

TRAVEL AND TOURISM STANDARD LEVEL

Paper 5250/1

Reports

General Comments

Most candidates were able to attempt all four questions within the time available, however, levels of attainment were very variable and many candidates were unable to quote accurate examples to help illustrate their answers. There were several opportunities for candidates to use examples with which they were familiar but it was surprising to see little use being made of the local area. Candidates were also limited by an inability to focus their responses and do what the particular question actually asked of them. Centres are advised to pay close attention to the command verb hierarchy used in these examinations, as many individuals appear unsure of the difference between:

- State/Name/Identify
- Describe
- Explain
- Discuss.

Candidates are expected to be able to form an opinion and come to a conclusion about the relative importance/significance relating to the factors influencing a particular topic or issue. Few candidates were able to demonstrate these skills and, therefore, there were very few **Level 3** answers.

Comments on particular questions

Question 1 was set in the context of Puerto Rico and many candidates were unaware that local time is **behind** GMT and that **winter** is the Caribbean's high season. Also, many candidates showed inability to *explain*. **Part (a)(iii)** asked for two reasons why boats would be hired and it was expected that appropriate explanation would be offered. This was rarely the case and so credit was limited. Those who could expand a valid point were properly rewarded. **Part (b)** suffered in the same way. Many candidates could identify three valid negative impacts but they were rarely explained properly. For example, water supply was correctly identified as an issue but the negative effect on locals was not illustrated properly. Answers about the use of the Internet in **(c)(i)** were better but answers to **(c)(ii)** tended to be very poor. The vast majority of candidates failed to realise that the Puerto Rico Tourism Company was in fact a national tourism organisation and there were very few appropriate comments. Only the better candidates mentioned guide services, TICs, attending fairs and promoting the island in general. Most candidates were able to make a better attempt at **Part (d)** and the positive economic impacts of tourism development tended to be well understood. However, very few individuals could offer an accurate illustration, or example, of the points that they made and many accounts were theoretical and slightly superficial.

There were some very significant problems with **Question 2(a)** and many candidates did not understand the term *ancillary services*. It was quite rare to see insurance, car hire, currency exchange and attraction tickets, etc. being identified together. Few candidates could answer **Part (b)** in an appropriate manner as the question was about the travel agency and not the tour operator. No mention was made of window displays, racking of brochures but some valid advertising points were usually identified. However, the degree of explanation offered about these methods was very variable and the question was not done well. Answers to **Part (c)** tended to be better and many candidates had a good idea about each of the three holiday products. The biggest problem for most candidates was their inability to answer **Part (d)** properly. There was very little discussion about personal skills and qualities. A large minority of candidates produced a list or a series of bullet point phrases. Why are the stated skills and qualities important? Which were most significant? Why is customer service important? These ideas were rarely developed and very few answers progressed beyond **Level 1** as a result.

Question 3 was set in the context of a new Singapore Airlines service and there were some very good answers. Most candidates were able to correctly interpret the stimulus material for **Parts (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (a)(iii)** but **Part (a)(iv)** was rather more difficult. Only a small minority of candidates were able to talk about time zone differences and even fewer realised that the international dateline would be crossed. There were some very good answers to **Part (a)(v)** and the stimulus material was again usually used to good effect. **Part (b)(i)** was not done well and too many candidates neglected to consider the idea of transport and flexibility of travel as being of significance. There were some very good responses to **Part (b)(ii)** and the concept of the lounge is well understood. The overall standard of answers to **Part (c)** was poor and very many candidates ignored the instruction to write about an example of their choice. Candidates could have written about their local city or a destination studied during their course. Precise factual details were not in evidence and most answers could have applied to a city anywhere. It was expected that candidates would identify particular features that make a given destination attractive to leisure visitors. For example, candidates from Centres in Spain could mention Madrid then name specific attractions that would appeal to different groups of leisure visitors in Madrid.

Question 4 was usually started very well and most candidates were able to correctly interpret the stimulus material about Lapland tours. **Part (a)**'s three sections were always done well and there were many full mark answers. **Part (b)** was less well done and many candidates had difficulty explaining their reasoning. The obvious points about Christmas being a holiday season and winter being the season for heavy snowfall were never really clearly stated and thus few candidates gained maximum credit. There was some further confusion with **Part (c)(i)** and some candidates tried to identify *traditional* winter sporting activities from the stimulus material. Only a small minority of candidates were able to correctly answer **Part (c)(ii)** and it was clear that most individuals did not read the question properly. The question asked for a description of the ways in which mountain destinations have developed the **natural landscape** for winter sports. The emphasis was on a sporting activity being linked with some change or development in the pre-existing landscape. Thus valid responses would include slopes being cleared for ski runs (both down hill and cross-country), the building of ski lifts to access upper slopes, lakes for skating and curling etc. Far too many candidates concentrated on support facilities rather than on developments directly relating to particular sporting activities. Answers to **Part (d)** were often quite good and there was some attempt at valid discussion. Most candidates were aware of at least two or three types of appropriate accommodation and there was usually some attempt made to match the accommodation type with visitor group requirements. At the other extreme, some candidates were clearly confused and wrote about different accommodation and meal plan options rather than the establishments supplying such services. Most candidates were able to make a very good attempt at **Question 4**.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM STANDARD LEVEL

Paper 5251/1

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TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Paper 5252/01

Marketing and Promotion

General comments

The majority of candidates had clearly been well prepared for this examination and many demonstrated a high level of understanding of the principles of marketing and promotion within the travel and tourism industry. It was particularly pleasing to note the many instances of candidates using specific examples from the industry to exemplify their answers.

Candidates demonstrated differing levels of ability in responding to the command verbs within the question paper; better performing candidates were able to 'discuss' and 'compare', whilst weaker candidates tended to respond with an explanation or description to these types of questions.

Overall, the majority of candidates who sat this examination attempted all of the questions and seemed able to complete their responses well within the time allowed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The context of this question focused around the marketing and promotion opportunities for tourism associated with the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. The case study setting provided basic information from the situation analysis conducted by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Tourism and the questions that followed required candidates to apply their knowledge of marketing and promotion tools and techniques to this case study.

- (a) The four sub-questions in this set allowed candidates to demonstrate their understanding of SWOT analysis. Responses were varied, with some candidates scoring maximum marks, and others scoring zero.
- (b) Candidates were required to identify a total of **two** positive and **two** negative external influences as part of the PEST analysis for the case study. The majority of candidates scored well for this question, although there were instances of candidates not using the case study material or providing more than two examples of each type of influence.
- (c) The question asks candidates to identify three components of a package holiday, which was generally answered well. Several candidates were unable to score here, as they identified features specific only to the 'Adventures in Beijing' holiday package.
- (d) This question provided an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the reasons for product differentiation. Many candidates were able to do this reasonably well, with some achieving Level 3 for their responses.
- (e) This two-part question made specific reference to the marketing potential created by the Olympic Games. Few candidates scored any marks in the first part, as they were unable to use the stimulus material to identify the role of merchandising and the use of mascots in the marketing process. The majority of responses in the second section contained basic information about the reasons for marketing and promotion and scored at Level 1 or 2, but few were able to analyse fully the impact that the Games would have on tourism service providers.

Question 2

The majority of this question focuses on the sale of aeroplane tickets and the use of airport services. There was no detailed case study material for candidates to read, but each question within the set has a connection with one of the elements of the marketing mix for air travel – product, price and place being covered within these questions.

- (a) Candidates were asked to identify the characteristics of a perishable service and to distinguish these from tangible products. Many candidates were able to score well for the two tasks in this question.
- (b) This question provided an opportunity for candidates to perform a higher order learning skill. They were required to ‘discuss’ factors affecting the price of airline tickets. Better performing candidates were able to respond at a high level to this task and identified and explained the wide range of internal and external factors that impacts upon the eventual price a customer pays. However, the majority of candidates made a basic response to this question, describing and often merely listing the obvious differential influences on price – seasonality and class of travel being the most commonly cited examples.
- (c) The three questions within this subset required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of **both** online sales from an organisation’s perspective **and** e-ticketing from a customer’s point of view. Sadly, few candidates recognised the distinction between online booking and e-ticketing and repeated information in their responses to (i) and (ii). To achieve maximum marks across these two questions candidates needed to firstly look at the advantages and disadvantages of online sales for the airline – many responses focused on the benefits to the customer and therefore did not score any marks. Secondly, the response should have identified the benefits of e-ticketing – reduced check-in time, tickets can not be lost or left at home etc. However, many responses to this sub-question identified the benefits on online booking – 24 hour convenience etc and again were unable to score. Distribution diagrams were varied in quality and accuracy – many correctly identified the two stages in the chain, however several candidates compiled very complex illustrations with multi stages to the chain, which were invalid.
- (d) This was a standard question on locational factors, which required an application to the context of a new airport terminal. Many candidates were able to achieve the maximum six marks for their response. However, those who did not score so well, neglected to apply an element of common sense to their response – airport terminals are rarely located in the immediate vicinity of a city’s central business district for obvious reasons.

Question 3

The context of this question focuses around the provision of car rental services for tourists. Candidates are expected to use this context in an examination of market research tools and techniques and to suggest the most relevant element of the marketing mix for a car rental company.

- (a) Candidates are expected to recognise that a company’s database forms a internal secondary resource and that this can lead to the compilation of a customer profile for an organisation, from which target marketing can occur. Many candidates were able to make the necessary associations to score well across these two questions.
- (b) This question provided an opportunity for candidates to perform another higher order learning skill to make comparisons between two data types. However, many candidates overlooked the need to focus on the **benefits** of qualitative and quantitative data, providing a basic list of differences between the two, thus restricting their score to Level 1 or 2.
- (c) Knowledge and understanding of the product life cycle model is tested through this question. The majority of candidates were able to provide a valid response to this task.
- (d) This level of response question required candidates to apply the segmentation process to the car rental market. Whilst the vast majority of responses used demographics or lifestyle segments, only the better performing candidates were able to then exemplify this relating specifically to car types – saloons, luxury models etc.

- (e) This two part question asks candidates to identify the four elements of the marketing mix and then to select the most important aspect for car rentals. It was pleasing to note that nearly all candidates had a clear understanding of the marketing mix and were able to provide valid reasons for a main focus.

Question 4

The focus of this question is on the promotion aspect of the marketing mix, and marketing communications in general. There was no case study material for candidates to use.

- (a) This two part question tested candidates understanding of printed publicity materials and the reasons for their use in the travel and tourism industry. Many candidates were able to demonstrate a good level of understanding, however it was surprising to note that a reasonable number of candidates thought TV and Radio were forms of printed publicity. Several candidates did not score on the second part of this question, giving benefits of printed materials rather than their purposes.
- (b) Candidates were able to display their knowledge of technological advances through this question. Most chose appropriate examples through virtual tours or promotional videos.
- (c) This was a standard question about the AIDA principle. The majority of responses demonstrated a good level of understanding about the purpose of the acronym, although only the better performing candidates were able to cite realistic examples of how printed promotional materials could take advantage of its use.
- (d) This question caused the greatest difficulty for candidates on the whole paper. Only a small minority of candidates were familiar with the terms 'above the line' and 'below the line', with many mistaking this as a description of the company's success in meeting its promotional objectives. This should form part of the teaching for marketing communications and is commonly used within the industry to differentiate the type of marketing activity a company undertakes.
- (e) Candidates were required to arrange the stages of a promotional campaign in order. Most candidates scored well for this task.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Paper 5253/01
Travel Organisation

General comments

The paper allowed widespread differentiation, both within and between Centres. There were a number of very good scripts in which candidates showed sound knowledge and understanding of the content being tested, where most answers were written with confidence and competence. Such candidates were well prepared for the type of tasks which were required, however, at the other end of the scale weaker candidates displayed little knowledge and understanding, producing lists of undeveloped ideas with no contextualisation to the required circumstances. A small number of candidates struggled with the subject specific terminology and command words used and were unable to understand the nature of some of the tasks required. Most did however respond in an appropriate way to the majority of tasks, weaker answers generally being the result of a lack of knowledge and understanding and/or a failure to develop answers rather than a misunderstanding of the requirements of the questions.

All candidates were able to finish in the time allowed, though the brevity and superficial nature of answers from weaker candidates suggested that they had finished with too much time to spare.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) All candidates made an attempt to complete the booking form and the quality varied immensely from candidate to candidate. It is essential that candidates fill in such forms with care, completing all appropriate sections, as instructed. For example the initials of the passengers were required not their full first names, and the name of the cardholder needed to be in capitals. A significant number of candidates did not enter the details of payment, including the cost of insurance, whilst others omitted to complete details of the resort and room requirements. Those candidates who made few or no errors had clearly practised this type of task, an activity that is highly recommended, so they can become familiar with the degree of accuracy required.
- (b) Weaker candidates did little more than repeat the information in the question, that ferries were used to make journeys to islands, however many others were able to identify features such as the fact that they run to a timetable and often provide facilities to transport vehicles, they are relatively cheap, serve food and drink on board, and sometimes offer accommodation and entertainment. Candidates should be encouraged to write fully about the features rather than write lists of single words such as food, drink and cars which could be interpreted in different ways.
- (c) Generally this was well answered with most candidates, apart from the very weakest, being familiar with the terms. A significant minority confused 'full board' with 'all-inclusive', whilst some confused self-catering with a 'self-service' restaurant.
- (d) Candidates could have selected any accommodation types; they gained their marks for the justification of their choices. Many candidates correctly referred to the advantages that full board accommodation offered, that they would have to spend no time preparing meals or searching for restaurants, and that overall it could be more cost effective. The advantages of self-catering in providing flexibility and independence were well understood by many candidates. Candidates should avoid simple statements; answers such as 'it is easier' mean little unless the point is expanded.

Question 2

- (a) Surprisingly, large numbers of candidates could not define 'long-haul'. Many hunted through Fig. 3 for clues and answered by referring to 'experience in a travel agency' or similar. An answer referring to 'long flights' gained a mark, however full marks were only obtained by those candidates referring to flights taking more than 5 or 6 hours.
- (b) Most candidates were able to correctly explain the meaning of one or more of these terms. There were some excellent, detailed responses, including examples; however other candidates were satisfied with brief simple statements. It is over simplistic to state that 'scheduled airlines have better facilities' or that scheduled airlines leave 'on time' and charter airlines 'do not', candidates who make such statements are confusing the fact that scheduled airlines run to a fixed timetable. Similarly to state that 'charter airlines have cheaper fares' is equally simplistic, with prices of low cost airlines to some destinations now being lower than those available on charter flights.
- (c) Whilst there were some excellent answers to this question it was not answered fully by many candidates. Most candidates referred to speeding up the booking process, which of course is relevant, however few expanded on this by referring to the ability of such a system to search greater quantities of information, provide 'real-time' information, provide a greater capacity of response to individual customers and make instant reservations.
- (d) The focus of this question was on other forms of electronic **information sources** which may be used by a travel agent. Therefore the many candidates who wrote about electronic devices which could be used in a travel agency such as a fax machine or photocopier did not gain credit. Better choices included touch screen TVs, electronic display panels and the Internet.
- (e) This question differentiated well, many well prepared candidates wrote in detail and scored high marks, whilst weaker candidates merely commented on the 'need to take' health precautions, obtain a passport and change money into foreign currency. Detailed advice to which candidates referred included:

Health precautions:

Ensure all medical requirements are met; take out medical insurance; obtain vaccinations in good time; explain the need for preventative measures such as sun screen; or anti-malarials; and advise on drinking water particularly in Asia.

Passports and visas:

Passports must have at least 6 months before expiry; all customers must have their own passport; check if visas are required; and obtain these well in advance from Embassy/Consulate in home country.

Foreign currency:

Do not carry large amounts of currency; but obtain a small amount of local currency for arrival; for use for taxis; take a credit/debit card; which could be used to pay for accommodation; and for any excursions booked while there; and/or take travellers cheques; which are safe as they can be easily cancelled if stolen.

Question 3

- (a) The question asked for sources of information such as the email address, telephone number or website of the Sarawak Regatta Organising Committee or the telephone and websites of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and/or the Sepang International Circuit. Some candidates gave actual information from the advert rather than sources of information (e.g. 'the race takes place on the Sarawak River') whilst others referred to the Internet or telephone without stating what their source of information would be.
- (b) The Tourist Information Centre was an acceptable suggestion from many candidates here, as were paper based sources such as motorcycling magazines or leaflets. There were too many candidates who repeated their answer to part (a) despite the use of the words 'other sources' in the question.

(c) Candidates suggested a variety of forms of accommodation, the success of the answers being dependent on their justification. Hotels, self-catering and camping could all be justified, in relation to issues such as comfort/facilities, flexibility and cost. Several candidates thought that, as the Sarawak Regatta was water-based, accommodation would be available in 'longboats and modern watercraft' which seems unlikely.

(d) The focus of this question was on the advantages and disadvantages **for accommodation providers** created by large events. Some candidates wrongly focused on the advantages and disadvantages for individual visitors. Basic answers included reference to the fact that it was a busy time for hotels, therefore rooms were full (basic advantage) but staff had to work hard (basic disadvantage). Candidates who were able to develop their answers expanded on the implications of these issues, demonstrating sound understanding by giving a variety of disadvantages/advantages and reasoned judgements to support their suggestions:

For example: Accommodation providers realise the importance of such events as they bring good business to the area, ensuring rooms are filled to capacity and that profits are made. Staff could be stretched to full capacity when the hotels are full and extra staff may need to be employed to help meet the extra demand. Customers may have to be turned away, and there may be pressure on hotel services, such as reception and restaurants, due to large numbers of guests. The large amount of business helps overcome the difficult times of year when things are much quieter and there is little employment available, and repeat business could be generated from satisfied customers.

(e) Most candidates were able to identify at least one product or service a tourist information centre might provide for visitors, maps, transport timetables and visitor attraction leaflets being frequently listed. Some candidates did not help themselves by listing words such as accommodation, entertainment and transport without making it clear that the tourist information Centre might provide a **booking service** for accommodation, or **leaflets** about entertainment or **timetables** for public transport.

(f) This question differentiated well, most candidates were able to make some basic points about the advantages of car hire over travelling by train, whilst others produced some perceptive, comparative responses for example:

'The couple would have greater independence by travelling by car. They could decide on times and exact destinations without having to be restricted by train timetables. They would not have to worry about having to change transport en route as the car would be their single transport source and take them from door to door whereas they may have to use taxis to and from the station if they travelled by train. If they came across somewhere they liked the look of they could stop whereas in a train there are a limited number of scheduled stops. They can take whatever luggage they like as it will need to be carried onto a train, and in the privacy of their own vehicle they will have their own company, and listen to their own music, rather than having to share a packed train with people they do not know'

Note the above response compares the two methods of transport rather than simply making basic statements outlining the advantages of using a hire car, which is essential in a question of this type.

Question 4

(a) The question asked why Global Tourism wants to know if the customer has booked with them before – this would mean they were able to bring up and amend previous customer details on their data base. Many candidates wrongly suggested that this would indicate they were of satisfied with the previous trip. Whilst this may be true it would not be a reason for asking the question.

(b) Many candidates suggested that Global Tourism would want to know the ages of any infants who were travelling in order to be able to ascertain whether there would be a (reduced) charge or not, to meet specific needs (e.g. a cot or high chair), or to determine whether the child would need his/her own seat when travelling. Generally the question was well answered.

- (c) This question required candidates to consider how knowing about the specific needs of tourists would help Global Tourism to provide a better service and it produced the full range of answers. At worst candidates merely repeated the information given in the question that 'it would help them to provide a better service' which was not worthy of credit. Basic responses explained that 'it would help them to meet the needs of their customers better as they could provide them with what they wanted', however those candidates who developed their answers, explaining fully by using examples produced impressive answers:

For example: 'They can ensure their customers' needs are met which will ensure an enjoyable, hassle free holiday which might also bring about repeat business or recommendation. For example if a customer is vegetarian, Global Travel will be able to pre book appropriate meals for outbound and inbound journeys. If they know that a customer is disabled (e.g. wheelchair dependent) they can inform the airport and request assistance in advance so the customer is not kept waiting.

- (d) Almost all candidates were able to suggest why holiday insurance is important. The most basic of answers simply listed one or two basic necessities, such as the need to protect against accidents, theft and cancellation. At a higher level candidates were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the various reasons why insurance is important, and develop their responses with appropriate examples:

For example: Tourists are advised to take out holiday insurance in order to protect themselves against any unforeseen misfortunes which could ruin their holiday. Accidents can happen and so they must ensure appropriate medical cover as it can be very expensive to obtain medical assistance whilst on holiday. They will need to ensure baggage insurance because if their bags go missing they will be met with a large bill for new clothes/toiletries etc. Appropriate insurance will help cover the cost. They will need insurance cover in case of delays and cancellations, a cancellation could be due to a sudden illness and so the tourist would want to claim back the cost of their holiday. Insurance would be the only way this could be done.

- (e) Many candidates were able to explain the differences between a tour operator and a travel agent, at least in simple terms by referring to the fact that a tour operator creates the package whilst the travel agent sells it. Better candidates developed their answers by referring to other functions of the travel operators, such as having reps in place in resorts, and of travel agents, such as helping customers book the holiday, and providing information and ancillary services.

- (f) Many answers were weak here though there were a few exceptions. Success depended on a familiarity with the term 'travel providers' which not all candidates knew, a significant number confusing them with travel agents. Basic answers simply referred to 'the tour operator buying products from the travel providers to make a package' which at least showed a basic understanding of how the two work together, whilst the few excellent answers seen exemplified this by referring in detail to the products which they work to produce, and how they seek to market them to mutually benefit their businesses.