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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MODERN INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CASE STUDY: TRANS AMUSEMENT PARK)

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Abstract

In recent times, tourism has become an increasingly booming industry. Both the old and young now appreciate and understand what tourism is. Amusement park is a subset of leisure or recreational tourism as tourists visit amusement park just for leisure. Ibadan Trans amusement park as a case study is made up of four (4) distinct departments, and they are; Finance department, Personnel department, Maintenance department, and Operations department. It is a global world, so almost all industries are engaging the use of Information systems to ensure continual growth, increased customer patronage and sustainability of their industries. It is notable that Ibadan trans amusement park is not using information systems for its business

activities and transactions. The aim of this research work was thus to find out the feasibility of creating sustainable tourism through modern information systems usage in trans amusement park, Ibadan. A set of 120 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in trans amusement park. Primary data were obtained, coded and used for quantitative analysis. Simple frequency and chi square were used to analyze the objectives of the study. In conclusion, the result of this research work revealed that the benefits of information system to Ibadan's trans amusement park is quite enormous, especially in respect to products and services sales to existing customers, marketing of the tourism assets to prospective tourists within and outside the country, and easy booking of tourism facilities.

Keywords: Trans amusement park, leisure tourism, information systems.

Introduction

Tourism is the movement of people from one place to the other usually not for the purpose of making money but for pleasure. In his own view, Scott (2005) defined Tourism as the leisure/recreational experience *par excellence* in that it enables a temporary escape from the centre, which nevertheless remains of peripheral significance. For tourism to have taken place there must have been displacement of individual(s) (movement), exchange of cash, and satisfactory or unsatisfactory experience based on what the tourism location must have offered the individual(s). Although most tourists itineraries are inclined towards religious tourism and hospitality industry but it is noteworthy that Amusement Park as an aspect of tourism has not been neglected.

There have been various classifications of tourism by various scholars. Onwumah (2011) opines that tourism classification is as follows;

- Leisure Tourism or Recreational Tourism
- Winter tourism
- Medical Tourism
- Religious Tourism
- Pop Culture Tourism

- Recession Tourism
- Ecotourism
- War Tourism
- Heritage Tourism
- Dark Tourism
- Educational Tourism
- Creative Tourism
- Sport Tourism
- Down Tourism

Amusement park comes under leisure or recreational tourism as tourist's visit amusement park just for leisure. Amusement parks are capital-intensive, highly developed, independent recreational areas which invariably charge an entrance fee from visitors (Encyclopedia of Tourism, 2010). Parks could be classified into theme park, amusement parks, recreational parks and national park.

Ibadan's trans amusement park is made up of four (4) distinct departments, and they are;

- ❖ Finance department
- ❖ Personnel department
- ❖ Maintenance department
- ❖ Operations department

Meanwhile, the administrative block is attached to the side of the Park arena. The Finance department basically handles the monetary aspect of the Park. This particular department takes proper account of the money that goes in and out. Finance department also handles the sale of entrance and ride ticketing, the validation of ticket, among others.

The Personnel department basically deals with the creation and maintenance of staff's welfare which may include their recruitment, leave, benefits and so on. Maintenance department is a highly important department in the Park which deals with the least work of pumping of water to the great task of machine installation. The staffs of this department are always on deck for repairs, switching on/off generator in the case of power failure, the operation of the rides that are available in the Park and so on.

All the departments in the Park are inter- woven but the Operations department is basically the backbone of the park because it is where the main functions of the Park lies. The Operations department is basically in charge of marketing / advertising the park, taking bookings for the use of the park arena, taking bookings and renting out floors for parties, renting out of the hall, checking out that all the rides are in good order, renting out shops, attend to enquires, serves as tour guide, in charge of rental of canopies, chairs, tables, drums, and so on.

Facilities of Trans wonder land.

The facilities of trans Wonderland are awesomely built for the pleasure of prospective customers. The facilities are in two categories as stated in the table below.

Table 1: Classification of Trans wonderland’s facilities

FACILITIES	
Electronic Driven	Non-Electronic driven
Panoramic wheel	Niagara falls
Chair-O-plane	Swings
Dragon ride	kiddies manual rides
Telecombat	
Merry-go-round	



Figure 1: Panoramic wheel.



Figure 2: Merry-go-round

Figure 1 and figure 2 are panoramic wheel and merry-go-round respectively. They are particular attractions in trans amusement park that thrill children and adults.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research work was to find out the feasibility of creating sustainable tourism through modern information systems usage in trans amusement park, Ibadan. The objectives were to:

- ❖ Examine the knowledgeability of the amusement's park staff in regards to information system
- ❖ Examine the relationship between web portal for booking and reservations and increased marketing of trans to the international investors.
- ❖ Identify the staff's perception about the importance of data mining vis-à-vis introducing new products in the park to customers based on data gathered about them
- ❖ Examine the feasibility of online product sales for interested customers based on preference and demand

Brief Literature review

Aremu (2001) defined tourism as the science, art and business of attracting and transporting visitors, accommodating them and catering for their needs and wants. Ibimilua (2009) also noted that tourism involves the movement and stay of foreigners inside and outside a city or a region provided the journey and stay of the stranger is not connected with remunerative activities, hence usually tourism is not usually connected with money making or businesses. Tourism can also be defined as the act of giving visitors hospitable treatments, considering the fact that the visitors do not have the motive of making money at that particular point in time. It should be clearly understood that all itineraries cannot be classified as tourism; it is only the itinerary that has the attributes of tourism that can be classified as such. Tourism is still in the developmental phase in Nigeria. The contribution to tourism by government and private individual in Nigeria is not significant enough. Consequently, there are many tourism potentials that still need to be tapped in Nigeria for economic and social development of the nation. Bassey (2013) opined that in spite of the contribution of tourism in national economic development, it is surprising that the level of

commitment in leveraging the potential in tourism industry as economic driver is still very low at all tiers of government in Nigeria.

Tourism is presently a viable and vast sector globally. Faqihi and Hazeem, (2004) argued that today, tourism is the largest service industry in the world, that has been allocated a particular position in the economic, cultural, social and political fields. It should be noted that tourism industry has experienced tremendous growth both nationally and internationally in recent years. Therefore, tourism has directly or indirectly put foods on the tables of many households around the world. As a matter of fact tourism has contributed in no small measure in bettering the lives of many people globally. Mitchell and Ashley (2006) assert that tourism expansion is associated with accelerated economic growth, job creation and welfare, improved exports and public finances. Its expansion has afforded it the opportunity to be part of the essentials for development of developing nations and also help to sustain development in developed nations.

Riley, Ladkin and Szivas (2002) argued that it is evident that the continued development of tourism in a country provides benefits in terms of increased foreign exchange earnings because: tourism is an industry that had experienced notable growth and no doubt portrays even more potential growth for many years to come. Tourism industry reduces unemployment rates of nations and also helps to establish cash, culture, social and religious exchange between countries. However, Hall (2006) alluded that increased contacts between persons of different cultures can lead to increased knowledge and understanding which in turn can contribute to a relaxation of tensions between nations. This can also contribute to the application of the knowledge gained into innovativeness that can foster development of the society, the nation and thus increase revenue generation in the long run. Hall (2000) further opined that governments have realized that long-term potential tourism is not only for generating revenue, but also as a promoter of international peace and goodwill. Tourism also helps in sensitizing and informing people about their tradition and culture. Manwa (2012) asserts that tourism was perceived as a driver in the revitalizing of traditional knowledge; the older generation is able to teach the younger generation the skills of making traditional crafts that they sell to tourists.

There must be a particular asset, good or services that must be in place before sustainability must be thought of, as it is irrational to consider the sustainability of nothingness. Sustainability

requires that those assets are carefully managed to ensure that future generations inherit a resource base that is sufficient to support their needs and wants (Garrod and Fyall,1998). It is generally agreed that if tourism is developed and managed in a sustainable manner from economic, environmental and socio-cultural points of view, it can help to improve living conditions for local populations in different destinations (Holden, 2008). The impact of sustainable tourism may not be clear or understandable to the residents of local or undeveloped communities because most of them do not understand what sustainability is all about. Hence sustainable tourism is the phenomenon that ensures tourism assets and products are available and always in good/acceptable shape. The definition of sustainable tourism as cited in tourism destination management (2012) is that it is an enterprise that achieves a balance between the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development so as to guarantee long-term benefits to recipient communities. According to UNWTO (2005) sustainable tourism should:

- ✓ Make optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecosystems and helping conserve biodiversity
- ✓ Respect socio-cultural authenticity, conserve built and living cultural heritage, and contribute to cross-cultural understanding and tolerance.

Information system and Tourism

The online presence is one of the major tools needed by a tourism centre to provide information about itself to the would-be customers worldwide. Getting and storing relevant information of tourists' increases the patronage of tourism centers. It is notable that several individuals and organizations know about websites but just a few know about webportal and its importance. Meanwhile, it is of great advantage to have a web portal. What is a web portal? International Business Machines (IBM) defines a web portal as "a single integrated, ubiquitous, and useful access to information (data), applications and people." By being an integrated system a portal has excellent facilities and usage. As services can be provided on a web portal, business transactions can also be conducted on it. Bookings and sales are part of transactions that can be conducted on a portal in real-time by prospective tourists. Koceski and Petrevska (2012) asserted that the designed national tourism portal in its initial phase resulted in accurate recommendations and guidelines for tourists and travelers in the line of identifying an ideal trip and holiday.

Tourism is a big business in the modern time and every organization is in business to make money. Money comes from customers who patronize the tourism centers. New customers are to be attracted on regular basis while old customers are not to be lost. Retaining old customers is a key to business success. Old customers that have their information saved on the data base of the respective tourism destinations can be retained by contacting them on regular basis through electronic means. To carry out this function data mining technology can be used. Through data mining customers can be updated regularly in relation to their preferences and be informed about new products and services that match the ones they like. This idea was captured by Segall (2004) as he opined that data mining could provide suitable methods of identifying customer needs and providing value propositions based on these needs. Therefore data mining is important to tourism, hospitality and travel industry by storing the information of existing customers and keeping them posted on business developments and innovations at the tourism destinations. Samarasinghe et al. (2013) asserts that data mining will provide the required levels of information combining capabilities for the hotels. Data mining in tourism industry can make it so easy to locate the customers in case of found lost items or stolen properties. The tourism destination can leverage on the stored data of the tourists to know where and how to shift their paradigm in better meeting and fulfilling the needs of specific tourists. It is likely that there could be other customer specific and lifestyle related aspects as well; for instance, higher-end tourists are likely to have unique lifestyle related factors and they will only visit the same destination provided these needs are fulfilled (Low, 2005). If the paradigm shifts of the tourism destinations are obvious to the tourists they will keep patronizing and referring their cronies to such destinations as long as their desires are satisfied. Reyes (2010) opined that over the long run, the tourists seeking these new value propositions will arrive at destinations that they believe will provide the said set of values. Data mining is important in sustainable revenue generation, functionality and existence of a tourism destination.

For data mining to be in place in tourism, hospitality and travel industry, certain facilities must be efficiently functioning. These facilities range from computer system, reliable database, electrical power supply and human resources. Low (2005) alluded that this is due to the fact that data mining requires the companies to have a considerable amount of resources. Samarasinghe et al. (2013) also opines that there needs to be extensive storage facilities. Samarasinghe et al.

(2013) further opined that all these indicate that data mining is a very technical area and the hotels will have to invest in it in a meaningful manner.

Methodology

A set of 120 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in trans amusement park. This was basically to obtain primary data that were coded and used for quantitative analysis. Simple frequency and chi square were used to analyze the objectives of the study.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Socio-demographic status of the respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	53	46.1
Female	62	53.9
Age		
20-35	93	80.9
36-50	14	12.2
50 and above	8	7.0
Academic qualification		
o'level	35	30.4
OND	56	48.7
HND/Bsc	22	19.1
Higher degrees	2	1.7
Marital status		
Single	64	55.7
Married	50	43.5
Others	1	.9

Source: Author's Field Survey (2016)

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the respondents based on percentages and frequency calculations. The table reveals that eighty point nine (80.9%) percent of the respondents are between age group 20-35 years old while, twelve point two (12.2%) are between age group 36-50 year old. This means that the largest percentages of the respondents are neither too young nor too old hence. It is also obvious from table 1 that thirty point four percent (30.4%) are ordinary level certificate holders, forty eight point seven percent (48.7%) of the respondents are ordinary national diploma holders, while nineteen point one percent (19.1%) of the respondents are either higher national diploma or Bachelor of science holders. These figures depicts that the respondents have certain and appreciable level of education they understood the questionnaires without interpretation. Table 1 finally reveals that fifty five point seven percent (55.7%) of the respondents are single while forty three point five percent of the respondents are married.

Table2: Do you have knowledge of what information system is?

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	100	87.0
No	4	3.5
not sure	11	9.6
Total	115	100.0

Source: Author's Field Survey (2016)

Table 2 depicts that eighty seven percent (87%) of the respondents stated that they have knowledge of what information system is, just three point five percent (3.5%) opined that they do not have knowledge of what information system is while only nine point six percent (9.6%) of the respondents are not sure if they have the knowledge of what information system is or not. This means that a very large percentage of the respondents have knowledge of information system.

Table 3: Cross tabulation between using webportal to make booking for trans amusement park easy and marketing trans to international investors and tourists

website can help market	webportal can make booking for trans amusement park easy					
trans to international investors and tourists	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Don't know	Chi square	Df	P-Value
Strongly agreed	37	29	0	86.996	6	0.000
Agreed	2	9	0			
Don't know	1	29	4			
Disagreed	0	0	4			

Source: Author's Field Survey (2016)

The P value of the table above is 0.000, chi square value is 86.996 and the degree of freedom is 6. The P value is lesser than 0.005 (at 0.005 level of significance) hence, there is significant relationship between using webportal to make booking for trans amusement park easy and marketing trans to international investors and tourists. This implies that there is feasibility that a tourist who makes online booking for trans would tell another prospective tourists about the ease to booking and tourists assets of trans amusement park.

Table 4: Data mining can help introduce new products in the park to customers based on previous data gathered about the customers

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agreed	11	9.6
Agreed	88	76.5
don't know	15	13.0
Total	115	100.0

Source: Author's Field Survey (2016)

Table 4 reveals that nine point six percent (9.6%) of the respondents stated that they strongly agreed that data mining can help introduce new products in the park to customers based on previous data gathered about the customers, seventy six point five percent (76.5%) opined that they agreed that data mining can help introduce new products in the park to customers based on previous data gathered about the customers while only thirteen (13%) percent of the respondents stated that they don't know if data mining can help introduce new products in the park to customers based on previous data gathered about the customers.

Table 5: web portal can aid the feasibility of online product sales for interested customers based on preference and demand

Valid	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agreed	40	34.8
Agreed	56	48.7
don't know	19	16.5
Total	115	100.0

Source: Author's Field Survey (2016)

Table 5 reveals that thirty four point eight percent (34.8%) of the respondents stated that they strongly agreed that web portal can aid the feasibility of online product sales for interested customers based on preference and demand, forty eight point seven percent (48.7%) opined that they agreed web portal can aid the feasibility of online product sales for interested customers based on preference and demand while, only sixteen point five (16.5%) percent of the respondents stated that do not know if web portal can aid the feasibility of online product sales for interested customers based on preference and demand.

Discussion and Conclusion

Demographic characteristics play some role in usage and understanding of information systems. For instance, for this study gender deference's show up in knowledge and usage of information system; female gender tends to understand and use more of information systems when compared to the male gender. The use of information systems by marital status category reveals that single

individuals understand and use more information system than married folks. Also, From table 1 above it is obvious that the respondents of this research work possess certain or sufficient level of education and maturity to know the importance of the questionnaire administered to them. The results show a large percentage of the respondents understand what information system is as stated in table 2. This depicts that the questionnaires were administered to the right set of people who understand the importance and usage of information systems. Various individuals have different reasons for exploring information systems. Carroll (1987) asserts that literature in human computer interaction and cognitive psychology has shown that there is considerable exploratory learning involved in using computer interfaces

At the moment, trans amusement park does not have a website, so prospective tourists can neither make their booking online nor view trans amusement park's tourism assets on the internet. The result of the study as represented in table 3 reveals that the tourists assert that the presence of trans amusement park on the internet with a webportal for easy booking can easily market trans amusement park to the local and international communities. They may move on to browse products, gather information or even make purchases only after the Web sites of interest have been located through the search process (Kraut et al., 1996). It will be much easier for prospective customers to contact the representative of the tourism destination via short and multimedia messages that are on the web portal. Rahul and Tridas (2004) opined that portals also provide many personal communication services in the form of emails, message boards, etc. Data mining is an internet platform that provides the opportunity for user's information to be stored. Hence the respondents projected that the management of trans amusement can be able to go through users information/preference and use such opportunity to subsequently inform such tourists about the introduction of related services or products to the amusement park. This corroborates Rahul and Tridas (2004) opinion that a repeat customer is worth more to Yahoo! than a new one because repeated interactions with the portal provide Yahoo! with a rich set of information about preferences and purchase patterns at the individual level. Samarasinghe et al. (2013) also asserts that with increased investment in such packages, the hotels will be able to provide the customers with a surprise factor as the customers do not have to ask for what they require; the hotel will know from the moment of arrival that the customers would be looking for a certain set of values.

Conclusively, the result of this research paper reveals that the benefits of information system to Ibadan's trans amusement park is quite enormous, especially in respect to products and services sales to existing customers, marketing of the tourism assets to prospective tourists within and outside the country, and easy booking of tourism facilities.

Recommendation

There are some recommendations drawn from this research work and they are as follow:

- A website should be created for trans amusement park
- The website should have webportal for reservations
- There should be general renovation of trans amusement park
- The staff of trans amusement park should be enrolled for proper training on information system facilities and software that can help sell Tans amusement park to both international and domestic prospective tourists.

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