

The nature based attraction



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Nature-based attraction is unique. Lang & O’Leary (1997) stated that nature-based tourists are more interested in nature, travel more often at longer distances and stay longer at a destination. Moreover, they are well educated, with high levels of both individual and household income and are willing to spend more. Laarman and Durst (1987) defined natural-based attraction as a form of tourism activity that combines three elements, namely education, recreation and adventure. Silverberg et al., (1996) stated that nature-based attraction is a phenomenon which represents a new market in the tourism industry and has captured the mind of planners and marketers. Nyaupane et al., (2004), suggested that nature based tourism has been growing rapidly than tourism in general. When the destination managers attempt to attract the growing market, they are faced with a double paradoxical task; in the beginning, there is the need to preserve the resources that attract the tourist and provides a quality travel experience; Backman et al., (1999). It is a challenge which requires a balance between the individual’s expectations, preferences and attitudes towards the environment for a successful nature-based experience; Uysal et al., (1992) cited in Silverberg et al., (1996).

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Buckley, Pickering and Weaver (2003) stated that visitor attractions vary from very small to huge size, from free entrance to expensive fees, and include both natural and man-made or a combination of these two (Prideaux, 2002). According to Valentine (1992), natural-based attraction is mainly concerned with the direct amusement of some relative uninterrupted phenomenon of nature. He suggested that there are three types of activities that come below his definition: experiences which are dependent on nature, experiences which are enriched by nature and experiences for which a natural setting is related. Newsome, Moore and Dowling (2002) pointed out that nature-based tourism may be considered as adventure, wildlife and ecotourism while McKercher (1998) expands it further to alternative tourism, educational tourism, sustainable tourism, responsible tourism and other forms of outdoor-oriented non-mass tourism.

2. 2 Tourism attractions

According to Mill and Morrisson (1985), the tourism system is made of four key segments: the market, travel, tourist destinations and marketing.

Moreover, Gunn (1988) stated that tourism attractions deal with tourism destinations; highlights the role of tourism attractions (tourist, traffic, attraction, information and signposting). Therefore, tourism attractions forms an essential part of the tourism destinations and they are one of four key segments of the tourism system.

Tourism attraction is the major reason why tourist visits a destination. The tourist product includes attractions, services and infrastructures. Gunn (1988) said that tourism attractions are composed of the several components including tourist's activities, local scenery, service and

entertainment. Together, these features represent the total appeal of natural and man-made characteristics. For example, each historical site or lake has its own uniqueness in its features and appeal and cannot be judged as identical to other tourism resources. All tourism attractions are tourism resources, but all tourism resources are not tourism attractions. It may be impossible to evaluate the attractiveness of the various tourism destinations.

Also, Laarman and Durst (1987) use level of interest and degree of physical thoroughness to distinguish between soft and hard nature tourists. Lindberg (1991, cited in Meric & Hunt, 1998), moves from “ twofold typologies” to a fourfold categories.

He suggested that there are:

1. hard core nature tourists who has high levels of environmental commitment and support for enhance sustainability, want physically and challenging experiences, travel in small groups, take longer trips, demand for fewer services and make their own travel arrangements
2. dedicated nature tourists who take trips precisely to protected areas in order to appreciate local, natural and cultural history;
3. mainstream nature tourists who visit destinations primarily to take an unfamiliar trip; and finally,
4. casual nature tourists who enjoy nature as part of a wider trip.

According to Swarbrooke (2000: 67), “ visitor attractions are the heart of the tourism industry; they are the motivators that make people wants to take a

trip in the first place”. In opposition, Richards (2001) pointed out that it can be argued that attractions do not always attract visitors, however, they certainly do provide an emphasis for much tourist activity, and is a vital weapon of tourist destinations engaged in a competitive edge for tourist industry.

However, Eduard kuÅjen (2010) argued that a destination without potential or real tourism attractions cannot be developed into a tourism destination. Potential tourism becomes real only when it provides visitor accessibility like physical access, public access, sightseeing. Only the real tourism attraction can be engaged on the tourism market and be promoted. Also, Hu and Richie (1993), Muller (1994) stated that the classification of tourism attractions into natural and man-made is the main obstacle to an efficient approach to tourism attractions.

2. 2. 1 Evolution of tourist attractions

Consumer tastes and preferences have led to an evolution on the tourist attraction market and have turned it into a diversified market. Tourist attractions are changing in terms of forms, location, style and scale.

Kruczek (2011) stated that attractions evolving these days are tied into a new model for the evolution of tourism, the three E’s (Entertainment, Excitement, Education), which has succeeded the traditional three S’s model (Sun, Sea, Sand).

According to Swarbrooke (2002), it is very difficult to reconstruct the historical development of attractions for two reasons: firstly it is not easy to decide how many people need to visit a given site in order to call it an

attraction. For example were the Egyptians Pyramids visited annually as an attraction in Roman times? The second reason is the purpose of visiting an attraction. Most of the sacred buildings accomplish the double role of tourist attractions and place of worship. It is impossible to determine the proportion of visitors who come for religious reasons and others who may come out of curiosity for attractions.

During the Middle ages, very few attractions flourished. The religious pilgrims started to take new trends like the famous churches of Arab Peninsula, Jerusalem and became travel destinations. Gradually, the travel arrangement led to the appearance of the ancestor of today's tour leader and sorted out accommodation.

In the 17th century, there was revitalization of journeys to take the waters and health resorts established earlier by the Romans (e. g. Bath and Buxton in Great Britain, Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden in Germany and Vichy in France). The visitation of health resorts or spas caused an avalanche of the second-rate attractions occupying the leisure time of guests at health resorts. By the end of 18th century many heritage sites were already developed with tourists in mind.

The Industrial Revolution came forward in terms of innovative technologies which facilitated access to attractions. In the mid-19th century there was a fashion for excursions in Poland whereby many coastal resorts were developed and brought opportunities like bathing in the sea. In Great Britain, resorts like Brighton developed very quickly while bath became a fashionable holiday destination especially for Londoners. There was a fast development

of attraction such as casinos in France, in the famous Mediterranean Riviera region while in Europe the areas for mountain hiking became well-known.

With the arrival of the 20th century, the developments of attractions were mainly on events such as the Olympic Games. The presence of paid public holiday allowances for employers led to a massive growth on interest in local attractions. It offers relaxation, comfort, adventure and entertainment.

Curiosity in exotic attraction arises in Africa and Europe such as safari parks. Weekend recreation centers provided cheap, swimming pools, sport facilities and accommodations. When such centers attracted countless tourists, it then became a tourist destination. After the Second World War in 1939, an enormous boom arises in tourist attractions. Most of the tourism investors, associations and governments sponsored tourist attractions. And this was accompanied by huge shopping malls and the preservation of historical heritage sites. The last 20 years of the 20th century brought extraordinary tourist attraction development.

2. 4 Theories of tourist motivation

According to Solomon (2004), motivation is best described as a driving force that makes us change and explains that it is a process that leads people to behave as they do, and it begins when a need arises and the customer wishes to satisfy it. Tourist motivation, therefore, can be defined as “ the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behavior and experience” (Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998). Additionally, according to Maslow (1943), the demands of a person do not have ending points but rather other needs and demands raises once the present demands have been satisfied.

According to Fodness (1994), most researchers who attempt to define tourist motivation typically develop a list of the reasons for travel. However, Dann (1981) disagrees with that, arguing a motive is distinct from a reason, quoting Brown's (1963) viewpoint. In Dann's opinion, a reason is a subset of motivation, a type of motive wherein necessary and logical means are taken to bring about a desired end. Even if the reasons given for travel and the benefits sought from the travel experience may represent basic travel motivations (Dann, 1981; Pearce and Caltabiano, 1983).

However, although the reasons that people give for their travel behaviour do not equate basic tourist motivations, they stand for some psychological functions (the needs) that serve (satisfies) for the individual (Fodness, 1997). Hence, it is still worthwhile to list of the reasons for travel developed by researchers...

Dann (1977) also put forward the concepts of "push" and "pull" factors, around which most discussion of tourist motivation have tended to solve. Tourists are motivated to visit a particular destination by the information that they receive and their own motivation "Push" them to visit a destination where their needs and wants can be satisfied (Leiper 1990). Conversely also stated that the "pull" factors are the information received and the resources which are provided at the destination.

John and Susan (2003) proposed six motives, (e. g. physical, emotional, personal, personal development, status and cultural motives).

Precisely, with physical motivation, people prefer to travel to destinations where there are activities which can satisfy their needs. As for emotional

motivation, individual might contribute in many activities that can satisfy their needs for pleasure of romance (e. g. night sightseeing on a boat). Persons who travel out of personal motivation might join in night clubs to meet and make new friends, (e. g. tourists bring tourist customer). People who travel for motives of personal development and cultural prefer activities that might increase their knowledge in general. With motivation for status, people are willing to participate in high class activities to please their need for being well-regarded.

2. 5 Destination attractiveness

Pearce (1979) defined destination attractiveness as the responsiveness to which the destination meet expectations of its visitors in terms of food and accommodation, natural beauty, cultural richness, recreational opportunities and other amenities. The more a destination is able to meet the needs of the tourists, the more it is perceived to be attractive and the more the destination is likely to be chosen.

Without tourism there would be no tourist attractions. Attraction is the ability of a destination to deliver individual benefits. Ferrario (1979) stated that it only happened when people are attracted towards a destination whereby the facilities and services follow. Attractiveness is the outline of impressions, ideas and beliefs about destinations based on information from various sources MacKay and Fesenmaier; (1997). In short, the greater the attraction power of a particular destination, the higher will be the number of tourists in terms of their stay and tourist receipts. There are some factors which cannot be categorized as attractions but which plays an important role in the

attractiveness of a destination such as infrastructure, exchange rate and political stability; Ferrario (1979).

A tourist preference appears to be more precise and is the ultimate decision in defining the level of attractiveness of a destination. Their perceptions about a given area control its success or failure as a tourist destination. Since perceptions are certainty in the traveler's mind, it does not matter how many tourism resources are accessible in a specific area when all its attractiveness has already been well-defined; Echtner and Ritchie, (1993); Leyele, (1996). However, the limitation of tourist preferences as attraction measures is that human observations are based on personal and cultural beliefs and are influenced by promotional actions and previous experiences Milman and Pizam; (1995). In addition, factor like bad weather may create a one-sided perception of a tourist destination.

2. 6 Culture and Heritage tourism

There are undoubtedly conflicting views that exist about what is heritage. Most researchers admit that heritage is linked to the past. Lowenthal (1985) stated that whether it is celebrated or rejected, attended to or ignored, the past is ever-present.

Many authors pointed out that it is an element of the past that a society wishes to keep (Fladmark 1998, Graham et al 2000, Hall and Mc Arthur 1998, Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996).