Influence of communication strategies on tourism extension of conservation areas: A case of University of Ibadan's zoological garden

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the wonderful possibilities to mankind. Presently the Nigeria's tourism industry remains largely underdeveloped for obvious reasons. Tourism extension through effective communication strategies could be useful in providing information, education and change in attitudes of the populace towards tourism programme. This study therefore aims at assessing the wildlife tourism potentials of the zoological garden, assessing the level of awareness of the populace towards tourism in the garden and evaluating the effectiveness of the communication strategies in place in the zoological garden. Reconnaissance survey was conducted round the zoological garden and the environs to assess its tourism potentials. Structured questionnaires were administered to 146 tourists randomly selected to assess the level of awareness towards tourism and to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy in place. Questionnaires were also administered to all the 29 staff of the garden selected through complete enumeration also to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy in place. Results were analysed through the use of simple percentages and Chi-Square. The garden was observed to possess some tourism potentials through the presence of notable wild animals and plants and also a tourism enhanced environment. The result shows that most of the respondents (87.67%) receive no regular information from the Zoo. Also as the result reveals that the television and radio broadcast are the major communication strategy in place, tourists' medium of awareness were largely (67.82%) through trends and relatives. The result of chi-square test revealed that there is no significant dependence ($P<0.05$) of medium of awareness on nature of job of tourists. The communication strategy on ground is grossly inadequate and ineffective in sensitizing the populace on the tourism potentials of the garden. An effective extension programme need be developed, which must include a team of qualified and trained staff.

Introduction

The zoological garden being an Institution or a place where wild animals and sometimes strange animals (both native and exotic species) are kept and exhibited in cages, paddocks, pits, houses, enclosures, aquaria, pavilion and aviary for public viewing and feeling. There is need to encourage our citizens to discover its world, its fascinating riches, its basic and profound inquires of nature. Brain et al (1996) described tourism as a big business which helps in this discovery. In wild life tourism, extension programmes are the vehicle in creating awareness and educating the populace of the manifold benefits of tourism. Chapman et al (1997) explained that dissemination of tourism programme is better done by the use of appropriate communication strategies that would reach the targets. Harris et al (1994) identified the oral methods of communication instructions, speeches, meetings, use of telephones, loudspeakers and even grape vive. Improved communication however may be one of the most vital factors in the proper use of limited resources to develop an effective programme of tourism extension. Caldecott (1996) explained that Development support communication could be used to describe th systematic planning of communicatio elements in programmes. He explained tha the procedures include group media, mas media, printed support materials, trainin materials, evaluation process, questionnaires interviews and observations.

Graham (1994) explained that tourism extension workers are meant to be missionaries transforming the quality of

people's lives and contributing to their development as human beings through education. Child (1997) stressed the importance of a good standard training to the staff members of tourists' resorts. In this context, he recognized three levels of training which are lower level training (for guards, guides, scouts, ranger), middle or intermediate level training (for wardens or technical personnel) and higher level training (for the highly skilled personnel or management officers, wildlife ecologists and research officers), which must be at regular intervals, timely and purposeful.

For the tourism benefits of Ibadan zoological garden to be realized, enjoyed and spread across its jurisdiction, a proper and adaptable communication strategy must be in place as a vehicle of change and understanding. Although several research work had been undergone on University of Ibadan, zoo, there has been non yet on tourism extension, hence this study is very needful.

Methodology

The zoological garden of University of Ibadan is located in the south eastern part of the university community. It covers an area of about 3.50km^2 with a vegetation of mostly trees with some grasses and flat terrain topography. Most of the cages have information on the animal classification, some with their local or common names and their habitat differentiation. Reconnaissance surveys were conducted to determine the wildlife tourism potentials of the zoological garden.

Structured questionnaires were prepared and administered to both tourists and members of staff. 146 tourists were selected through random sampling technique while all the 26 members of staff were selected by complete enumeration. The study through questionnaires also aimed at determining the awareness of the populace about the tourism potentials of the garden and evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication strategy in use at the garden. The analysis of result was done through use of simple percentages and some other basic statistical packages such as chi square.

Results

Assessment of tourism potentials of the garden

The categories of animals in University include cats, birds, primates, and herbivores as presented in Table 1,flora in appendix, while Facilities encouraging tourism potentials of the garden are hotels, Academic Institutions (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary) and socio-economic centers.

Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents (72.6%) receive information about the zoological garden through friends and relatives, while few, (12.3%, 8.2% and 4.1% receive information through the media of radio, television and dailies respectively. Very few (2.7%) however, receive information through the services of the extension workers.

Also the Chi-square tests is significant as the result reveals that the medium of awareness is dependent on the nature of job.

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (87.7%) do not normally receive any information from the zoological garden. This is in line with the result in Table 2 which revealed that majority (about 72%) of the respondents got to know about the zoo through friends and relatives.

Table 1: Fauna sampled and their abundance at zoological garden

Common Names	Scientific Names	Frequency	Percentages
Bush – tailed Porcupine	*Atherurus africanus*	6	6.3
Chimpanzee	*Pan troglodyles*	2	2.1
Mixed species of water Birds		9	9.5
Gazelle	*Gazelle thompson*	1	1.1
Geeze		2	2.1
Putty – nosed Monkey	*Cercopithecus nicstitans*	1	1.1
Drill monkey	*Mandrilluls Leucophaeus*	3	3.2
African Grey Parrot	*Psittacus erithacus*	2	2.1
Mona monkey	*Cercopithecus mona*	6	6.3
Lowland Gorilla	*Gorilla gorilla*	1	1.1
Patas Red monkey	*Cercopithecus patas*	3	3.2
Common Jackal	*Canis aureus*	4	4.2
Dwarf Crocodile	*Osteolaemus tefrapsis*	6	6.3
Tortoise		1	1.1
Lion	*Panthera leo*	3	3.2
Striped Hyaena	*Hyaena hyaena*	3	3.2
Ostrich	*Struthio Camelus*	2	2.1
Dorcas gazelle	*Gazella dorcas*	1	1.1
Baboons	*Papio anubis*	6	6.3
Elanel	Taurotragus derbianus	1	1.1
Red River Hog	*Potamochoenis porcus*	2	2.1
Pea fowls	*Pava cristatus*	4	4.2
Pigeon	*Columbia larvata*	4	4.2
Red – Eyed Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia semitkorquata*	1	1.1
Crown crane	*Balearica pavonina*	2	2.1
Camel	*Dromedrius camelus*	1	1.1
Indian Python	*Pythus jmolurs*	1	1.1
Royal Pythkon	*Pythus reguis*	2	2.1
African Pylthon	*Pythus sebae*	2	2.1
Gabon viper	*Bitis gobanica*	1	1.1
Soft shell River Turtle	*Trionyr triunguis*	4	4.2
Monitor lizard	*Veranus niloticus*	4	4.2
Spitting Cobra	*Naja nigricollis*	2	2.1
Black Cobra	*Naja melanolenca*	2	2.1

Table 2: Awareness medium and occupation

Occupation	Radio	Television	Dailies	Extension worker	Friends/ Relatives	Total
Civil Servants	4(2.74)	5(3.42)	3(2.05)	52(35.62)	67(45.89)	67(45.89)
Business Men	6(4.11)	4(2.74)	2(1.37)	1(0.68)	7(4.79)	20(13.70)
Students	5(3.43)	1(0.68)	1(0.68)	-	45(30.82)	52(35.62)
Applicants	3(2.05)	2(1.37)	-	-	2(1.37)	7(4.79)
Total	18(12.33)	12(8.22)	6(4.11)	4(2.74)	106(72.60)	146(100)

N = 146
( ) – Percentage

Table 3: Rate of information reception at the University zoological garden

Rate of Information	Frequency	(N – 146) Percentage
Weekly	7	4.78
Monthly	9	6.43
Yearly	2	1.37
None at all	128	87.67
Total	146	100

Table 4 reveals that about 93 percent of the staff of Ibadan Zoological garden agreed to Television and Radio Broadcast as the major communication strategy in place. Very few (about 7 percent) agreed to use regular publications. The indication is that the media of Television and Radio Broadcast are ineffective in getting the populace aware of the tourism potentials of the Zoo as Table 2 reveals that only about 12 percent and 8 percent receive information through the Radio and Television respectively.

Table 4: Communication strategies at University of Ibadan's zoological garden

Type of communication strategy	Frequency	Percentage
News bulletin	-	-
Regular publication	2	6.90
Magazines	-	-
Hand bills	-	
Television/radio broadcast	27	93.10
Total	29	100

N = 29

Conclusion and recommendations

The assessment of both the flora and fauna in the University of Ibadan 200 infers that the garden has tourism potentials. Also the academic institutions, socio-economic centers, the human population and the hotels in the environment of the zoological garden have boasted its tourism potentials.

The study also revealed that a very poor communication strategy is in place, grossly inadequate and highly ineffective, which has reduced its import in being a vehicle to sensitizing the populace to the tourism

potentials of the garden. Therefore it is imperative that a good, implementable tourism extension programme must be incorporated into the Zoological garden Management Plan. In doing this the management might have to identify local problems, establish priorities and determine appropriate actions to reach set out goals. Also management must also identify its target audience and must be adequately catered for. Employment of tourism extension workers, who will promote the garden and eventually train other members in extension education.

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Appendix
Scientific names of flora common in the zoological garden

Common flora

Eucalyptus Canaldulensis

Terminalia Catalpa

Elaeis guineensis

Musa Sapientum

Bambusa vulgaria

Cassia siamea

Hura crepitans

Azadiractile Indica

Mangiteria Indica

Dominant grass and weed species

Andropogium tectorium

Tridax procumbens