent over that of 1993. Tourism will continue to be the number one industry for decades to come.

In the case of the Southeast Asian region, tourism has become one of its foremost industries. Although, the region receives less than 11 percent of the world's international tourist trade, members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are experiencing a boom in both foreign and domestic tourism. The number of foreign visitors has doubled, receipts from tourism have tripled during the last decade and tourism has become the leading source of foreign exchange in countries like Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

GROWTH OF INTRA-ASEAN TOURISM

ASEAN in its 1987 Manila Declaration expressed its determination to encourage intra-ASEAN travel and strengthen ASEAN's tourism industry. Since then, the regional association has signed various treaties, agreements and declaration to reaffirm their commitment to develop the tourism industry in order to promote ASEAN as a single tourism destination⁴. About eight documents have been signed, the following are the documents:

- a. Agreement of the Establishment of the ASEAN Tourism Information Center (1988).
- b. Financial Regulation of the ASEAN Tourism Information Center (1988)
- c. Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism (1998)
- d. Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism (1998)
- e. ASEAN Tourism Agreement, Phnom Penh, 4 November 2002
- f. Declaration on Revitalizing Tourism for ASEAN, China, Japan and Korea, Beijing, 9 August 2003.
- g. Vientiane Declaration Enhancing ASEAN Tourism Cooperation by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers
- h. Langkawi Declaration on "Shifting Paradigm-Prospering the Region" by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers.

ASEAN cooperation in tourism was eventually formalized in 1976 with the formation of the Sub-Committee on Tourism (SCOT) under the ASEAN Committee on Trade and Tourism. ASEAN SCOT had been effectively initiating regional tourism projects in the functional areas of promotion, marketing and research. Amongst the most significant achievements of ASEAN tourism cooperation were the Visit ASEAN Year 1992 (VAY'92), the hosting of the ASEAN Tourism Forum as an annual event since 1981, and the establishment of the ASEAN Tourism Centre in 1998 as a central coordination arm. Six ASEAN Promotional Chapters for Tourism were established in major tourists markets. The fifth ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok on 15 December 1995 set the current direction for ASEAN countries to focus on promoting sustainable tourism development, preservation of cultural and environment resources, the provision of transportation and other infrastructure, simplification of immigration procedures and human resources development.

Taking cognizance of the above opportunities, the 6th Meeting of the ASEAN National Tourism Organization (NTOs) held in Singapore on 17-18 July 1997 agreed to formulate the Plan of Action for the ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism. This plan would then be submitted for consideration of the first formal meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers in Mactan, Cebu, Philippines. This plan of action is a strategic document that will provide greater tourism interaction and cooperation and bind ASEAN member countries into a more consolidated regional alliance in the new millennium.

The ASEAN nations are aware that the strategic importance of the tourism industry for sustainable socio-economic growth of these nations, the diversity in cultures, economies and the complementary advantages across the region would benefit the development of the industry. The ASEAN

tourism sector will definitely benefit from the increasing affluence and strong economic growth of the member countries brought about by the rapid political and economic changes driven by the continuing globalization process for trade and investment, and the advances in transport, telecommunications and information technology, among others. ASEAN also had much to offer with the inherent diversity in terms of peoples, lifestyle, culture, religion and culinary experience, together with the rich natural landscape and deep historical heritage. The objectives, therefore, of ASEAN cooperation in the tourism sector are:

- a. To develop and promote ASEAN as a single and collective tourism destination with world class standards, facilities and attractions.
- b. To enhance cooperation in the tourism sector among member countries, involving both public and private sectors, in order to achieve facilitation of intra-ASEAN travel and free trade and investment in tourism services, and
- c. To provide a common forum for discussion of major issues and development in travel and tourism.

The total of Asian air passengers grew by 6.9% in 1996, and a remarkable 19.1% in 1995. Nearly 94 million Asians traveled as tourist in 1996, surpassing the number of tourist from North America for the first time ever, and with 50% traveling in Asia, up from 40% in 1980. With ASEAN member countries continuing to be among the most important countries of destinations for air visitors to Asia-Pacific into the 21 century, member countries are expected to experience heavy strain on their airport infrastructure and airline capacity, hotel accommodation, and means of transportation. Thus, member countries must sustain support for a liberal international trading system in general, and for policy reforms for more competitive aviation services, liberalization of telecommunications and tourism infrastructure expansion.

The success of Visit Thailand Year in 1987, launched by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), provided the path to other ASEAN Government tourist boards to pursue this strategy. Subsequently, in 1992, the countries formed a joint venture and launched the visit ASEAN Year. As anticipated the number of visitors from the more affluent countries from the Pacific Rim such as Japan, Australia, Canada and the United States and the European Community raised steadily, an indication of the success of ASEAN's strategy.

In Malaysia, for example, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which was established in 1987, received an amount of \$100 million from the government for its initial promotional expenditures. Tourist arrivals in Malaysia were predicted to reach a million by 1990 and receipts of \$3 billion was expected. However, following the very successful Visit Malaysia Year 1990 event, the number of foreign visitors increased tremendously reaching 7.079 million. Table 1 shows tourist arrival to Malaysia and receipt from 1990 to 2002. The Table shows a steady increase in tourist arrival except between 1997 and 1998. This could have been caused by the financial crisis which hit the region causing economic and political uncertainty in most parts of the region.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia 1990-2002

Year	Tourist Arrivals	Per capita Expenditure (RM)
1990	7,445,908	604.4
1991	5,847,213	732.4
1992	6,016,209	763.8
1993	6,503,860	778.9
1994	7,197,229	1,153.0
1995	7,468,749	1,228.4
1996	7,138,452	1,443.9
1997	6,210,921	1,561.7
1998	5,550,748	1,545.8
1999	7,931,149	1,553.5
2000	10,221,582	1,696.0
2001	12,755,073	1,896.0
2002	13,292,010	25,781.1

Source: *Tourism in Malaysia, Key Performance Indicators 2001*

Table 2 shows visitor arrivals by the country of destination 1996-2002. Clearly, tourist arrivals from each of the ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam increased during this period. In Indonesia, political instability and the bombing of several tourist spots such as Bali and the J.W. Marriot Hotel in Jakarta decreased tourist arrivals from 5,064,000 (2000) to 4,981,000 (2002). Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore were the countries that received most of the tourists. Tourist arrival for Malaysia in 2002 was 13,292 million. This was followed by Thailand with total tourist arrival of 10,873 million tourists. Singapore ranked third with 7,560 million tourists in 2002. Countries like the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia also indicate positive potential in the ASEAN tourism market. Total tourist arrival for ASEAN countries also increased from 39,136 million to 42,744 million between 2000 and 2002⁵. The good potentials and cooperation among ASEAN countries was a contributing factor for the increasing trend. Extensive promotional efforts and political stability in these countries boosted the confidence of tourists to travel to ASEAN and within the region.

The general growth of the tourism industry in Southeast Asia, contributed to the growth of intra-ASEAN tourism. Table 3 shows the intra-ASEAN visitor arrivals by country of destination. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia are countries that managed to attract more tourist compared to other ASEAN countries. The promotion and cooperation among these countries contributed to this phenomenon. Total intra-ASEAN tourist arrivals increased from 13,796 in 1999 to 18,221 in 2001.

Table 2: Visitor Arrivals by Country of Destination (Million) 1996-2002

Country	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Brunei	622,354	643,215	964,080	955,000	984,000	1,083	na
Cambodia	260,489	na	na	263,000	466,000	605	523,000
Indonesia	5,034,472	5,185,243	4,606,416	4,728,000	5,064,000	5,154	4,981,000
Laos	403,000	463,200	346 200	624,000	737,000	674	737,000
Malaysia	7,138,452	6,210,921	5,550,748	7,931,000	10,272	12,775	13,292,000
Myanmar	na	265,122	273,858	195,000	271,000	205,000	217,000
Philippines	2,049,367	2,222,523	2,149,357	1,971,000	1,992	1,797,000	1,933,000
Singapore	7,292,521	7,197,963	6,240,984	6,967,000	7,691,000	7,519,000	7,560,000
Thailand	7,192,145	7,221,345	7,842,760	8,798,000	9,509,000	10,062,000	10,873,000
Vietnam	1,607,155	1,715,637	1,520,128	1,782,000	2,150,000	2,330,000	2,628,000

na = not available

Source:

Economic Planning Unit, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Interior (Cambodia), Directorial General of Tourism, Department of Tourism, Arts and Culture (Indonesia), Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development,(Myanmar) National Tourism Authority (Lao PDR), Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, Department of Tourism (Philippines), Singapore Tourist Promotion Board, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism.

Table 3: Intra-ASEAN Visitor Arrivals by Country of Destination (000)

Country of Destination	1999	2000	2001
Brunei Darussalam	851	876	964
Cambodia	49	56	58
Indonesia	1,840	2,055	2,115
Lao PDR	446	528	472
Malaysia	5,947	7,182	9,208
Myanmar	42	45	43
Philippines	141	283	214
Singapore	2,224	2,428	2,520
Thailand	2,088	2,197	2,386
Viet Nam	167	265	241
Total	13,796	15,916	18,221

Source: ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (NTOs)

Table 4 shows the Extra ASEAN⁵ Tourist Arrival by Country of Destination. Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia again attracted more tourists from out of the ASEAN regions. Overall the numbers of tourist arriving from countries outside ASEAN have increased during the period of 1999 to 2001.

Table 4: Extra ASEAN Visitor Arrivals by Country of Destination (000)

Country of Destination	1999	2000	2001
Brunei Darussalam	104	108	119
Cambodia	214	411	547
Indonesia	2,888	3,009	3,039
Lao PDR	178	209	202
Malaysia	1,984	3,089	3,567
Myanmar	154	225	161
Philippines	1,830	1,709	1,582
Singapore	4,743	5,264	4,999
Thailand	6,710	7,312	7,676
Viet Nam	1,614	1,885	2,089
Total	20,419	23,221	23,981

Source: ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (NTOs)

Table 5: Tourist Receipts to Malaysia 2000 and 2001

Country of Residence	2000		2001		2002	
	Tourist Arrival	Tourism Receipts (RM Mil)	Tourist Arrival	Tourism Receipts (RM Mil)	Tourist Arrival	Tourism Receipts (RM Mil)
Indonesia	545,051	826.1	777,449	1,246.6	769,128	1,221.2
Philippines	81,927	119.2	122,428	214.6	107,527	165.7
Singapore	5,420,200	7,664.1	6,951,594	11,636.3	7,547,761	13,401.1
Thailand	940,215	644.8	1,018,797	866.7	1,166,937	1,002.9
Brunei	195,059	327.8	309,529	616.1	256,952	483.0
Total ASEAN	7,182,452	9,593.2	9,179,797	14,580.3	9,848,305	16,273.9

Source: Tourism in Malaysia, Key Performance Indicators 2001 and 2002

To expedite the growth of Intra-ASEAN tourism, more cooperation is needed among ASEAN countries. Table 5 shows tourist arrival for Malaysia was 7,182,452 tourists in 2000 and eventually increased to 9,848,305 tourists in 2002. During this period tourist's arrival from Singapore and Thailand to Malaysia shows an increasing trend. In 2000, Singaporeans who arrived in Malaysia totaled 5,420,200 tourists and this later increased to 7,547,761 tourists in 2002. Meanwhile, tourists from Thailand also increased from 940,215 tourists in 2000 to 1,166,937 in 2002. Intra-ASEAN tourism market also identified countries such as Brunei, Indonesian and Philippines as potential markets that will be able to contribute towards the growth of Intra-ASEAN tourism. Intra-ASEAN tourist arrival and receipts for Malaysia was 7,182,452 tourists in 2000 and eventually increased to 9,848,305 tourists in 2002.

Table 6 shows the ten largest number of tourist arrival in Thailand for the period 1996 and 2001. With a total of 1,056,172 tourists' in the year 1996, tourist arrivals to Thailand from Malaysia ranked at the top place and followed by Japan in the second place with total tourist arrivals of 934,111 people. However, in 2001, tourism market in Thailand showed that Japan was ranked first in the ten largest number of tourist arrivals namely 1,168,548 tourists and Malaysia occupied second place with 1,159,630 tourists. Singapore is also listed under ten largest number of tourist arrivals with 437,103 (1996) and steadily increased to 664,980 (2001).

Table 6: Ten Largest Number of Tourist Arrivals To Thailand: By Country of residence, 1996 and 2001.

Rank		Country of Residence	Number of Tourist Arrival (Million)	
1996	2001		1996	2001
2	1	Japan	934,111	1,168,548
1	2	Malaysian	1,056,172	1,159,630
5	3	Taiwan	447,124	724,769
4	4	China	456,912	694,886
6	5	Singapore	437,103	664,980
3	6	South Korea	488,669	552,977
7	7	Hong Kong, China	396,679	523,465
10	8	United Kingdom	286,889	517,974
9	9	United States of America	308,573	485,276
8	10	Germany	353,677	398,034
-	-	Others	2,078,491	3,241,970
Total			7,244,400	10,132,509

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand.

COMMONALITIES AS A POTENTIAL AID IN INTRA-ASEAN TOURISM

Intra-ASEAN tourism in the Southeast Asian region has always existed. The discussion above has demonstrated this point. The commonalities that exist among the ASEAN countries play a huge role in attracting tourist arrivals from member countries. The following section will explore the variety of commonalities that contribute in enriching the intra-ASEAN tourism. Numerous common factors have been identified as contributing to the growth and sustainability of intra-ASEAN tourism. These factors range from history, geography, culture, language, cuisine and others.

HISTORY

Southeast Asian countries share similar historical experiences that have helped these countries grow and mature into the developed countries that they are known today. In the early years, oppression from respective colonialists and widespread poverty made it difficult to form any kind of cooperation or understanding between the countries.

The pressures of international politics and regional security conflicts have brought the countries together in the spirit of regionalism. The chaos of the first and Second World Wars and the insecurity and anxiety that were brought on by the Cold War left the region in a state of economical, political and social instability. The suffering endured by all Southeast Asians during the Japanese Occupation, the Vietnam War and the rise and spread of communism in the region has further strengthened understanding between the countries.

Some Southeast Asian countries pioneered the struggle for independence from imperialists in the region. Independence movements such as that in Malaya and the Philippines inspired other countries within the region to follow suit. Imperialism left an unforgettable mark in the region's history.

Historical experiences have encouraged the spirit of regionalism in South East Asia and have made the peoples of the region stronger and more determined. This determination can be seen in several earlier attempts as well as campaigns demanding change in the Southeast Asian region. The failure of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961 and Malaysia-Philippines-Indonesia (MAPHILINDO) in 1963 eventually led to the formation of a more cohesive organisation, namely ASEAN in 1967. The painful historical experiences also helped the countries cooperate better with each other. This cooperation is the main formula for regionalism and the demonstration of the ASEAN way.

The common history shared by most of these countries is one of the bases that encourage cooperation, especially in the economic sector. This cooperation includes tourism which will help further instil a strong spirit of regionalism among ASEAN member countries.

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR

The geography of Southeast Asia is recognised as a factor that can help promote better ties among countries in the region. The geography of the region can be characterised in two categories; maritime (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore), mainland Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam). Many of these countries share borders. Therefore, these countries make an effort to maintain good bilateral ties with each other in order to avoid major conflicts. For example, Thailand shares borders with Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Malaysia and a lot of effort is put into maintaining good bilateral ties with these countries. With good relations with neighbouring nations and its strategic location, Thailand can use these factors to its advantage to promote intra-ASEAN tourism to boost its own tourism industry. This move can also be implemented in other ASEAN countries which share a common border with one or more countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.

A country's topography and geographical setting can also be a tourist attraction by itself. Mountains and hills, islands, rivers, gulfs, caves, coasts and deltas can be turned into tourist destinations. Many of these already exist in Southeast Asia. Mount Kinabalu (Sabah, Malaysia), Krakatau Island (Sumatra & Java, Indonesia), the Jayawijaya Range (Irian Jaya), the River of Muhakam (Borneo), the Coast of the Isthmus of Kra (Thailand), Bohol (Southern Philippines), the Red River Delta (Vietnam), Hkakabo Razi (Myanmar), The Volcano of Gunung Semeru (Eastern Java), the Irrawady River, Tonle Sap, Salween River, the Mekong and Lake Taal (Luzon)⁶ are some of the many natural attractions found in Southeast Asia. These marvellous forms of nature reflect the region's potential for tourism, mainly nature, heritage and adventure tourism.

CULTURE

Southeast Asian cultures are intermixed with foreign cultures. Some of these cultures have influenced earlier governments as well as nation building in modern day Southeast Asia. The process of Indianisation, Sincisation as well as Islamisation brought about by merchant traders arriving from India, China and Arab, respectively influenced the growth and development of early kingdoms such as Champa, Srivijaya, Malacca, Angkor, Pagan, Sukhothai and Ayuthaya. The emergence of these kingdoms created an assimilation process in economic, political and social terms among the peoples of Southeast Asia. This process led to the development of a plurality of cultures and this can be seen in various cultural performances, religions and beliefs, languages, cuisines and festivals practiced today in Southeast Asia. Thus, the similarities in Southeast Asian culture can be attributed to the influence brought by Chinese, Indian and Arab merchant traders. This is a common factor binding all Southeast Asian countries and in turn a major factor attracting tourist to the region.

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LANGUAGE

The beauty of Southeast Asian languages is the politeness, friendliness and softness of its sounds that reflect the long, old and respected heritage of Southeast Asia. The language is pleasant to the ears and will make any tourist feel welcome in the region.

Different countries may use different languages but they all share the same beauty. Thai, Khmer, Indonesian Malay, Malay and Tagalog are the main Southeast Asian languages. All these languages are unique but when spoken, they all echo the politeness and friendliness of the speaker.

'Thank You' can be said in a variety of ways. In Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, the term is *terima kasih* and is said politely and respectfully, and followed by a gesture such as a hand-shake. Similarly, thank you is said as *Che zu tin ba de* in Burmese, *Khorb koon* in Thai and *Khawp jai* in Laotian and is followed with the clapping of palms and a slight nod of the head. This gesture is known as *wai* in Thai.

A number of countries in the Malay Archipelago share a common language. For example, the Malay language is used extensively in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and Southern Thailand. This has created an opportunity for intra-ASEAN tourism as tourists from these countries do not face communication problems. The population in Southern Thailand, in areas such as Hat Yai, Golok, Songkhla, Narathiwat, Yala and Phuket use Malay to communicate with each other. The peoples of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar also have little or no problems when communicating with each other as their languages belong to the *Tai-Kadai* family. Similar dialects in this family of languages are used in Thailand, northern Myanmar and the Yunnan district in China⁷.

CUISINE

Food is not a problem for intra-ASEAN tourists as Southeast Asian nations share the same staple – rice. Boiled rice is known as *nasi* in Malay speaking nations such as Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. This staple is known as *khao* (Thailand), *kanin* (Philippines), *com trang* (Vietnam), and *htamin* (Myanmar).

Members of ASEAN are rice-planting countries except Singapore. The only difference about this staple is the way it is prepared. In Malaysia, rice is served as *nasi lemak* (rice boiled in coconut milk), *nasi dagang*, *nasi kerabu* and *nasi campur*. Over in Indonesia, there are *nasi tumpeng*⁸, *nasi kuning* (saffron rice), *nasi uduk*, *nasi padang*⁹, *nasi ambang* and *nasi gudeg* (rice with jackfruit and coconut milk curry). *Nasi ayam hainan* is well known in Singapore while the popular rice dish in Vietnam is *com tay cam*¹⁰ Laos is well known for its *laat khao* rice dish while in Thailand, the popular rice dish is *khao man kai/pet* (rice with chicken/duck served with a sauce). As an alternative, Southeast Asians consume glutinous rice and noodles made from rice flour. Other similar foods can be found around the region such as *Tom Yam*, *Satay*, vermicelli soup, 'roti' *canai*, *Prata* and *Murtabak*.

TOURISM PRODUCTS

Many Southeast Asian countries have already become a favourite destination among foreign tourists. Thailand was the first Southeast Asian country to open its doors to tourists in 1960s and have reaped the profits of the tourism industry ever since. Malaysia and Singapore entered the industry in early 2000 and the trend was followed by other countries in the region.

Southeast Asian countries offer common tourism products based on common themes such as marine tourism, historical tourism, water sports, festivals, unique cultures and eco-tourism, all of which have attracted foreign tourists by the droves to the region. Recognising this potential, intra-ASEAN tourists should make the region their choice destination.

Other commonalities in tourism products that can be seen are historical cum theme parks and recreation parks. Examples of such places are *Taman Mini Malaysia*, *Muang Boran* in Thailand and *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah*. The products offered may be the same and thus strengthens the claim that these are indeed commonalities in intra-ASEAN tourism but they are unique in their own way. The uniqueness of these places creates variety for intra-ASEAN tourists. Table 7 shows the commonalities of main tourism products offered by Southeast Asian countries.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN CAPITALS

The unique images of Southeast Asian capitals have become the main factor of attraction for intra-ASEAN tourists. Each capital has its own remarkable image to portray to the intra-ASEAN tourist. It is said that one has not really visited a Southeast Asian country if one has not been to the capital. Southeast Asians are proud of their respective cities though they may not be as big or as glamorous as New York City but capital cities are one obvious commonality in Southeast Asia. The cities are made more interesting by the multiplicity of attractions such as the sky-scrapers, available facilities and services, atmosphere and the existing traditional public transportation system. Tourists will be amazed by the many traditional modes of transportation still existing in Southeast Asia, for example, *bajai*, *becak*, *andong*, *angkots* (Indonesia), *beca and kereta lembu* (Malaysia), *jeepney* (Philippines) and *tuk tuks*, *songthaew*, *reua hang yao* (Longtail boats) (Thailand).

Southeast Asian capitals – Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei), Jakarta (Indonesia), Manila (The Philippines), Singapore, Bangkok (Thailand), Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Vientiane (Laos) and Yangon (Myanmar) have their exclusive characteristics. The centre of a city where a range of businesses operate from, commonly known as the World Trade Centre is a main intra-ASEAN tourist attraction. The Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), the World Trade Centre in Bangkok, Indonesia's Jakarta World Trade Centre and the Bay Area World Trade Centre in the Philippines are major tourist attractions well known for their trade and shopping areas.

Table 7: Commonalities of Main Tourism Products Offered by Southeast Asian Countries

Country	History	Maritime	Ecotourism
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Palace, Muang Boran, Ayutthaya Historical Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ko Lanta, Koh Samui, Phuket, Ko Similan, Ko Tarutao 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khao Sok National Park, Kaeng Krachan National Park, Doi Inthanon National Park
Malaysian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Historic Heritage of Malacca, Georgetown, The Site of Fort Cornwallis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pangkor Island, Langkawi Island, Perhentian Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gunung Mulu National Park, Mount Kinabalu, Taman Negara National Park
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Canning & Clarke Quay, Empress Place Building, Cavenagh Bridge, Parliament House, St Andrew Cathedral, Raffles City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentosa Island, Ubin Island, Singapore River (Singapore River Cruises) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bukit Timah Nature Reserve
Indonesian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borobudur and Prambanan, Batavia, Kasunanan Palace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bali, Metawai Islands (Sumatra), Pulau Samosir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pangandaran National Park, Bromo-Tengger-Semeru National Park, Kerinci-Seblat National Park
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rizal Park & Memorial, Malacanang Palace, Intramuros, San Agustin Church, Casa Manila. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boracay, Panay, Cebu, Bohol, Bantayan Island, Olongapo & Subic Bay, Corregidor, Manila Bay, Batangas, Clark, Malapascua Island, Samal Island & Talikud Island, Siargao Island, Sulu Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sohoton Natural Bridge National Park, Mount Kanlaon National Park
Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wat Sisaket, Vientiane, Louang Phabang, Plain of Jars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louang Namtha, Don Khon & Don Det 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bolaven Plateau and Tad Lo Waterfalls
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ananda Pahto Temple, Bupaya, Inn-Hpaya Stupa, Nat Taung Kyaung 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diamond Island, Coco Island, Foh-Ka -Lah Island, Eastern Boronga Island, Gulf of Martaban 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khakaborazi National Park, Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angkor, The throne Hall of the Royal Palace, National Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koh S'dach, Koh Kong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raem National Park, Bokor National Park
Brunei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque, Nurul Iman Palace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Village, Bandar Seri Begawan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ulu Temburung National Park
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vien Bao Tang Cach Mang (Museum of the Revolution), Vien Bao Tang Lich Su (The History Museum), Ho Chi Minh Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ha Long Bay, Phu Quoc Island, An Binh Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sa Pa, Mekong Delta, Sam Mountain

Table 8: Various Interesting Venues or Markets Promoting Handicrafts in ASEAN Country

Destination	Markets
Indonesia	Sukuwati (Bali), Jalan Malioboro (Yogyakarta), Jalan Surabaya (central Jakarta), Jalan Prawirotaman, Samudera Raya, Pasar Turi, Ubud Market (Bali).
Thailand	Chatuchak, Pratunam Market, Thanon Khao San & Banglamphu, Thanom Ploenchit, Silom & Sukhumvit Road
Philippines	Green Hill, Binondo (Ongpin Street)
Cambodia	Psah Toul Tom Poug (Phnom Penh), Psar Thmei, Psar Kancals, Psar Chas, Psar Orussey
Malaysia	Petaling Street (Kuala Lumpur), Masjid India (Kuala Lumpur), Filipina Market (Kota Kinabalu), Chow Kit, Jalan Tun Razak, Pasar Satok (Sabah)
Laos	Khoun Boulom Road, Heng Boun Road, Dong Palane Market, Samsenthai, Setthathilat road.
Singapore	Little India (Jalan Besar), Chinatown (New Bridge Road), Chinatown Complex (Trengganu Street), Arab Street
Vietnam	Cau Ong Lanh Market, Binh Tay Market, Ben Thanh Market, Dan Sinh Market
Brunei	Gadong, Temburong Jetty.
Myanmar	Bogyoke Market(Aung San), Hsipaw Market (Shan), Mandalay's Central Market, Ibein Market

TASTES AND HANDICRAFTS

Southeast Asians have similar tastes when it comes to handicrafts. This can be seen from the products produced such as textiles, interior decorations and carvings. Many Southeast Asian handicrafts can be obtained anywhere in any Southeast Asian tourist destinations like markets, bazaars and plazas. Table 8 shows the various interesting venues or markets which cater to handicrafts needs in ASEAN countries.

However, the products do have differences in terms of the way it is made, motifs, the kinds of textiles used to produce it and the usage of a certain product. Textiles such as the *sarong*¹¹, *batik*, *silk* and *songket* can be found in any Southeast Asian nation. *Batik* can be found in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines and are named after the places from which they are produced for example, *Batik Jawa*, *Batik Kelantan* and *Batik Nara*. *Sarongs* can be found anywhere in Southeast Asia including Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. In Myanmar, the *sarong* is known as *Longyi* and is a common item of clothing among Myanmarese. Myanmarese in government offices wear the *Paso*, a *sarong* which is official office wear for

these employees. In Thailand, the *sarong* is known as *Pha Sin*, while in Samui, it is known as *Sarong Serape*. The *sarong* in Malaysia is known as *kain pelikat*. These commonalities have created a unique identity for the Southeast Asian communities especially when certain textiles are associated with certain countries such as Malaysian *Songket*, Thai Silk and Javanese Batik in Indonesia.

Other products are also produced such as clothes, footwear and bags, all of which are made to suit Southeast Asian needs and tastes. It is different from buying souvenirs from foreign destinations such as Europe. For example, Southeast Asians do not see the need to buy winter clothing from these places as souvenirs as they do not experience winter back home in their countries. Intra-ASEAN tourists have the advantage of being able to use the items they buy when travelling within the region as most of these items cater to their similar needs.

CONCLUSION

Southeast Asia has the potential of becoming a popular tourist destination because of its multiple cultures. This does not only attract foreign tourists but can also be used to attract tourists within the region. Intra-ASEAN tourism needs to be given high attention due to the commonalities that exist between the nations.

Southeast Asia has high potential in becoming a popular tourist destination that will attract both foreign and ASEAN tourists as the nations share commonalities in terms of history, geography, tourism products and culture. Thus, intra-ASEAN tourism should be given priority as the criteria of promotion as the nations share common similarities. To facilitate intra-ASEAN and international travel, members of the ASEAN countries should be able to travel within and into ASEAN by extending visa exemption arrangement for nationals of ASEAN member states travelling within the region on the basis of bilateral visa exemption agreements concluded between member states that are ready to do so and encouraging the use of smart cards for ASEAN business and frequent travellers.

The 10 ASEAN member countries should realise the importance of intra-ASEAN tourism as it is a tool for the further development of tourism in the region. The common yet diverse aspect of Southeast Asia will give Southeast Asians the opportunity to explore the exclusivity of their region. The commonalities that exist do not mean the region's tourism industry should be stereotyped in anyway or the region has limited attractions but because of these commonalities, the region has become a unique and diverse tourist attraction.

These commonalities make it easier for travel and tour agencies to understand the wants and needs of intra-ASEAN tourists. It also eases the task of planning and negotiating tour packages for intra-ASEAN tourists as transportation costs can be kept at a minimum and the total cost of the holiday does not burn a hole in the vacationer's pocket.

Therefore, it can be said that the commonalities between the countries in Southeast Asia can help promote intra-ASEAN tourism. It can also be

used as a stepping-stone to a stronger and more united ASEAN as this branch of tourism can help instill the spirit of regionalism in the region. Tourism is a messenger of peace and a bridge for friendship and cooperation. Tourism is playing a growingly important role in promoting economic and cultural development and social prosperity, enhancing international friendship, strengthening friendly exchange and safeguarding world peace. By tourism, it binds the countries and the people together and helps in harnessing the power of 10 ASEAN countries in good cooperation.

ENDNOTES

¹ This paper was presented at the 7th ASEAN University Network Educational Forum, De La Salle University, Philippines, 7 May – 20 May 2005.

² Michael J. Hatton, *Community Based Tourism in The Asia-Pacific*, School of Media Studies : Canada. 1999. pg. 68-73.

³ Norma Polovitz Nickerson, *Foundations of Tourism*, Prentice Hall: New Jersey. 1996. pg. 1-2.

⁴ Steven C.M. Wong, "ASEAN Co-operation in Tourism" in Sandhu, Kernial Singh, *The ASEAN Reader*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003. Pg.270.

⁵ The term extra-ASEAN refers to tourist arriving from countries outside the ASEAN region.

⁶ Gunung Kinabalu is the highest peak in Malaysia, rising 13,455 ft (4101m), The Pergunungan Jayawijaya range in central Papua (Irian Jaya) contains the world's highest range of Limestone Mountains, some with peaks more than 16,400 ft (5000 m) high. Heavy rainfall and high temperatures, which promote rapid weathering, have led to the creation of large underground caves and river systems such as the river of Sungai Beliem, The River of Sungai Mahakam cuts through the Central Highlands of Borneo, the third largest island in the world, with a total area of 290,000 sq miles (757,050 sq km). Although mountainous, Borneo is one of the most stable of the Indonesian Islands, with little volcanic activity. The Island of Krakatau (Pulau Rakata), lying between Sumatra and Java, was all but destroyed in 1883, when the volcano erupted. The release of gas and dust into the atmosphere disrupted cloud cover and global weather patterns for several years. The Volcano of Gunung Semeru in eastern Java lies on the Pacific Rim of Fire. It is part of the ancient Tengeneger volcano and remains highly active. The Coast of the Isthmus of Krai southeast Thailand has many small, precipitous islands like these, formed by chemical erosion on limestone, which is weathered along vertical cracks. The humidity of the climate in Southeast Asia increases the rate of wearing. The Bohol in the southern Philippines is famous for its so-called 'chocolate hills'. There are more than 1000 of these regular mounds on the island. The hills are limestone in origin, the smoothed remains of an earlier cycle of erosion. Their brown appearance in the dry season gives the hills their name. Dorling Kindersley, *Reference Atlas of the World*, London: Dorling Kindersley Book. 2003. pg. 172-177.

⁷ Joe Cumming, *Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia*, Australia: Lonely Planet. 1991. pg. 363.

⁸ *Tumpeng* is a traditional Indonesian food which is generally made from yellow rice accompanied with a variety of side dishes. *Tumpeng* is presented in almost all

celebration parties that is conducted when there is a historical or special family event, or as a mark of giving thanks on gaining success in either business, educational, or other efforts.

⁹ The Minangkabau region of West Sumatra produces some of the best cooks in Indonesia, and it is in their *nasi padang* restaurants where the visitor will find the tastiest, spiciest Indonesian food.

¹⁰ *Com tay cam* is rice with mushrooms, chicken and finely sliced pork flavoured with ginger. But mostly Vietnamese like to eat noodle made from rice. *Pho* is the Vietnamese name for the noodle soup that is eaten at all hours of the day but is a special favourite for breakfast. It is prepared very quickly boiling noodles and placing them into a bowl along with greens (shallots, parsley) and shredded beef, chicken or pork. A broth made with boiled bones, prawns, ginger and *nuoc mam* is then poured into the bowl. Some people take their *pho* with chilli sauce or lemon. *Lau* is fish and vegetable soup served in a bowl resembling a samovar with the top cut off. Live coals in the centre keep it hot. *Mien luon* is vermicelli soup with eel seasoned with mushrooms, shallots, fried eggs and chicken. *Bun thang* is rice noodles and shredded chicken with fried egg and prawns on top. It is served with broth made by boiling chicken, dried prawns and pig bones. *Xup rau* is vegetable soup. *Canh Kho hoa* is a bitter soup said to be especially good for the health of people who have spent a lot of time in the sun. The noodles served with Vietnamese soups are three types: white, rice noodles (*banh pho*), clear noodles made from rice mixed with manioc powder (*mien*), and yellow, wheat noodles (*mi*). Many noodle soups are available either with broth (*nuoc leo*) or without (*kho*, literally 'dry'). See <http://www.cuisinenet.com>

¹¹ A *sarong* is large sheet of fabric, often wrapped around the waist and worn as a skirt by men and women in Southeast Asia and Pacific islands, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia. The fabric is often brightly coloured or printed with intricate patterns, often depicting animals or plants, checkered or geometric patterns, or resembling the results of tie dying. Sarongs are also used as wall hangings and other forms of clothing, such as shawls, baby carriers, complete dresses or upper body clothing. In North America, sarongs are often used by women as a cover-up over swimwear. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarong>.