

The Influence of Maintenance Culture in the Sustainability of Tourism Attractions in Obudu Mountain Resort

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Abstract

This work weighed the influence of maintenance culture in the sustainability of tourist attractions at Obudu mountain resort. From the objectives of the study, this paper identified the various attractions at the study area, identified the maintenance culture practices in place at the resort, ascertained the level of patronage in the study area, determined the role of maintenance culture in the level of tourists patronage and verified the ways of improving the sustainability of the destination through maintenance and the level of patronage. This paper also aimed to review the determinant factors which influence the development of maintenance culture. This study was guided by five research questions and two hypotheses with simple frequency percentage, mean and chi-square statistics used to analyze the data generated for the study. The research work identified and assessed the maintenance strategies as well as sources of maintenance costs of tourism at Obudu mountain resort. The study found out that the most frequently used maintenance strategies at the resort were the Corrective Maintenance (CM) and the Preventive Maintenance; these two methods were considered cost effective but were not efficient for efficient and reliable for sustainability. In conclusion, Assets and facilities are essential to an organization's resources, thus improving the working environment and well-being of their maintenance is an important aspect that should be given serious attention. This is where the need for the roles of each member of the organization involved in maintenance tasks with a clear understanding that regard to maintenance culture. Based on the finding recommendations were made.

Keywords: Organization; Business activities; Tourist attraction; Economy

Introduction

The desire for pleasure, comfort ability and privacy is one of the essences of man by creation and tourism provides an avenue to meet these needs, tourism is considered individualistic because of its increasing demand [1]. Tourism can be defined as the temporary movement of people from their normal place of abode to another for leisure, pleasure or business activities, staying for not less than 24 hours or more than 365 days. Tourism is the business activity connected with providing accommodation services with entertainment for people who are visiting the place for pleasure. The development of tourism as an industry has been rapid and widespread in the last half century; it has become an important industry in most countries of the world. Today, the industry is making profits from other sectors and contributes in revenue generation, job creation, promotion of small and medium scale enterprises, and improving an infrastructural development.

The importance of tourism cannot be over emphasized, globally it creates new job opportunities in many countries; thus, helps in reducing unemployment. Tourism also enhances social progress and strengthens communities; it encourages the protection of the environment and contributes actively to conservation. Okpolo opined that tourism accounts for about 7% of the global capital investment with receipts predicted to have reached 1.550 billion dollars by year 2010 [2]. Also, Mirbabayev et al. stated that tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities and a source of foreign exchange [3]. Nigeria is one such country seeking to diversify its economy away from crude oil production to maximize employment and income generating opportunities. Nigeria has huge tourism potentials especially given its natural and diversified landscapes and mountains [4]. It is an indisputable fact that for the development of tourism to be successful, it must be planned and managed responsibly and sustainably [5].

Thus, Frey suggested that whereas responsible and sustainable tourism should not be used interchangeably, the approaches all have the common objective of minimizing negative social, economic and environmental impacts, whilst maximizing the positive effects of tourism development [6]. To this end, sustainable tourism signifies a condition of tourism based on the principles of sustainable development, taking "full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts" and addressing the needs of stakeholders. Moreover, focusing on sustainability development of these sites alone may not achieve the desired purpose; thus, maintenance of the facilities should put into considerations, plan and policy of the development. Enzo et al. instituted that maintenance is portrayed as the set of actions carried out on an asset in order to ensure that the asset continues to perform its intended functions by repairing any equipment that has failed and/or by restoring it to its favorable operating conditions [7]. As stated by the daily independent, maintenance can be described as an act of regularly keeping machine, building or piece of equipment in good working condition; it is also a culture of repair and upkeep to ensure longevity, sustainability and beautification of the infrastructures in question. According to Ojo et al. the purpose of maintenance on tourist attractions is inevitably to extend their lifespan and improve the carrying capacity of the facilities; In other words, maintenance

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policies are planned to reduce the frequency of service interruption and the many undesirable consequences of such interruptions [1]. Maintenance of tourist attractions clearly impacts on the quality of service rendered and on the system reliability of which, if little is done about it, may result to excessive number of costly failures and poor customer service satisfaction. Enzo et al. instituted that maintenance is portrayed as the set of actions carried out on an asset in order to ensure that the asset continues to perform its intended functions by repairing any equipment that has failed and/or by restoring it to its favorable operating conditions [7]. Also in line with Ojo et al. they explained that the comfortability of the tourist during visits is very essential and always a priority because the tourists counts on the quality of service experienced and this goes a long way, attracting visitors to the destinations and making the destination a sustainable tourist attraction [1]. Moreover, this would only be through a well maintained tourist facilities and infrastructures. The types of maintenance strategies are a) preventive maintenance; according Ojo et al. this strategy offers the efficiency of performing maintenance tasks on a planned basis rather than reactive basis [1]. Thus, preventive maintenance (PM) is that many times maintenance is performed. b) Corrective maintenance this type of maintenance represents the traditional maintenance policy. It is carried out fixing production assets when they fail. Therefore, maintenance activity is not scheduled; Enzo et al. also established that maintenance activities are more difficult and skillful it also needs more time necessary to fix breakdowns [7].

Shaelal opined that service quality by its very nature is an elusive, indistinct and abstract concept because consumers do not really articulate their requirements. Quality in tourism is an important factor and ultimately dictates the success of the tourism business [8]. Quality service has become a major interest of the public and private tourism business enterprises, understanding that the development of a complete tourism package (adequate, lodging, restaurants, transportation, standard infrastructures and other ancillary services with providing prompt and courteous service) will not only attract tourists but may encourage visitors to stay, spend money and most importantly come back. Ojo et al. observed that in the last decades, maintenance strategies evolved with the aim of carrying out as little maintenance as possible and as infrequently as possible while at the same time preserving the availability of company assets. Tourism utilities have always needed a maintenance programs to keep infrastructures in good working conditions for as long as it is feasible [1]. Enzo et al. defined maintenance as the combination of all technical administrative and managerial actions during the life cycle of an item intended to retain it in, or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function; (or combination of functions of an item which are considered necessary to provide a given service) [7]. Eraqi further explained that efficient maintenance policy improves the quality of tourism services production and delivery and should be matched with both the features and the explicit/implicit customer expectation [9].

Obudu mountain resort is settled in a community called Becheeve and it is hosted by six villages; the main occupation of the inhabitants of the communities are subsistence farming, while some are civil servants and part time workers. Some also engage in tourism activities in the area [10]. The mountain resort has contributed enormously to the economy of Nigeria.

The government who is the main stakeholder of Obudu mountain resort has failed to give sufficient attention to maintenance of attractions at the mountain resort. This has in turn failed to boost the image of resort, resulting to low patronage by tourists. Nigeria as a

country is a neglected tourism goldmine and nature's biggest gifts for many decades with little or no new investments in the industry. Osefoh and Agbonome explained that the traditional tourist attractions, game reserves, nature reserves and museums are not adequately maintained nor physically developed in line with ambient physical environment that enables conducive atmosphere for attraction of domestic and international tourist. The stakeholder that operates the mountain resort has failed to pay attention to the sustainability of the attractions and infrastructure already built thereby subjecting the resort to a chance of deterioration and unsatisfactory level of profit. In other words, Uwadiogwu acknowledged that local people's participation in tourism development in Nigeria is yet to be given adequate attention [11]. Investigations have revealed that the people of Becheeve community (hosts of Obudu Mountain Resort in Cross River State) have been denied the right to maintain and control their cultural heritage and to manage the positive and negative impacts from tourism activities [12]. From statistics, Nigeria barely has tourist industry at all and neither ranked among the tourism nations of the world nor in Africa. They also explained that the number of domestic and international tourist visits at Obudu mountain resort is at its lowest ebb, in spite of its exoticism, splendor, comfort and mosquito free being the best natural reserve in Nigeria that earned the name, "Jewel of Africa". These and others prompted the research on the influence of maintenance culture in the sustainability of attractions at Obudu mountain resort.

Objectives of Study

The major objective of this study was to ascertain the influence of maintenance culture in the sustainability of tourism attractions at Obudu mountain resort.

Specifically the objective includes:

1. Identified the various attractions at the resort
2. Identified the maintenance culture practices in place at Obudu mountain resort
3. Ascertained the level of tourist patronage in the study area
4. Determined the role of maintenance culture in level of patronage
5. Verified ways of improving the sustainability of the destination through improved maintenance in the level of patronage.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised in the course of this study and was used in forming the research questionnaire

1. What are the various attractions in Obudu mountain resort?
2. What is the maintenance culture practice at the study area?
3. What is the level of tourist patronage in the study area?
4. What is the role of maintenance culture in the level of patronage at the study area?
5. What are the ways through which sustainability of the destination will be improved so as to increase the level of patronage?

Methodology

Area for the study

This study was carried out at Obudu mountain resort in Cross River State. The state of Cross River is located on longitude 5°45'N and

latitude of 8°30'N. the state was created on the 27th of May 1967 and has an area of 20,156 Km squared (7,782 square mile) and a density of 93 Km squared (240 square mile).

Research design

The study adopted a survey research design, with the use of questionnaire and interview schedule to obtain information from the host communities of the tourism destination. Survey research design was used for the study because it requires the use of questionnaires and interviews (a procedure that involves asking questions from respondents) to gather information about people and their thoughts and perception about the research topic.

Population for the study

The population for the study consisted of guests lodging in the resort and the management of the resort as at the time of this study. The population of this study, however, consisted of two hundred and fifty (250) respondents.

Sample/Sampling technique

The sample size was structured on two population size, determined using the Taro Yamane formula ascertain the sample size of the both tourists and staff used for the study. The sample size for the tourists was 122, while the sample size for the staffs and management was calculated as 60; a total of 182 questionnaires were administered to the respondents found at the resort.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument used in carrying out this study was questionnaire and personal oral interview schedule. The personal interview was verbally communicated between the researcher and the respondents, while the questionnaire was structured into five sections.

Result

Research question 1- What are the various attractions in Obudu mountain resort?

Identifying the Various Attractions At Obudu Mountain Resort (Table 1).

Research question 2- What is the maintenance strategy used at Obudu Mountain resort?

The results in the Table 2 described that 12 (20%) respondents

mentioned preventive maintenance as the maintenance strategy used, none of the respondents mentioned predictive and reliability centered maintenance; but, 48 (80%) mentioned corrective maintenance.

From the Table 3, 12% indicated that the frequency of some, maintenance strategies mentioned was on monthly basis, while 40 (67%) opined that it is on 6 monthly basis, 8 (13%) indicated on yearly basis.

Table 4 showed that the respondents agreed that lack of funds (3.4), no training and education (3.1), inadequate staffs (3.0), no motivation (3.1), bad policy system (3.3) and no reward and recognition (3.1) are factors that can affect the application of the mentioned maintenance strategies. But, disagreed that staffs empowerment (1.8), can affect maintenance strategy. These explains that lack of funds can pose a negative effect for maintenance culture in an organization just as it is at Obudu mountain resort; considering the clustered mean of 3.0 (from the decision rule that stated that any mean response greater than 3.0 should be accepted).

Research question 3- What is the level of tourist patronage at the resort

From the Table 5, 38 (63%) indicated that the level of tourist patronage in a month is between 31%-50%, while 22 (37%) indicated that it is between 51%-70%.

The Table 6 showed that 5 (8%) were between 21-30 years of age, 15 (25%) were between 31-40 years while 36 (60%) of the respondents stated 41-50 years; 4 (7%) were above 50 years.

From Table 7, 15 (25%) respondents indicated that the cable car is the tourist facility that was used most by tourists followed by the canopy walkway with 11 (18%) and the state- of- the- arts swimming pool with 8 (13%) indicating on it.

Results from the Table 8 explains that 19 (32%) respondents were of the opinion that mountain race periods attracts more tourists to the resort followed by august breaks and Christmas periods with 15 (25%) and 13 (22%) respectively

Research question 4-What is the role of maintenance culture in the level of patronage and service quality at the study area?

Table 9 showed that the respondents disagreed on experiencing excellent quality service nor low quality service with mean responses of (2.2) and (2.2) respectively; but, agreed on experiencing average quality

Tourist attractions and facilities	Their features
Swimming pool	This is an ideal spot for tourist to take a dip in the cool and crystal clear waters. Here, you experience the thrill of state of the art water slides or the relaxing effects of a Jacuzzi
Canopy walkway	This is a bridge built with platforms linking up two high trees of about 300meters high. It creates a thrilling close – up of the birds in their natural habitat high above the ground
Grotto	this can be a natural or artificial cave that is associated with modern ,historic or prehistoric use by humans
Cable cars	this is the biggest attraction at Obudu and it runs from the entrance of the resort at the bottom of the mountain up to the ranch resort at the summit
Squash halls	This is a racquet sport played by two singles or four players in a four walled court with a small, hollow rubber ball.
Gymnasium	this is where tourists spend some time on their body fitness using the latest exercising machines and equipment
Mini water fall	this is a place where the water flows over a vertical drop in the course of a stream or river
The tree house	These are mini houses built with platforms among the trunks or branches of one or more matured trees, 70 meters high. They are used for recreation or nature observation

Table 1: Identifying the Various Attractions at Obudu Mountain Resort.

Maintenance strategies	No of respondents	Percentages
Preventive maintenance	12	20%
Predictive maintenance	--	--
Corrective maintenance	48	80%
Reliability centered maintenance	--	--
	60	100%

Source, field survey

Table 2: Identifying the Maintenance Strategy in Use at the Resort.

Frequencies	No of respondents	Percentages
Daily basis	--	--
Weekly basis	--	--
Monthly basis	12	20%
6 monthly basis	40	67%
Yearly	8	13%
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 3: The Frequency of The Above Mentioned Maintenance Strategies.

Factors	Total score	Mean	Decision
Lack of funds	204	3.4	Agreed
No training and education	187	3.1	Agreed
Inadequate staffs	182	3.0	Agreed
No motivation	185	3.1	Agreed
Staff empowerment	106	1.8	Disagreed
Bad policy system	197	3.3	Agreed
No reward and recognition	187	3.1	Agreed
Total	1248	20.8	

Source, field survey 2014

Table 4: Possible Factors That Affects the Application of the Mentioned Maintenance Strategy.

Level of tourist patronage	No of respondents	Percentages
10% – 30%	--	--
31% – 50%	38	38
51% – 70%	22	22
71% – 100%	--	--
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 5: Ascertaining the Level of Tourist Patronage at the Resort in A Month.

Age gap	No of respondents	Percentages
Less than 20 years	--	--
21 – 30	5	8%
31 – 40	15	25%
41 – 50	36	60%
Above 50 years	4	7%
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 6: Determining the Age Gap That Visits the Resort Most. service with the mean response of (2.9).

From Table 10, 70 (64%) agreed that they would like to visit the resort again; while 40 (36%) indicated that they would not visit again

Research question 5-what are the ways through which sustainability of the destination will be improved so as to increase the level of patronage

The results on the Table 11 showed that the respondents agreed

that either preventive maintenance (2.8), predictive maintenance (3.0) or reliability centered maintenance (3.2) should be implemented at the resort while corrective maintenance was disagreed on by respondents with (1.9) mean; this indicated that the corrective maintenance which is applied does not have any effect on the sustainability of the attractions,

Tourist attractions and facilities	No of respondents	Percentages
Swimming pool	8	13%
Canopy walkway	11	18%
Golf course	--	--
Grotto	7	12%
Cable cars	15	25%
Squash halls	1	2%
Gymnasium	1	2%
Mini waterfall	4	7%
The tree house	2	3%
Lawn tennis court	--	--
Hiking trails	--	--
Water parks	3	5%
Conference halls	2	3%
Becheeve nature reserve	2	3%
Horse and cattle ranch houses.	4	7%
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 7: Ascertaining the Facilities Used More Often By Tourists.

Festive periods	No of respondents	Percentages
Christmas periods	13	22%
August breaks	15	25%
Easter periods	5	8%
National public holidays	--	--
New year eves	3	5%
Mountain race periods	19	32%
Cultural periods	5	8%
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 8: Determining The Periods That Attracts High Influx of Tourists to the Resort.

Options	Total score	Mean	Decision
Excellent quality service	239	2.2	Disagreed
Average quality service	316	2.9	Agreed
Low quality service	238	2.2	Disagreed
No quality service	--	--	--
Total	793	7.3	

Source, field survey 2014

Table 9: Determining the Role of Maintenance Culture in the Level of Patronage and Service Quality.

Option	No of respondents	Percentages
Yes	70	64%
No	40	36%
	60	100%

Source, field survey 2014

Table 10: Ascertaining whether the tourist would like to visit the resort again.

Maintenance strategies	Total score	Mean	Decision
Preventive maintenance	308	2.8	Disagreed
Corrective maintenance	206	1.9	Agreed
Predictive maintenance	335	3.0	Disagreed
Reliability centered maintenance	356	3.2	--
Total	1205	10.9	

Source, field survey 2014

Table 11: Verifying ways of improving the sustainability of attractions through improved maintenance culture.

Frequenciest	Total score	Mean	Decision
Daily basis	--	--	--
weekly basis	303	2.8	Disagreed
monthly basis	359	3.3	Agreed
6 monthly basis	343	3.1	Agreed
Yearly	262	2.4	Disagreed
	12	11.6	

Clustered mean 2.9

Table 12: Determining the frequency for the suggested maintenance strategies.

Frequenciest	Total score	Mean	Decision
Government funding	368	3.3	Agreed
Park entrance fees	281	2.6	Disagreed
Accommodation	330	3.0	Agreed
Food sales	365	3.3	Agreed
Merchandise sales	301	2.7	Disagreed
Parking	339	3.1	Agreed
Public investment	321	2.9	Agreed
Private sector initiatives	335	3.0	Agreed
Total	2,578	22.3	

Clustered mean 2.9

Table 13: Identifying the recommended source of funds.

considering the clustered mean of 2.7.

Table 12 explains the frequency suggested by the respondents with monthly basis having (3.3) and 6 monthly basis having (3.1) mean respectively; but the respondents disagreed on weekly basis and yearly with (2.8) and (2.4) respectively, considering the clustered mean which is 2.9.

The Table 13 describes the suggested source of funds for maintenance by respondents; government funding, accommodation, food sales, parking, public investments and private sector initiatives were agreed to be used as source of maintenance funding.

Discussion on Findings

Table 1 showcased the various tourism attractions at Obudu mountain resort. Holloway rightly pointed out that it is generally the attraction that prompted the tourists to travel.

Table 2 revealed that the maintenance strategy practiced at Obudu mountain resort was corrective maintenance and preventive maintenance.

Table 3 described the frequency with which the above maintenance strategies were carried out at the resort. 6 monthly basis is considered as the rate on which the maintenance strategies are being carried out; just as observed that in the last decades, maintenance strategies evolved with the aim of carrying out as little maintenance as possible and as infrequently as possible while at the same time preserving the availability of company asset.

The results on Table 4 reveals that the following factors- lack of funds, no training and education, inadequate staffs, no motivation, bad policy system and no reward and recognition; as the factors that affects the implementation of the mentioned maintenance strategies. Even though, the development of maintenance culture is difficult and definitely needs some time, when the determinant factors for the development of maintenance culture are implemented it will succeed without fail. The overall mean of 3.3 which was higher than the decision rule which states that any mean response above 3.0 should be accepted.

Table 5 shows the percentage of the level of tourist patronage at the resort in a month; with 51 – 70% having the highest respondents, and studies reveals that domestic tourists, record more visits to the tourist destination than international tourists based on factors like; distance, climate, language, culture and security.

The facilities that were used more often by tourists revealed in Table 7 cable cars (Figure 1), canopy walk way (Figure 2), the state-of-the-art swimming pool (Figures 3-8) and the grotto were the most visited



Figure 1: The cable cars on the move.



Figure 2: The canopy walkway built 300 meters high above sea level.



Figure 3: The natural water fall.



Figure 4: The main state-of-the-arts swimming.



Figure 5: Flood lit tennis court.



Figure 6: The becheeve natural reserve where you find all kinds of migrating birds.



Figure 7: The cable car's take off point.

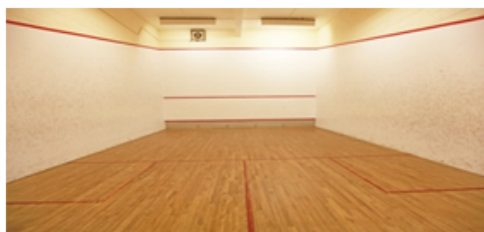


Figure 8: The squash hall and control point.

attractions and facilities used at the resort. This entails how prone the mentioned tourist attractions and facilities are to failure considering the

frequency of maintenance actions on them. In Table 8 we discovered that the resorts have more guests and tourists during mountain race periods followed by august breaks and Christmas periods. A unique maintenance policy or strategy is needed for such high influx of tourists. For instance, the reliability- centered maintenance. According to Table 9, we discovered that the level of service at Obudu mountain resort was on an average scale. Most failed facilities and ill- maintained tourist attractions contributed to guest experiencing an average service quality and with this quality of service, sustainability is not assured. The results on Table 10 shows that 64% of tourists would like to visit the resort once more while 36% are not coming again.

The results from Table 11 opined that reliability centered maintenance; with a mean of (3.2) is the maintenance strategy that should be implemented at the resort for sustainability purposes. Oparinde established that this maintenance programme can be the most efficient with lower costs by eliminating unnecessary maintenance or overhauls, reduced probability of sudden equipment failures, able to focus maintenance activities on critical components, increased component reliability and incorporate root cause analysis.

Table 13 suggested that the recommended source of fund should be from the government with government funding having the highest mean value of (3.3). The result is appropriate since the major sources of maintenance cost of most tourism destinations were government funding programmes, accommodation, donations and foreign aid amongst others which was in support of Paul opinion that government agencies were typically competent providers of tourism services [13]. Hence, this assured the reliability of the study outcome.

Conclusion

Maintenance is very important to an organization today; maintenance culture is very necessary not only to maintain continuous productivity of facilities and infrastructures, but to also minimize maintenance cost and to ensure a safe environment. Therefore, maintenance culture needs to be implemented by the tourism industries to increase the quality of maintenance work. Maintenance culture is unique for each organization, for that reason, the maintenance in the tourism organization needs to be evolved to meet the changing in the tourism market demand and trends. However, there are inadequate studies from maintenance culture perspective. Studies related to maintenance usually focuses on maintenance strategies, information and technology, whilst there are few studies discussing about cultural maintenance. In other words, most other industrial sectors have literatures on maintenance and strategies of achieving them. But, tourism sector can only boast of very few literature studies on maintenance; Hence, this research. The element of maintenance culture is usually ignored by the tourism sector. The objectives of this paper were discussed for the conceptual framework for developing maintenance culture for all parties involved in maintenance management of tourism destinations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Due to the eco sensitivity of ecological habitats, of which the mountain resort falls among; the state government should endeavor and make appropriate funding for the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities and attractions used by tourists.
- The comfortability of tourists during visits is very essential and can be achieved through a well maintained facilities and

infrastructures in terms of good accommodation, feeding, serene environment and reputable staff attendants which can encourage further visits and attract others. Therefore, maintenance activities should be of paramount importance and there should be a steady frequency for such activities.

- There should be an awareness campaign on the involvement of the private sector initiatives and public investors as a means of increasing maintenance cost for improved quality of service and reliability of tourist facilities and attraction.

From the findings of this research, there are some factors that can act as deterrents to maintenance culture; these factors should be investigated on and be resolved.

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