

Contemporary Trends and Issues in The Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary trends and issues in the hospitality and tourism industry often generate opportunities and challenges. The hospitality and tourism environments are constantly changing. Customers' needs and preferences dictate consumption and business success in the service-driven and experiential industry. This review paper explores contemporary trends and issues in Hospitality and Tourism. The review adopted a qualitative approach with a focus on the collection of secondary data and subsequent thematic analysis. The paper looks at hospitality and tourism products, services, experiences, markets and environments. It also reviews the existing opportunities and challenges in the industry. The paper lastly recommends that hospitality and tourism firms understand, embrace and take advantage of modern trends and opportunities that emerge in the environment. They should also devise strategies for managing inherent challenges in the industry.

Key Words: Contemporary, Trends, Issues, Hospitality, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry is highly competitive. The industry is often monopolistic with many firms offering similar products and competing for the customers that are available. The unique characteristics of the industry such as intangibility, perishability, variability, inseparability (Kotler et al. 2021), costly and labour-intensive further complicate operations. Hospitality and tourism services and experiences cannot be enjoyed before consumption. They also cannot be stored for later use. They tend to vary with the service provider. They largely depend on the service provider making the provider and delivery inseparable. It is expensive to run hospitality and tourism facilities due to high fixed and variable costs. The industry further requires many employees who hold different positions.

Hospitality and tourism stakeholders need to understand the business environment if they are to succeed. The industry is exposed to trends and challenges that emerge from internal and external environments. This review paper investigates contemporary trends and issues in the hospitality and tourism industry. Its objectives are twofold;

1. To investigate contemporary trends in the hospitality and tourism industry
2. To explore contemporary issues in the hospitality and tourism industry

Literature Review

Authors like Ballantyne, Packer and Axelsen (2009) have previously looked at trends in tourism research. According to Rosing et al, (2015), a trend is defined as “a general direction in which something is developing or changing. Trends involve looking at the statistical analysis of historical data over a selected time frame and charting the progression”. Trends are therefore patterns that emerge and are observed in either the market or industry. They are often linked to new markets, products, opportunities and challenges. They may call for a change of strategies and tactics. Examples of hospitality and tourism trends are

demographic shifts, emerging markets, digitization and changes in information technology (IT) (Kapiki, 2012). Nonetheless, trends are constantly changing thus calling for continuous research.

Other authors such as Fonseca (2012) and Hole, Khedkar and Pawar (2019) have studied issues in tourism. Issues are challenges that arise in the industry. Issues make the management of hospitality and tourism facilities difficult or impossible. Issues range from disasters to wildlife poaching, seasonality of tourism, insecurity and poor infrastructure. Changing economics, technology, sustainability, competition, safety and security standards are challenges facing hotels (Nain, 2018). Issues call for the continuous development of strategies and tactics to mitigate negatives impacts.

METHODOLOGY

This review paper adopted a qualitative approach by exploring secondary data from journal articles, books, newspapers and online resources when analyzing the contemporary trends and issues in the hospitality and tourism industry. Thematic analysis was then used to present the results and themes that emerged from the data. Thematic analysis explores themes that are generated during data analysis (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary trends in the hospitality and tourism industry

Table 1 shows the contemporary trends in hospitality and tourism. The trends include popular tourist destinations, attractions and source markets, development of niche tourism products, concern for security, value of ISO certification, greening and growth in international travel.

Table 1: Contemporary trends in hospitality and tourism

1) Popular tourist destinations	2) Growth of the middle class
3) Popular tourist attractions	4) Increase in travel for academic reasons
5) Popular tourism source markets	6) Uptake of business roles among women
7) Development of niche tourism products	8) Changing preferences of consumers
9) Growth in international travel	10) Concern for healthy eating
11) Growth of medical tourism	12) Concern for health and safety
13) Growth in wellness tourism	14) Concern for security
15) Growth of domestic and regional tourism	16) Increased personalization
17) Growth of cruise tourism	18) Growing importance of value co-creation
19) Growth of events industry	20) Catering to customers with disabilities
21) Catered business travel	22) Building a culture of Quality and Total Quality
23) Ageing of the population	24) Value of ISO certification
25) Growth of the youth and young populations	26) Uptake of societal marketing
27) Desire for entertainment	28) Encouraging sustainable businesses
29) Embracing corporate social responsibility	30) Embracing green businesses
31) Growth in family outings	32) Customer centric businesses
33) Modern legal frameworks and laws	34) Changing Information Technology (IT)
35) Increased competition	36) Impact of globalization
37) Increased substitution of products	38) Embracing public relations
39) Increased insecurity	40) Focus on memorable experiences
41) Importance of value co-creation	42) Popularity of digital marketing

Popular tourist destinations

Popular tourist destinations include Dubai, Mexico, India, China, Tanzania and Kenya. These destinations offer a range of attractions that draw local, domestic, regional and international tourists. For instance, Dubai is popular for medical, business, adventure, sightseeing, leisure and shopping driven travel (Yas et al, 2020). Mexico normally attracts travellers who seek climate, geography, infrastructure, entertainment, culture, history, festivals, food, shopping and nightlife (Regalado-Pezúa et al., 2022). Popular attractions in China include sports, cultural, holiday and internet tourism (Zhao and Liu, 2020). India's main attractions are music, dances, festivals, weather, ecology, flora, fauna (Prabandhan, 2022) and medicine. Tanzania has attractions like adventure, tours, wildlife, beaches and culture (Malleo and Mtengwa, 2018) that are similar to Kenya's attractions.

Popular tourist attractions

Popular tourist attractions include the Wonders of the world such as the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt (Gupta, 2020), Great wall of China in China, The Taj Mahal in India, Christ the Redeemer statue in Brazil, Machu picchu in Peru and the Maasai Mara and Wildebeest migration in East Africa. The wonders of the world offer a range of cultural, historical, religious and wildlife attractions.

Popular tourist source markets

Popular tourist source markets include Brazil, Russia, India, China, United States of America (USA), France, Italy and United Kingdom (UK). Most popular tourism source markets like Brazil, Russia, USA, France, Italy and UK are developed countries with great tourism spending powers. Countries such as India and China also have large human populations that constitute the outbound tourism market. For example, China is a major tourist source market and destination (Wee, 2017). China also has a great economy and improved living standards that increase tourism spending power (Zhao and Liu, 2020) coupled with technological advancement and global development strategies that have increased its outbound tourist numbers (Liu and Cheng, 2021).

Development of niche tourism products

Niche tourism products are tourism products that can give competitive advantages by targeting specific groups of tourists (Wahab and Shamal, 2022). Niche products include wellness tourism, health tourism, gastro tourism, wine tourism, conference tourism, events, space tourism, dark tourism, war tourism, family entertainment and sports tourism. Niche experiences facilitate specialization in production and marketing thus achieving excellent firm performance.

Growth of wellness tourism

Wellness tourism focuses on wellness. Tourists visit hospitality and tourism facilities for wellness. Wellness tourism has dimensions like "health of body, mind and spirit, self-sufficiency, physical strength, esthetics, healthy nutrition, relaxation, meditation, mental activity, education, environmental awareness and sensitivity to social relationships" Smith and Puczko (2014) as quoted by Dini and Pencarelli (2021). Dini and Pencarelli (2021) add that wellness tourism includes hot springs, spas, medical tourism, natural environment, culture, gastronomy, spirituality, care of body and mind, sports and events. Wellness tourism therefore focuses on diet, healthy menus, healthy cooking methods, portion control, gyms and exercise facilities, consumer education, relaxation, meditation, fitness, beauty and spas. In response to growing demand, hospitality and tourism facilities have developed spas, saunas, healthy restaurants, gyms, yoga and meditation rooms.

Growth of health tourism

Health tourism is travel to improve one's health. Health tourism is driven by globalization, rise in health expenditure, global travel, reduced health costs, ICT and internet (Aydin and Karamehmet, 2017). There is concern for healthy eating as customers address health issues like cholesterol, calories intake, diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. Hospitality and tourism facilities are therefore offering healthy menus, portion control, customer education, healthy food and beverage production practices, gyms and fitness facilities to cater to the health tourist.

Growth of gastro tourism

People travel for food. Gastronomic tourism, also called culinary tourism or gourmet tourism, seeks culinary experiences involving Gourmet travellers (Gheorghe, Tudorache and Nistoreanu, 2014). "Food related gastrotourism refers to the pursuit of appealing, authentic, memorable culinary experiences of all kinds, while traveling internationally, regionally or even locally...where food is the focus and motivation for the travel" (Williams, Jr Williams and Omar, 2013). Gastro tourism is therefore travel to food attractions. It involves visiting destinations to sample and experience cuisine and foods of the region.

Growth of wine tourism

Tourists travel for wine. Wine tourism targets tourists interested in wine involving visits to wineries in order to taste wine and experience area where wine is grown and produced (Gu, King and Huang, 2019). Motivators for wine tourism include rest, relaxation, tasting, education, outing, socialization, eating, drinking, entertainment, touring, purchase, event, history, culture, talks and outdoor relaxation (Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, Debbage and Sonmez, 2016). Popular wine tourism destinations include the wine growing regions of France, Spain, Italy, South Africa, Germany and Portugal like Champagne, Bordeaux, Loire, Alsace, Burgundy, Duoro valley Beira, Minho, Tejo, Lombardy and Veneto.

Uptake of space tourism

Space has been attracting tourists lately. Space tourism is travel to space (Cole, 2015) for leisure, business or research (Yazici and Tiwari (2021). Elon Musk, one of the richest men in the world in the year 2023, has promoted space tourism in the 21st century by facilitating commercial and private travel to space. Popular space travel destinations include the orbit and international space station (ISS).

Embracing dark tourism

Dark tourism involves travel to destinations linked to death, wars, genocides and massacres. Smith (2002) claimed that death and disaster can be tourism attractions. The motivation for dark tourism include strong curiosity about death and disaster thus yielding mental, physical and educational experiences (Chang, 2014). Dark and war tourism destinations could include Ukraine, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda.

Desire for entertainment and growth in family outings

Entertainment and family outings include family vacations and visits to popular entertainment spots like hotels and theme parks. Family entertainment is an element of Family tourism and Entertainment tourism. Family tourism is tourism that involves family members (Schanzel and Yeoman, 2015) while entertainment tourism is travel to entertainment attractions like gaming destinations (Luo and Lam, 2017).

Uptake of sports tourism

Sports events such as football, world cup, superbowl, basketball and the olympics have become popular attractions among sports enthusiasts. “Sport tourism is all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or commercial reasons and necessitating travel away from home. Sport tourism simply identify tourism activities involving sports. It is a simple combination of both sports and tourism” (Gozalova, Schikanou, Vernigor and Bagdasarian, 2014). Sports tourism attracts people of all ages ranging from the young to the old. It could be local, domestic, national, regional or international. It could also be physical, digital or virtual via popular electronic and online media.

Growth in international travel

People travel internationally for reasons such as business, leisure, medical, education, sports, religion, health and adventure. There has been an increase in the number of international tourist arrivals from traditional source markets like Britain and Italy and emerging markets like China and India (Sofronov, 2018). Growth in transport infrastructure including air, rail and water through cruises has continued stimulating the growth in international travel.

Growth of medical tourism

Medical tourism is related to health tourism. Medical tourism is travel for healthcare (Ghanbari, Moradlu and Ramazani, 2014). People travel widely and internationally to seek treatment for illnesses. Even so, efforts should be made to integrate culture, heritage and recreation in medical tourism. Countries such as India are popular medical tourism destinations.

Growth of cruise tourism

Cruise tourism has grown as a tourism activity. Cruise tourism includes casinos, short excursions, port lectures, shopping, spas, sea, sports, fishing, leisure, accommodation, entertainment and vacation (Brida and Zapata, 2009). Cruise tourism is a form of luxury tourism with economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Brida and Aguirre, 2010). According to Wee (2017) cruise holidays have grown due to better and larger vessels being developed, development in cruise ship infrastructure like ports and the growing interest in cruising.

Growth of domestic and regional tourism

Domestic travel involves local travel while regional travel covers countries, regions and economic blocs. Domestic travel is travel within countries while regional travel is travel within groups of countries and continents. Domestic and regional travel have stimulated domestic and regional tourism. Domestic and regional travel could be for business, leisure, adventure, religion, sports, events, health etc. Hole et al. (2019) noted that there has been increase in domestic tourism in India in line with the growth in the aviation industry. This trend has been witnessed globally affecting regional tourism as well.

Growth in the event industry

There has been an increase in the nature and number of events in the hospitality and tourism industry. Oklobdžija and Blace (2015) give The Accepted Practices Exchange Industry Glossary of TERMS (APEX, 2005) definition of an event as, “An organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner, etc. An event is often composed of several different yet related functions”. Events in

hospitality and tourism range from weddings, business meetings, celebration dinners, fundraisers and sports. Pabilando, Pitao and Bacason (2022) list events to include concerts, conventions, parties and weddings. There has been growth in conferences, meetings and conventions occasioned by the rise in the number of local and international conferences, seminars, workshops and conventions. Events have moreover spurred demand for outside catering.

Catered business travel

Business tourism involves people travelling for purposes that are related to their work. As such it represents one of the oldest forms of tourism, man having travelled for this purpose of trade since very early times (Davidson, 1994, as cited by John and Susan, 2001). It is normal for businesses to cater for business travel among its employees by paying for expenses like accommodation, entertainment, food and transport. This trend has stimulated the development of business hotels and facilities that focus on the business traveller by providing meeting rooms, conference halls, business centers, photocopying, printing and internet services.

Demographic changes

Demographic changes include ageing of the populations and growth of the youth and young populations. “The major demographic trends are the slowing of population and household growth, the aging of the population, and an increasing fragmentation of consumer markets, rising educational level, a more colourful society due to migration, a changing role of women in society” (Nedelea, 2008).

A large percentage of the world population is growing older. Ageing of the population has created the senior tourist (Batista-Sanchez, 2020). It has also spurred demand for healthy menus, special meals for the elderly and leisure travel. The senior tourists travel a lot because they have the time and are well off with pensions and other retirement benefits to spend and enjoy.

Growth of the youth and young populations is a demographic trend in hospitality and tourism. The young and youth make up the youth tourist. Youth tourism involves people aged between 15 and 29 years (Cakar and Seyitoglu, 2016). Growth of the young and youth populations have led to high consumption of junk food, rise in adventure and education tourism, increase in use of information technology in hospitality transactions and growth of the techno savvy population.

The middle class form the middle-class tourist. Growth of the middle class has improved the hospitality and tourism spending power from the class. The middle class also has disposable time while some own assets (Yunyao, Xiaotong and Rui, 2016). The middle-class travel motivations include leisure, adventure, business, religion, health and education. Gao et al., (2022) found that the young middle outbound tourist in China sought relaxation, pleasure and culture.

Education can be a motivation for travel. People cross boundaries to pursue learning in foreign institutions. Touring, employment, skills and knowledge acquisition are some motivators for travel among education tourists (Tomasi et al, 2020). Travel for education has therefore created education tourists. Popular education tourism destinations include UK, USA, Canada, India and Australia.

Women are increasingly travelling for reasons such as leisure, business, education, health, wellness, sports, adventure, culture and religion. Most women are either traveling solo (Hamid et al, 2021) or in groups. Uptake of business roles among women has also led to the development of hospitality and tourism facilities such as hotels, restaurants, clubs and bars with amenities that specifically cater to the woman traveller.

Changing preferences of hospitality and tourism consumers

Customers’ needs and demands are constantly changing. The changes may be due to crises such as covid-19

(Tarakci et al, 2021), demographic shifts, new generations, ageing, innovative products, technology, globalization, emerging markets and competition. New preferences among hospitality and tourism consumers include healthy eating, growing health concerns when dining out, demand for healthy menus, safety, security, personalized services, quality, value and variety. Changing preferences call for the development of products and experiences such as organic restaurants, green businesses, safe premises, quality products, value for money and product diversity.

Concern for health and safety

Health and safety ranges from food to premise safety. Health and safety have always been important in the hospitality and tourism industry (Breda and Costa, 2005). Concern for safe food and food poisoning have led to the adoption of the ISO 22000 food safety system, hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) and healthy menus. The food management systems enhance safety throughout the production and preparation process from planting to production, customer service and consumption. Hospitality and tourism facilities are also vulnerable to disease outbreaks, pandemics and epidemics like cholera, typhoid, salmonella and covid-19. The facilities are moreover prone to accidents such as falls, drowning and burns among employees and customers. These diseases and accidents can accrue costs such as deaths, injuries, treatment, absenteeism, negative reputation and lawsuits.

Increased personalization

Increased personalization has created the need to customize and tailor make services, products and experiences to individual preferences and tastes. Customization generates customer satisfaction, employee motivation, purchase, spending, positive word of mouth and loyalty. Hospitality and tourism products including rooms, destinations, food, entertainment, events, occasions and environments are nowadays being customized to specific customers' wishes. Information technology has facilitated service personalization (Gana, 2018) since customers can give precise instructions over the internet and digital platforms thus developing and customizing products online.

Growing importance of value co-creation

Value co-creation is the co-creation of value through personalized interactions that are meaningful and sensitive to specific consumers. Tourists' interactions with the organization and each other contribute to the co-creation of value (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital and Gouthro, 2014). Value co-creation actively involves the customer and use of IT and virtual platforms in co-creating experiences and meeting customers' needs while achieving firm objectives.

Catering to customers with disabilities

Hospitality and tourism facilities have learnt to address the needs of customers with disabilities. Catering to customers with disabilities has led to accessible tourism (Reindrawati, Noviyanti and Young, 2022). It has had an impact on hospitality and tourism infrastructures, employee training and service delivery. Hospitality and tourism firms have developed special facilities and infrastructure such as elevators and stairs for customers with disabilities. They have trained employees on service delivery and instituted processes and systems that facilitate service to customers with disabilities. Catering to customers with disabilities is also an element of corporate social responsibility.

Building a culture of Quality and Total Quality Management

Quality is meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Puri and Singh, 2018). Total quality on the other hand integrates people, product, services, processes and environment in meeting and exceeding customers'

expectations. Quality enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is a source of competitive advantages and profitability. However, firms are striving to manage the costs of quality and measure quality. Quality has costs like warranties, training, samples and maintenance. It is also dynamic thus making it difficult to measure.

Value of ISO certification

Modern firms have made International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certifications business priorities. The ISO certificates are a sign of quality and compliance with set regulations. Important ISO certifications in hospitality and tourism include the ISO 22000 Food safety system that enhances food safety, ISO 14000 Environmental management that addresses the environment, ISO 27001 Information security for enhancing information safety, ISO 50001 Energy management for reducing energy wastage, ISO 37001 Anti-bribery management system for mitigating bribery, ISO 26000 Social responsibility for social responsible businesses, ISO 31000 Risk management for reducing risks, ISO 20121 Sustainable events for running sustainable events, ISO 9000 Quality management for quality assurance and ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety for workplace health and safety (ISO, 2023). ISO certification enhances business reputation, instills consumer confidence, generates trust, institutes compliance and establishes high standards.

Uptake of societal marketing and corporate social responsibility initiatives

Societal marketing promotes the needs and wants of customers while addressing societal concerns (Truong and Hall, 2013). It involves embracing corporate social responsibility including employee responsibility, environmental management, energy management, community involvement, ethical business, vision and values. Hospitality and tourism firms embrace corporate social responsibility through initiatives like taking care of employee welfare, environment conservation, reducing energy wastage, community development, sponsorship, addressing stakeholders' needs and ethical businesses.

Encouraging sustainable hospitality and tourism businesses

Sustainability addresses the availability of scarce resources in future. Sustainability could be environmental, economic and social. Patino, Medina and Arilla (2016) believed that sustainability is important in modern tourism and should reflect economic, environmental and social dimensions. The sustainability concept led to the development of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Hospitality and tourism facilities can moreover contribute towards achievement of the sustainable development goals of no poverty, quality education, decent work and economic growth, good health and wellbeing, affordable and clean energy, clean water and sanitation and climate action. The firms can offer employment, educate stakeholders, sustain livelihoods, conserve energy, protect the environment and mitigate climate change.

Embracing green businesses

Greening is about Going Green. Greening embraces environmentally friendly practices. Greening in hospitality and tourism means showing concern for the environment, building green hotels, green restaurants, green infrastructure, green team of staff, green practices, reducing, reusing, recycling, pollution control, water and energy conservation, recycling of waste and provision of local menus. Furqan, Som and Hussin (2010) explain that green tourism integrates environmentally friendly tourism with focus on products that do no harm to the environment while enhancing environmental, economic, cultural and experiential richness. Green tourists are people whose primary motivation for travel is environmental friendly experiences.

Building customer centric businesses

Hospitality and tourism businesses should be customer centric. Customer centricism is focus on the customer (Niininen, Buhalis and March, 2007). Popular sayings are that “The Customer is the king” and “The customer is always right”. Debate still ranges on whether the two statements are true and accurate. The customer may be the ultimate consumer but not always right. Customers can make mistakes like excessive drinking and fighting with employees thus costing the business.

Changing Information Technology (IT)

Information technology, information and communication technology and the internet have greatly affected the hospitality and tourism industry (Jadhav, Shivaji and Mundhe, 2012). The internet has affected bookings and sales e.g. bookings.com. There is also emphasis on smart technologies e.g. smart phones, smart guest rooms, motion sensor facilities; online social networks e.g. trip advisor; online distributors, online customer experiences, online transactions, customer relationship management, mobile phone payments, digital menu order taking and video conferencing. In addition, Apps have made tourism enjoyable and accessible and artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality, augmented reality, robotics and chatbots have become popular benefiting tourists, organizations and industries thus enhancing smart tourism with a digital future (Sugasri and Selvam, 2018).

Impact of globalization

The world is now a global village. Patino, Medina and Arilla (2016) felt that globalization has changed the face of tourism. There are modern technologies in production and service including advanced communication technology. There is also global competition, markets, products, multi-culturalism at the work place and environmental concerns like global warming and travel.

Modern legal frameworks and laws governing the industry

The hospitality and tourism industry has not been spared by legal frameworks (Korze, 2018). Laws affecting the hospitality and tourism industry include the betting tax, liquor laws and licensing, banning of plastic bags, banning of shisha, minimum wage laws and pollution control. Restrictions, laws and fines have therefore been imposed on gambling, sale, distribution, promotion, marketing and production of alcoholic beverages, packaging materials, smoking, shisha, minimum wages and environmental protection.

Increased competition

There is a lot of international, regional, national, domestic and local competition. The hospitality and tourism industry has always been competitive (Vodeb, 2012). Continents, countries, cities, towns and regions are competing for tourists. There are also alliances, mergers, acquisitions, business closures, substitutions and new entrants in efforts to ensure business survival.

Increased substitution of the hospitality and tourism products

Substitution means the availability of alternatives. Hospitality and tourism substitution could affect destinations, products, services and experiences (Van der veen, 2015). For example, convention centres versus tented camps with conference facilities, delis versus traditional restaurants and hotels versus tented camps. Substitution increases competition between firms while expanding the customers' choices.

Increased insecurity

Insecurity has always been a challenge in the hospitality and tourism industry. Insecurity arises due to threats like terrorism, fraud, robbery, disease outbreaks e.g. ebola, covid-19, political unrests and cyber-crime (Hamarnah and Ježábek, 2018). Terrorists have previously attacked hospitality and tourism facilities and destinations. Some tourists have also been victims of fraud and robbery while traveling. The year 2019 also saw the emergence and spread of the corona virus (covid-19) that became a pandemic and threat to the global hospitality and tourism industry. Wars, general elections and civil unrests have been threats to tourists as well. Information technology and the internet have created security challenges such as online fraud, hacking, theft and illegal use of tourists' data and information.

Popularity of digital marketing

Digital marketing uses electronic platforms for communicating, promoting and marketing to hospitality and tourism consumers. Most hospitality and tourism firms have been forced to adopt digital media and tools including internet marketing, search engine optimization, electronic bill boards and displays, website marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing, content marketing, video marketing, viral marketing, online PR and branding and affiliate marketing (Kariru, 2022). Social media tools such as twitter, facebook/meta, whatsapp, Linked In, instagram and tiktok have become popular for communication, advertising, marketing and entertainment among hospitality and tourism businesses. Almost all businesses nowadays maintain online presences through websites and search engine optimization. The mobile phone has also become an important tool for communication, marketing and financial transactions.

Embracing public relations

Internal public relations (PR) involves internal customers or employees while external public relations deals with external stakeholders and publics like the media, suppliers, potential employees, communities, customers and government (Petrovici, 2014). Internal PR can be embraced through work-life balance, tele-commuting, flexi work-plans and schedules, diversity and unionization. Hospitality and tourism firms can embrace external public relations through media outreach, ethical businesses and CSR-environmental, community, employee and market place.

Focus on memorable experiences

Memorable experiences are unforgettable experiences. Hospitality and tourism consumers nowadays demand experiences. There is therefore shift of focus from delivering products and services to creating memorable experiences (Hosany, Sthapih and Bjork, 2022). The experiences should be personalized (Nain, 2018). The memorable experiences can be created via themes like favourable atmosphere, services, value, destination, quality, communication and products thus influencing emotions and generating loyalty.

Contemporary Issues in Hospitality and Tourism

Contemporary issues and challenges in hospitality and tourism include seasonality of tourism, travel advisories, poaching of wildlife, sex tourism, child sex tourism, limited diversification of tourism, economic recessions, stagnations and booms, natural disasters like tsunamis, forest fires and floods in national parks, politics, crises, insecurity, negative perceptions of the industries, negative impacts of tourism, drugs, immorality, climate change, inaccessibility of destinations and poor infrastructure. According to Hole et al. (2019), India faces challenges like “financial issues, global uncertainty, branding issues, human resources, financial viability, customer issues, operating cost creep, supply, safety and security”.

Table 2 highlights contemporary issues in hospitality and tourism including the seasonality of tourism, travel advisories, natural disasters, poaching of wildlife, drugs, immorality and crises.

Table 2: Contemporary issues in hospitality and tourism

1) Seasonality of tourism	2) Travel advisories
3) Natural disasters	4) Poaching of wildlife
5) Insecurity	6) Crises
7) Drugs	8) Negative perceptions of the industry
9) Climate change	10) Immorality
11) Poor infrastructure	12) Inaccessibility of destinations
13) Child sex tourism	14) Sex tourism
15) Economic recessions and stagnations	16) Limited diversification of tourism

Tourism seasonality

Destinations have in the past experienced seasonality. Tourism seasonality refers to the “fluctuations of demand or supply in the tourism industry, caused by temporary movement of people due to factors such as climate conditions and public and school holidays” (Corluka, 2019). Governments have attempted to manage seasonality by adjusting prices during the off-peak season, diversifying tourism and developing new tourism products that attract tourists throughout the year.

Travel advisories

Most countries in the world have been affected by travel advisories. Travel advisories are restrictions on travel given by countries to protect their citizens from real or imaginary threats like terrorism attacks, disease outbreaks and wars (Babey, 2019). Travel advisories restrict travel thus reducing hospitality and tourism activities and earnings.

Limited tourism diversification

The hospitality and tourism industry has been known for lack of tourism diversification. Diversification refers to the expansion of a product or a sector into a new market rather than specializing in a single-product (Weidenfeld, 2018). For example, countries with coastal regions are known to focus on beach tourism paying less attention to other tourism activities like agri tourism. Tourism diversification increases tourism products thus increasing tourist numbers and spending. However, limited diversification reduces tourist numbers and spendings.

Economic crises

Economic crises include recessions, stagnations and inflation. Economic crises like downturns and recessions can affect the hospitality and tourism industry (Kapiki, 2012). Downturns and recessions reduce disposable income among the traveling publics thus reducing hospitality and tourism spending and consumption. Inflation also makes tourism products expensive and unaffordable.

Natural disasters

Natural disasters are harmful events occurring in nature that are often beyond human control. Natural disasters affecting the hospitality and tourism industry include cyclones, diseases, hurricanes, flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and bushfires (Praveen and Rajesh, 2021). Natural disasters

destroy hospitality and tourism properties and cost lives while instilling fear of travel to affected destinations.

Political events

Political events include terrorism, wars, civil wars, civil unrests, travel advisories and general elections. Elections and wars tend to affect hospitality and tourism activities (Kimani, 2021). Elections, unrests and wars deter tourists from travelling and visiting affected destinations due to fear and insecurity thus reducing hospitality and tourism spending.

Crises

The hospitality and tourism industries have been exposed to many crises. A crisis is a “low probability, high impact event that threatens the viability of the hotel and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effects and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly” (Karam, 2018). Common crises in hospitality and tourism include natural crises like earthquakes and floods, environmental crises like oil leakages, geopolitical crises like terrorism attacks, political disturbances or wars, social crimes or road accidents and epidemic diseases.

Insecurity

Insecurity is a major challenge in the hospitality and tourism industry. Insecurity in hospitality and tourism could be in the form of crime, fraud, terrorism, war, and corruption (Hamarneh and Jeřábek (2018). Robberies, hijackings, human trafficking, drugs, online fraud, corruption and bribery are crimes that pose threat to the industry. Terrorism has previously shifted tourism patterns (Wee, 2017) by drawing tourists away from affected destinations.

Poaching

Poaching has been rampant in the tourism industry. Poaching is the killing of wildlife like elephants and rhinos for products like hide and horns which are then sold (Lucas, 2022). Poaching has led to decline and extinction of some wildlife thus reducing tourism activities in affected regions.

Sex tourism and child sex tourism

Sex and child sex tourism are immoralities in hospitality and tourism. Sexual tourism involves traveling for sex (Blackburn et al., 2011) while child sex tourism involves tourists indulging children in sexual activities (Bah, 2021). Sexual tourism goes against moral standards and has been linked to the erosion of morals, spread of diseases such as AIDS and death.

Negative impacts of tourism

Hospitality and tourism have both negative and positive impacts on destinations, societies and countries. These impacts could be socio-cultural, environmental and/or economical (Ferreira, Castro and Gomes, 2021). The negative impacts of tourism destroy destinations, attractions, societies, communities, economies, environments and cultures. Some negative impacts of tourism are the erosion of traditional values, commoditization of the tourism product, immorality, drugs, pollution, destruction of destinations, economic leakage and unequal development of tourism.

Negative characteristics of the hospitality and tourism industry

The hospitality and tourism industry has negative and positive characteristics that act as issues. The industry

is known to experience job insecurity, monotony, low pay, unsocial working hours and lack of work-life balance. For example, job insecurity, which has always been an issue due to seasonality in the industry, was apparent during the covid-19 pandemic, when some employees were laid off and fired (Karatepe et al, 2022). The jobs entail performing similar tasks daily. The pay especially for operatives is considered somewhat low leading to heavy reliance on tipping and service charges. Employees are often forced to work late into the night and during weekends and public holidays. Most women in the industry also find it hard to balance family and work. These features often discourage students and employees from joining the industry and pursuing hospitality and tourism courses in colleges and universities.

Drugs

Drugs are a menace in hospitality and tourism. Drugs in tourism have led to the coining of the term “drug tourism”. “Drug tourism could be seen as the journeys undertaken with the purpose of obtaining or using drugs, which are not available or are illegal in the tourist origin places” (Pareira and Paula, 2016). Drugs in hospitality and tourism are linked to crime, immorality, illnesses and death.

Climate change

Climate change is a major issue in the hospitality and tourism industry. Climate change leads to temperature rises thus directly and indirectly affecting hospitality and tourism through the erosion of natural attractions and extreme weather events such as floods (Siddiqui and Imran, 2018). Erosion of natural attractions destroys destinations, products and experiences while extreme weather events deter travel to affected areas.

Inaccessible destinations and poor infrastructure

Some tourist destinations and attractions have become inaccessible due to poor infrastructure like roads and bridges. Inaccessibility has always been a challenge for hospitality and tourism development (Toth and David, 2010). Remote areas like national parks, game reserves and beaches are often inaccessible due to poor roads and bridges especially during harsh weather like the rainy season when the regions flood.

CONCLUSION

The hospitality and tourism industry experiences many trends and challenges which act as opportunities and threats. These trends and challenges are manageable with proper training, innovations, plans and policies. It is up to hospitality and tourism stakeholders to understand the micro and macro environmental forces that impact their organizations. Hospitality and tourism stakeholders should take advantage of the opportunities that exist and mitigate the issues. The stakeholders and academia should therefore work together to make policy changes that contribute to business performance and sustainable tourism development.

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