

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH CULTURAL TOURISM

An Analysis under the Perception of Managers of the Municipality of Ceará-Mirim, Natal, Brazil

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This paper aimed to analyze mainly how the main agents responsible for the promotion of tourism in Ceará-Mirim, Natal, Brazil, has realized the importance of cultural tourism attractions as a differential for the city. For this, interviews were conducted with managers responsible for public sector tourism and local culture, as well as professionals involved in the promotion and enhancement of cultural heritage and tourism in the town. This study is characterized as being exploratory descriptive with qualitative approach. The results revealed that the county has not yet awakened to the use of cultural resource as a differential tourism product, besides the absence of continuous and innovative cultural activities, which are presented as one of the factors obstacle for achieving competitive advantage in the city. Furthermore, the incipient population participation in the process of tourism planning and lack of public policies that give grants for the creation of a favorable environment for the practice of cultural tourism have reflected the disadvantage that Ceará-Mirim is the detriment of other tourist destinations in the state. In this sense, the lack of preservation of historic and cultural heritage is revealed falls far short of sustainability required for the consolidation of a competitive differential.

KEY WORDS: cultural tourism, cultural heritage, competitive advantage, Ceará-Mirim (Natal).