

Theme parks: the economics of entertainment essay

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Theme Parks: The Economics of EntertainmentIntroduction

Theme

Theme parks have always been an alluring mode of entertainment, especially for people interested in family oriented amusement. Although theme parks do qualify as being a part of the leisure vacation industry, they orient themselves better along the category of the entertainment vacation industry. Theme parks are often packed with wild rides and stimulating performances, lending a dose of action to their brand of entertainment. In regard to economics, theme parks have the potential to draw thousands of people into a region, spurring the market and generating business. The first theme park was created by Walt Disney in California in 1955, the industry growing throughout America and spreading to Europe and Asia in the 1970s-90s.[1] One of the first theme parks in Europe was the Europa-Park in Germany in 1975, promising a full cultural experience of Europe in just one day.[2] In order to get a full view of the economics of entertainment which is spurred by the theme park industry, it is good to take a look at the historical and modern developments of family oriented amusement.

EntertainmentTheme parks are centered on the idea of providing interactive family entertainment to families on vacation. It is important to recognize that modern theme park rides and performances are not classified as video games or classic rides, and constitute a medium focused on interactive experiences. Families seek entertainment in which real experiences are emphasized, with less emphasis on virtual experiences. The people who attend theme parks go there to have shared experiences together, as a family or small group on a mutually satisfying and entertaining vacation.[3]

The design of theme parks promotes action and amusement as an

interactive experience, integrating families into an exciting and creative new world. There is often the creation of new cultures, technologies, even new landscapes, within the world of the theme park, and visiting families come to enjoy the experience of something unique and out of the ordinary, to be surprised and delighted by the originality of their interactive experience.

It is the capacity of the theme park industry to thrill and enchant its vacationers, and to always have a steady eye on the demands on the consumer. Economics The economics of the theme park industry has always been, and may very likely always be, centered on the vacationing family in search of exhilarating entertainment as the core of the trade. Consumer are most interested in interactive adventure, fantasy and mystery, movies and television shows, and science fiction/futuristic themes being more service oriented, offering less passive and more interactive experiences.

The health of the industry, as with other industries, is associated with economic forces and the quality of service provided.[4] In securing theme parks as solid vacation destinations, a key element is the industry's ability to generate a world in which diverse, fun, and engaging services are in continual assessment of the desires of consumers. In assuring quality which meets and exceeds the expectations of consumers, theme parks have the potential to continue their progressive development within the leisure and entertainment industry. Yesterday & Today The theme parks of yesterday were born within the culture of developing new media in family entertainment, Disneyland being created as a kind of parallel to Disney's

command of the television and movie entertainment industry, and the family entertainment tradition, although increasingly progressive and diverse, continues today. Disney has not lost its edge in the market and continues as a family entertainment powerhouse, its theme parks being developed as having “ no present, no past, no future, but an immediate synchronism of all the places and all the periods in a single atemporal virtuality...a lapse or collapse of time: that’s what the fourth dimension is about”.

[5] The theme park industry has evolved from the infant ideas of wanting to provide family members entertainment in the form of glimpses of other times and places to a mature conception of the purposeful creation of utopian urban worlds, a shift from fantasy to postmodernism. It is the purpose of theme parks in the modern age to offer its consumers the experience of entering into a “ three dimensional work of populist art entertainment for the masses”, in which ideal urban living is presented as an ongoing interactive performance.[6] Although the industry has evolved in its dynamic complexity, the core of providing family entertainment has remained intact, and few do it as well as Disney. Conclusion The theme park industry emerged strong and continues to strengthen as a viable industry, offering economic and entertainment possibilities to individuals, families, and communities. Theme parks have the potential to bring an economic spark to areas in need of a boost in business as well as a boost in unique creativity and urban planning. Theme parks have a way of opening the minds of vacationers as well as all people involved in the production of the entertainment industry. Many of the ideas which are applicable to the

modern theme park are also applicable to cities in general, with the push for economic stability, creativity, diversity, interaction, and fun. When an individual, family, or community is tired, downtrodden, or simply in need of leisure and entertainment, theme parks have a way of whisking people away into a different world, providing them with care, thrills, and delighting experiences, opening their minds to an idea of utopia.

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