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Entertainment of leisure tourists in island destinations: evidence from the island of Mauritius

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Abstract

The entertainment activities of leisure tourists constitute a significant component of tourism experience. Their analysis is important since it allows tourism marketers to acquire insights and better understanding on tourists' experience and satisfaction. The paper's aim is to examine the evolving nature, roles and forms of entertainment activities of leisure tourists in an island destination, namely Mauritius. The study adopted a mixed research methodology employing the technique of semi-structured interview targeted to tourists, entertainment providers and government officers. Results indicate that tourism entertainment has evolved in form and context; it is one of the main determining factors for leisure tourists in their decision-making; (iii) water-based activities are prevailing in their choice; and (iv) it is possible to identify the most promising forms of entertainment. The article is completed by suggesting a database for the various forms and types of entertainment for leisure tourists and proposing its applicability to similar destinations.

Key words: Leisure tourism, Entertainment activities, Island destination, Database, Mauritius.

Source: http://www.amazingmauritius.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Halaveli-beach Mauritius-couple.jpg

Introduction

Entertainment activities and opportunities is one of the component elements of a tourism destination offering. It is also one of the main factors determining the attractiveness and appeal of destinations and contributing to the satisfaction of visitors. Literature suggests that tourists are more willing to spend on entertainment today (Loi, 2009; Wolf, 1999; Bosshart & Macconi, 1998). Loi (2009) indicates that events not only offer entertainment opportunities to tourists but also constitute business platforms for many related industries as well as local communities; for instance, the Bollywood Film Fair Award 2010 held in Mauritius. In the tourism field, from the consumer's perspective, it is estimated that entertainment activities constitute a significant element of the tourism experience providing a series of potential benefits, i.e. improvement of destination attractiveness, business opportunities for local business, enhancing destination competitiveness, and tourists' loyalty. At this regard, a study conducted by Nallathiga (2006) highlights the importance of entertainment for tourists visiting Mumbai, India. This study suggests that "entertainment will not only become an important source for attracting tourists on short term, but will also be more useful in retaining them for longer period" (Nallathiga, 2006: 4). In fact, most tourists do look for entertainment opportunities offered during the decision-making phase (Tenner, 1997; Pearce, 2008). Hence, entertainment is regarded as an important motivator while making holiday decision (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001; Pearce, 2008; Adeboye, 2012; Yu *et al*, 2014). The importance of entertainment in tourism has also been highlighted by the destination competitiveness model suggested by Dwyer *et al* (2004). Along the same line, Ritchie and Crouch (2000) propose entertainment as one of the destination's core resources and attractions. In the context of island tourism, the need to diversify tourism has often been acknowledged by researchers (Dwyer et al., 2004; Andriotis, 2005; Loi, 2008; Cooper, 2011). Islands, by their very nature, face a number of inherent

disadvantages, such as isolation, scarce resources, limited growth *inter alia* (Andriotis, 2005). Despite the growing importance of entertainment, very few studies have explored this topic. The present study attempts to address this knowledge gap. Its main aim is to examine the entertainment of leisure tourists in island destinations by identifying promising forms of entertainment and discussing their potential in enhancing the quality of tourism experience.

The reminder of the paper is structured as follows. Firstly, a review of the literature on the interrelation of entertainment with tourism is conducted. The conceptual issues are also clarified and highlighted. The empirical study is then analytically presented, providing the profile and context of investigated island (i.e. Mauritius), the implied research methodology, and the study's findings and discussion. The study then deals with the conclusion and implications. The study's limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Literature Review

Defining entertainment in the tourism context

Bosshart and Macconi (1998) define entertainment as a reception phenomenon with basic factors such as joy, fun and it is pleasant, easy, agreeable, without being compulsory and demanding. Hugues and Allen (2008) and Kirillova *et al* (2014) identify similar characteristics while describing entertainment, but they extend the meaning to escapism. They consider as entertainment live performances, discos, sports, watching TV, playing computer games and listening to music. In looking into the essence of those definitions, it might be seen that tourism also is very much grounded to the notion of relaxation, escapism, fun, and joy. Swarbrooke et al (2003: 5) explain that leisure holidays are about enjoyment, self-expression and satisfaction. Bhatia (2011) also views similar features in entertainment and therefore interprets tourism as relaxation and recreation.

Bates & Ferri (2010) describe tourism entertainment as a well-designed and managed situations with dance performances, shows, theme park presentations, guided tours, video presentation tailored exclusively for visitors.

Entertainment in the context of tourism, can further be explained by Vargho and Lusch (2004) concepts of operand and operant resources; the former being those invisible and intangible resources that produce effect whilst; the latter are resources upon which an operation or act is performed to produce an effect. For instance, sea, sand and sun, as operand resources, become more appealing when beach entertainment activities are included in holidays package. Operant resources (in this context), might be described as entertainment talent and skills required to successfully conduct beach activities.

The Linkage between Entertainment and Tourism

There is a linkage between the tourism industry, the entertainment industry and the tourism market. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship.
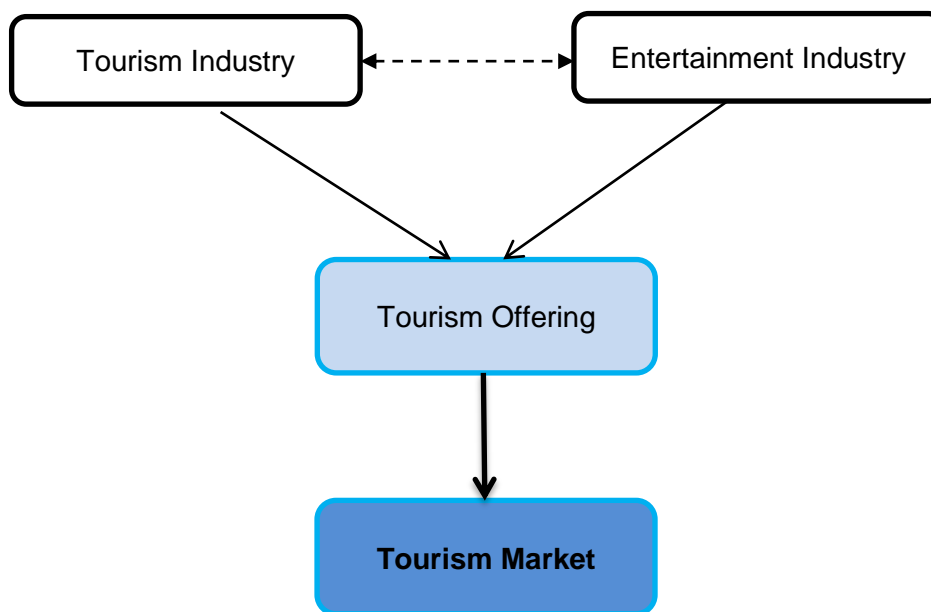

Figure 1: The linkage between tourism and entertainment

The tourism and entertainment industries are inexorably linked as tourism providers combine entertainment in the tourism offering aiming at improving destination attractiveness. The core tourism offering very often needs to be translated into entertainment in order to enhance its appeal. For instance, a tourism heritage site, as an operand resource, requires the support of operant resources like documentaries and films to make the product marketable and more appealing. Tenner (1997), in a study conducted at Las Vegas, indicates that entertainment has become the primary focus of Las Vegas tourism and this is creating precedent for other destinations. In other cases, the integration of entertainment with other activities (e.g. gambling) has helped to address negative image (D'Hauteserre, 2000). Crete Island is a further example; to reach its potential and sustain its tourism industry, the island utilised available entertainment forms to diversify its tourism offering and integrated other economic activities (Andriotis, 2005). Likewise, in India, cultural entertainment has been extensively utilised for marketing purposes. Tourism and entertainment work hand in hand, as a considerable share of entertainment market consists of tourists. Thus, as tourism flourishes, new

avenues for entertainment are provided since the two industries are inter-dependent in a mutually beneficial partnership.

The Relevance of Entertainment in Tourism

Tourism is dependent on various industries / activities to produce the final offering to tourists. The entertainment is one of the industries that significantly contribute to the tourism experience. It is relevant to the tourism industry, given that the essence of tourism (relaxation, enjoyment and escapism) is compatible with that of entertainment (Hugues & Allen, 2008; Kirillova et al., 2014; Loi, 2008). Dwyer et al. (2004), in their model of destination competitiveness, argue that the mere existence of resources is insufficient to generate visitation to a destination in the absence of tourism infrastructure, like entertainment and shopping. This is also the view of Ritchie & Crouch (2000), whose model also emphasises on the role of entertainment. The latter is therefore regarded as an important factor in the tourism experience as it influences perceived destination image and attractiveness. As such, different destinations try to brand themselves as the most entertaining at the global marketplace.

In the context of island destinations, entertainment is relevant to the tourism industry for two main reasons: (i) it brings diversification to the existing tourism offering, as islands face scarcity of natural and cultural resources; and (ii) island tourism suffers sustainability threats. As such, it is believed that the integration of entertainment in the tourism experience helps in preserving natural and cultural resources.

In a study undertaken in Macau, Loi (2009) indicates that entertainment components are implicit in all types of tourism and, if appropriately exploited, contribute significantly to tourism businesses. This view equally stands in the context of island tourism. Given that islands have to handle with limited resources and sustainability problems, the development of entertainment contributes to the diversification of tourism offering. Moreover, it is believed that the entertainment activities give a breathing space to natural and cultural resources that are often over-exploited in island tourism. As such, many island destinations use entertainment to bring diversification (see, for example, Greek and Caribbean islands). However, some negative issues are observed in the form of tourism entertainment. According to Cooper (2011) attractions have been a neglected industry of tourism due to their variety and fragmented ownership pattern. Furthermore, while some tourism attractions provide a valuable experience at reasonable admission charge or even without admission fee, others tend to overprice their services. Such attractions are commonly characterised as tourist traps and might compromise the contribution of entertainment and harm destination image.

Entertainment in the Push-Pull Factor Framework of Tourism

The push-pull framework explains why tourists choose a place over another, the type of experiences they seek and the type of activities they want. While push factors represent motivators that influence tourists' decision to visit a destination, pull factors emphasise specific attributes of destinations that motivate people to choose a destination over another (Wu & Pearce, 2014). Likewise, Cooper (2011) argues that the richness and variety of destinations around the world continue to contribute to the success of the tourism industry and entertainment is one of the assets/resources that influence the destination choice. The relevance of entertainment in enhancing the appeal of tourism offering has been acknowledged by various scholars including Pearce (2008), Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003) and Crouch & Ritchie (2005).

A review of literature indicates that most tourism studies qualify entertainment as an important pull factor. For instance, Cave (2009) argues that leisure, entertainment and recreational facilities are a pull factor for tourists to visit an exotic destination. Similarly, Tenner (1997)

considers attractions, historical sites and monuments as important pull factors, while Awaritefe (2004) classifies pull motives as facilities/amenities designed to entertain persons visiting the location. Likewise, a study conducted by Kirillova et al. (2014), suggests that the environmental qualities of a destination have an impact on overall tourism experience and loyalty. According to these authors, tourists' interaction with a destination's overall environment and their internalization of what they see and sense could play a key role in their overall satisfaction. When people plan to travel for pleasure, they seek destinations that, in their opinion, maximize the possibility to have a pleasurable experience (Lue et al., 1993); and one source of pleasure is the various types of tourists' entertainment.

Entertainment as a Motivator for Repeat Visitation / Loyalty

Literature suggests that it is important to understand why people travel and why they choose a given destination as this allows marketers to better understand the specific attributes that influence tourists' choice. According to Prayag & Hossany (2014), motivation is an important impelling and compelling force behind tourist behaviour. In tourism management literature, it has been acknowledged that aesthetic characteristics affect tourists' experience and satisfaction, contributing to their loyalty towards a destination (Lee et al., 2011) and thus intention to return (Baloglu et al., 2004). At this regard, Nallathiga (2006) suggests that entertainment will become an important source for attracting the short term tourists, and more useful in retaining them for longer period. It therefore plays a central role in determining a tourist's loyalty. Studies show that the quality and types of entertainment offered at the destination often determine tourists' experience and satisfaction (Beerli &

Martin, 2004; Dwyer et al., 2004; Smith, 1994). In fact, tourist satisfaction with a destination's performance is often considered as key indicator as it can stimulate behaviour and motivate visitors to recommend and revisit a place (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001; Pritchard, 2003). It is therefore important to be aware of the entertainment influencing role on the tourism offering. Thus, the types of entertainment included in the tourism offering have an enhancement effect on the tourists' decision making. Moreover, tourists' perception of what types of entertainment available also shapes their judgement and hence their behaviour as well as their destination selection process (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). Therefore, it may be argued that tourists make their decisions on the quality and types of entertainment available at destination and entertainment included in the tourism offering motivates them to re-visit the destination. In a similar vein, Dwyer *et al* (2004) observe that to achieve competitive advantage for tourism industry, destinations must ensure that entertainment and overall experience are superior as compared to other alternative destinations. In fact, with more countries opening up their borders and more options available at the global marketplace; there has been an increased quest by tourists for entertainment. It might be argued that the entertainment constitutes a determining factor in: attaining tourism diversification, improving tourism experience, revitalisation and preservation, marketing and creating job opportunities.

Typology of Tourism Entertainment

Loi (2009) argues that in normal terms, the typology of entertainment is usually organised around adult, child, public, corporate and live entertainment, as shown in Table 1.

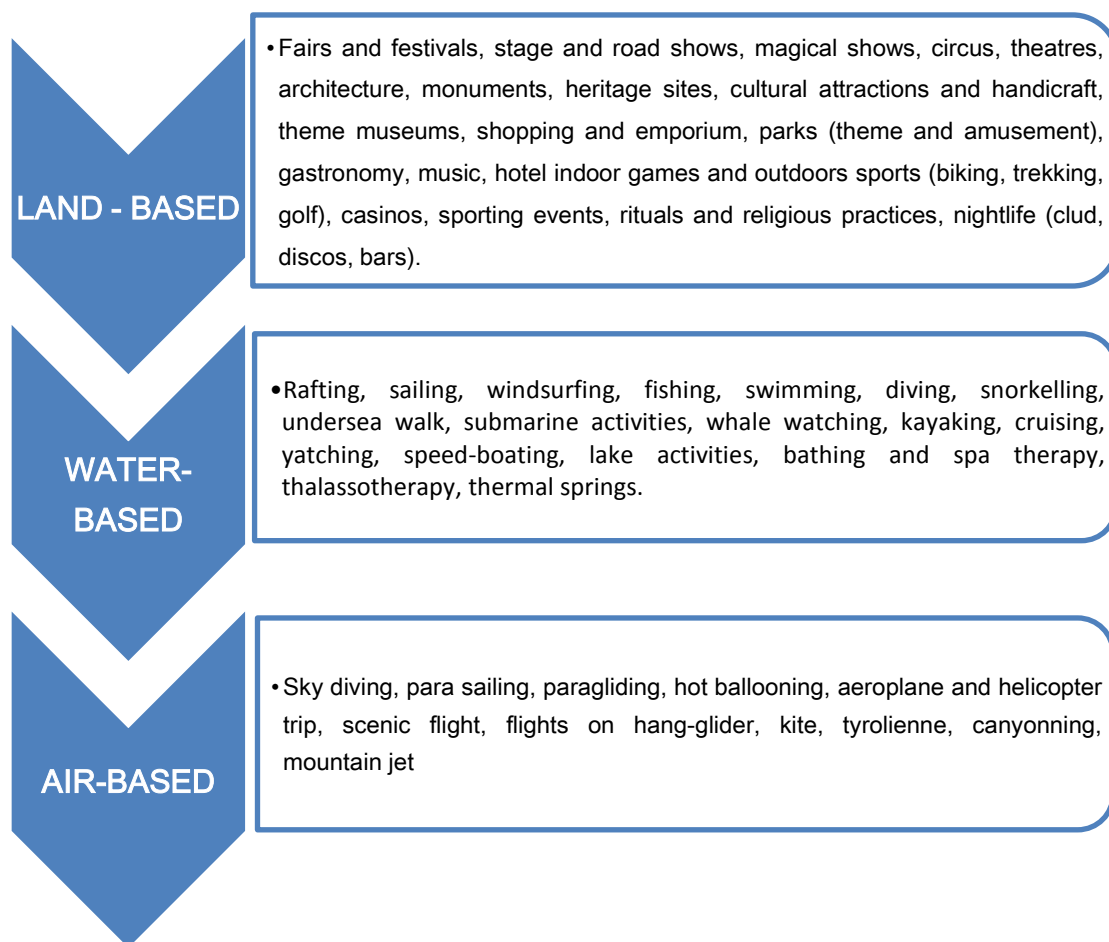**Table 1**: Typology of Entertainment

Entertainment	Typical examples / activities
Child	Children games, clowns, puppets, pantomimes, cartoons, theme parks.
Adult	Activities like music concerts, live sports, opera and also entertainment that arouse sexual desire by displays of eroticism. Examples are beach parties, night life, peep shows, striptease, massages, blue films and shows

Live	For all ages, a variety of activities labelled as live entertainment, e.g. music concerts, live TV shows, live sports, theatres, etc.
Public	It includes performances, singing, dancing, competitions, and painting
Corporate	It is mostly organised by entertainment providers and includes corporate events, private parties, ceremonies, product launches

Source: Loi, 2009

However, in the context of tourism, the above typology should be considered differently as the entertainment industry is a vast entity featuring numerous forms and categories. Entertainment in tourism typically takes place in three forms namely, land-based, water-based and air- based. However, with the development and proliferation of technology, another category of entertainment was introduced, the technology-based. Figure 2 depicts the four categories of most common forms of tourism entertainment.

LAND - BASED
- Fairs and festivals, stage and road shows, magical shows, circus, theatres, architecture, monuments, heritage sites, cultural attractions and handicraft, theme museums, shopping and emporium, parks (theme and amusement), gastronomy, music, hotel indoor games and outdoors sports (biking, trekking, golf), casinos, sporting events, rituals and religious practices, nightlife (clud, discos, bars).

WATER-BASED
- Rafting, sailing, windsurfing, fishing, swimming, diving, snorkelling, undersea walk, submarine activities, whale watching, kayaking, cruising, yatching, speed-boating, lake activities, bathing and spa therapy, thalassotherapy, thermal springs.

AIR-BASED
- Sky diving, para sailing, paragliding, hot ballooning, aeroplane and helicopter trip, scenic flight, flights on hang-glider, kite, tyrolienne, canyonning, mountain jet

TECHNOLOGY -BASED

- The 8th mass media like 3D, 4D games, online games, multiplayer online role-playing games (MPORGs), computer games, play stations, the 4th screen interactive virtual tours, 3D & 4D movies and shows, entertainment appliances, such as touch screen smart phone, tablets, e-books, i-pads, Web 2.0 (social media and blogs)
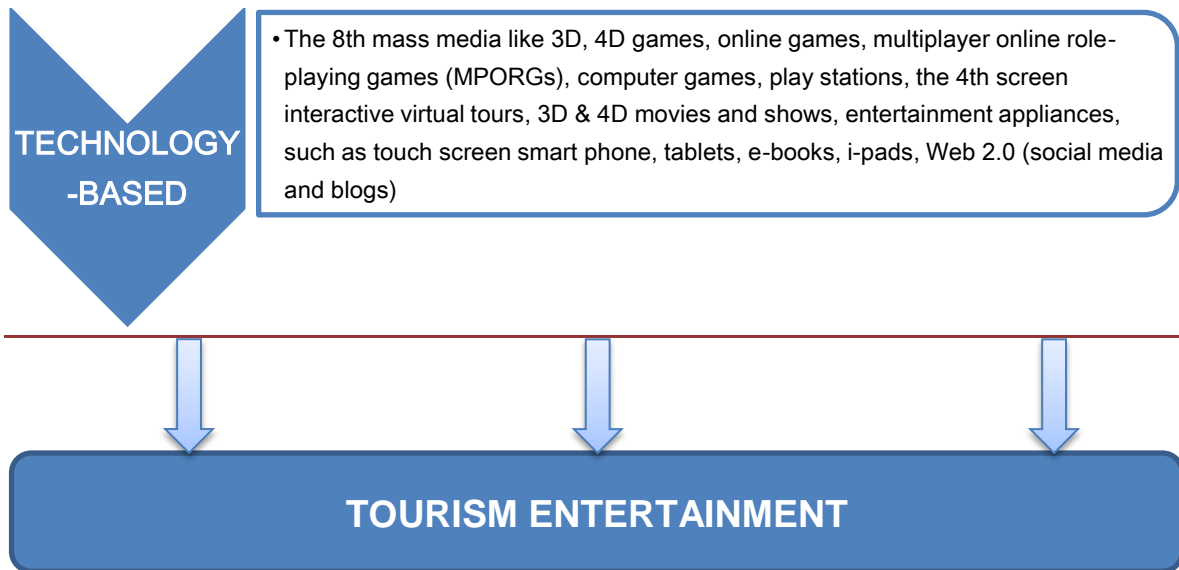
TOURISM ENTERTAINMENT

Figure 2: Typology of tourism entertainment

Figure 2 gives an insight on the types of entertainment, on which tourists draw to make their travel decisions. Thus, likewise to other tourism destinations, islands also follow this trend to render their tourism offering more appealing and attractive. Mauritius, as an island destination dependent on tourism industry, is not an exception.

Empirical Study

The Research Area: Island of Mauritius

Mauritius is a small tropical island in the Indian Ocean (Figure 3). It occupies an area of 720 square miles and is slightly bigger than the city of London (Gowreesunkar, 2012). Mauritius is blessed with all natural and cultural resources. Tourism initiatives and plans date back to year 1968, with a continuous growth: the inbound tourists accounted 993,106 for January to November 2013, the number of hotels gradually increased from 50 units in the 1980's to 106 in 2014 (Mauritius Statistics, 2014).

Figure 3: Mauritius
Source: http://www.travelovision.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Experience-Mauritius-Original-map.png

Similar to other islands, Mauritius has been struggling hard to position its tourism offering. Various branding strategies have been employed to demarcate from competitors of the region (for instance, Seychelles and Maldives). The growing dependence of the island on tourism led the industry to devise various strategies with regards to its sustainability, diversification, attractiveness and competitiveness.

While the tourism industry kept diversifying throughout the decades, various forms of local entertainment were developed to be integrated in tourism offering (see Table 2). Table 2 illustrates the most popular tourism entertainment utilised by the Mauritian tourism. Various governmental and non-governmental bodies work in collaboration to develop those entertainments, the most important ones being the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MOTL), The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), The Ministry of Art and Culture (MAC), and cultural centres.

Table 2: Entertainment activities for tourists in Mauritius

Entertainment commonly used in tourism offering	Entertainment activities and examples from Mauritius
Cultural and religious activities	Cultural celebrations, festivals and other shows, e.g. Chinese new year, Father Laval pilgrimage, Gastronomy festival, Grand Bassin pilgrimage, festival Kreol, Chinese, Sega dancing
Sports and competitions	Beauty contest (Miss Mauritius), games like tennis, basketball, petanque, hotel animations among others; Sport events (e.g. Mauritius international beach tennis; Air Mauritius golf channel trophy; All Africa junior team golf championship).
Conferences, shows and exhibitions	Exhibitions and shows, e.g. salon du livre, salon de la santé, salon de la maison, Bollywood Award, concerts and musical shows, fashion shows and art performances
Sea, Sun, Sand, and water-based activities	Water activities include parasailing, waterskiing, windsurfing, deep sea fishing, catamaran, undersea walk, bottom glass, snorkelling, scuba diving, islets trips.
Nature and ecotourism	Parks, forests, gardens, waterfalls and valleys. For example, the forest of Maccabé, Sept Cascades waterfall, Rochester fall, Casela nature and leisure park, Eureka nature park, Pamplemousses botanical garden, The tea route.
Heritage attractions and art sites	Heritage attractions such as Sugar world, Rhumerie de Chamarel, art galleries, museums, Le Morne, historic monuments and building, Port Louis Central Market and China Town, Bois Cherie tea factory.
Wellness and spa services	wellness treatments, massage, wrinkles treatment, cosmetic dentistry; thalasso therapy; mediation, yoga etc.
Shopping, gambling and night life	World standard shopping malls e.g. Caudan waterfront, Mahebourg waterfront, Grand Bay, Goodlands, pubs, discos, night clubs, casinos and horse races.
Post millennium entertainment	Media and technology-based entertainment like film festival, LCD movies with local and international channels, computer games, interactive virtual tours and themed weddings

Earlier, sea, sun and sand were the three S's of Mauritian tourism, but of late, shopping has become the fourth S. Although surveys on travel motivations have rarely indicated the intention to shop as a primary motive, shopping has emerged as the most universal element in tourist experience (Dasgupta, 2011). Shopping as a tourist activity has indeed prospered in various markets and to this effect, various malls have been developed

(e.g. la Croisette). Also, many previously inactive sites have been converted into tourism attractions. For instance, cultural show like 'The Soul of the World" is staged at cultural spots like la Citadelle. Social and cultural entertainment activities such as "Anou Ale La Mer", "Loisirs lor Laplaze" and Sega are organized at selected tourism areas to revive the cultural values. The post millennium has witnessed a different niche market with demand for

themed weddings, themed conferences, competitions and technology-mediated products and this segment is found to have high tourism potential. Despite the various forms of entertainment available to enhance the Mauritian tourism industry, one important aspect which has not received enough attention is the forms of entertainment preferred by leisure tourists in Mauritius. This aspect is important as it allows tourism marketers to gain better understanding on tourists' motivational factors and to identify the promising forms of entertainment that can be used in improving the tourism competitiveness of Mauritius. To address this gap, this study investigates the issue of entertainment activities of leisure tourists in the island of Mauritius.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed methodology approach using the technique of semi structured interviews. The choice is based on Brymann (2004) philosophy as the study attempts to elicit opinions from a given population, i.e. tourists and entertainment providers. The island of Mauritius is chosen for the following reasons: (i) it is a small island very heavily dependent on tourism; ((ii) the success of its tourism industry is dependent on many factors, one of which is the quality of tourism offering; and (iii) the different forms of entertainment constitute one of the most determining factors of the quality of tourism offering;

More specifically, the research interviewed two groups of persons (i) governmental officers in Port Louis (capital of the island) and (ii) tourists and providers of entertainment services in Northern Mauritius. This area was chosen because it is the popular destination of the island. Furthermore, other coastline areas around the island have similar characteristics and features (Gowreesunkar, 2012).

Sampling Plan

The list of hotels was obtained from Ministry of Tourism and Leisure. The sample size was calculated scientifically using Raosoft sample size calculator (Table 3) with a margin of error of 5%, with a confidence level of 95%. After the population size of each hotel was done, the stratified sampling method was chosen. This random sampling was selected to ensure representativeness from each category of area's hotels. A population size of 45 hotels (2 to 5 stars) was generated for the survey, thus giving a recommended sample size of 49 tourists.

Table 3: Sample Size of Hotels

Hotel category (in stars)	2	3	4	5
No of hotels in the north	4	19	11	11
Tourists to be interviewed	(4/41)*45=4	(19/41)*45=21	(11/41)*45=12	(11/41)*45=12

Convenience sampling was chosen for the interviews and questions were prepared prior to the interview session. The following research questions were formulated for the survey purposes:

RQ1: What is the role of entertainment in the tourism offering?

RQ2: Does entertainment enhance the whole tourism offering?

RQ3: Does entertainment influences tourists' decision for future visitation?

RQ4: How entertainment has evolved in the Mauritian tourism industry?

RQ5: What are the main types of entertainment available in the Mauritian tourism offering?

RQ6: What are the promising forms of entertainment that can be considered for the future?

The Survey

To gain an understanding on the role of entertainment in the tourism experience, semi structured questionnaires were administered to tourists residing in pre-selected Northern hotels. Tourists were carefully approached on the beach of their

accommodation when they were not involved in any activity. Questionnaires included dichotomous questions, Likert scale (with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree) and open ended questions. A pilot test was carried out on 10 tourists at Grand Bay. This helped in addressing ambiguities and in re-formulating some questions. Then, a total of 49 questionnaires were successfully completed, thus representing a response rate of 100%.

The next part of the survey related to semi structured interviews that were conducted on entertainment providers of hotels as well as on tourism officers at Port Louis. Phone calls were made to arrange appointments and the total number of interviewees was 2 officers from MTPA and 1 from MOTL, 1 from MAC and 6 from hotels (2 from 2-star; 2 from 3-star; 1 from 4-star and 1 from 5-star). The interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. The final phase of the study related to content analysis conducted on existing literature, websites, brochures and reviews. This was required to address RQ4 and to build a database on evolution of entertainment in Mauritius. Content analysis has been successfully used by researchers (see for example Xiao and Smith, 2006). Microsoft Excel software was used to analyse the data.

Study's Findings and Discussion

The Role of Entertainment in Island Destination's Offering
The survey reveals that entertainment has important role and significantly contributes to the tourism offering. From the demand side, 89% tourists stated that it was the main motivator while selecting holiday packages. The following statement from a South African couple indicates: " *We are tourists not only to passively see the land of Mauritius, but we are here to have fun and to see how we can entertain ourselves; the more entertainment variety we have, the more we find the package worth our time and money spent to come here*". This finding confirms a suggestion by Adeboye (2012: 13) about tourists who also looked solely for entertainment to qualify Greek tourism as attractive.

However, few tourists (11%) did not agree that entertainment is an important factor for tourism. For them, tourism was about visiting a foreign country only. Entertainment like discos, clubs were not important: "*We are interested to see the history, nature, culture and heritage of Mauritius. We are not interested in artificial entertainment; we can enjoy it in our country as well*". This observation confirms the findings of Vorderer (2011) that it would be difficult to generalise the characteristics of entertainment and just relate it to enjoyment and amusement.

From the supply side, interviews with the tourism officers and entertainment providers reveal that entertainment element was considered as enhancer and diversifier for the existing tourism offering. According to the MOTL respondents, the Mauritian tourism industry is going through a critical phase and to continue relying on existing offering might compromise its future: "*Mauritian tourism product will not be able to survive without entertainment. The future of the economy is so fragile with the tourism industry exploiting and depleting sea sand and sun resources*". The interview from MAC officers indicates that "*Entertainment works hand in hand with tourism. The tourism is nothing without what we are planning and offering in our Ministry*". For hotel entertainers, the following opinions were recorded:
"*Entertainment is important as it adds value to tourism product and it gives business to performers*"
"*Hotel entertainment is the cherry on the cake for the tourism offer*"

Based on the findings, it may be argued that entertainment has several roles and impacts on destination attractiveness. From economic and marketing perspectives, entertainment can enhance tourism offering and generate significant contribution to tourism, if properly developed. To further support the fulfilling role of entertainment in tourism, the study of Abedoye (2012), shows that declining Spanish tourism had to introduce entertainment besides the conventional sun, sea, sand in order to revitalise the existing tourism offering. Findings show

that entertainment is an important component of the Mauritian tourism industry, and despite being a separate industry, they do have compatible objectives (see Figure 1) and thus, can harmoniously work together. The study also shows that entertainment is an important ingredient for the Mauritian tourism. Based on study's findings, the role of entertainment in tourism business may be summarised as follows.

The study's findings confirm those of Loi (2008), i.e. tourism industry combines entertainment to diversify and become more attractive. Entertainment is one of the core resources and potential pull factor, as suggested by Ritchie and Crouch's (2000). It contributes to render tourism offering more appealing and adds value to the tourism offering (Awaritefe, 2004). Revitalisation and preservation: It gives a breathing space to typical island tourism resources (3S) and thus contributes in sustainability endeavours (Abekoye, 2012). While working on the forms of entertainment to include in tourism packages, traditional singing, food, dance, and culture are preserved and appreciated. Marketability, profitability and job opportunity: When added to tourism package, it becomes more marketable. Diversity of entertainment brings positive publicity, attracts more tourists, and encourages repeat visitation and longer stay. It also provides job opportunities. Entertainment also serves as a form of education to the emerging generation. Learn the culture and familiarise with the local communities' culture and tradition. It is quite evident that entertainment significantly contributes to improve tourism experience. Tourists often search for more active experiences; they would rather choose to go on a vacation to a more entertaining area to have fun.

Entertainment: it's Impact on Intention to Revisit / Loyalty

RQ3 was formulated to understand the relationship between entertainment and tourists post consumption behavioural intentions. Primary and secondary data were jointly analysed to elucidate whether entertainment in the tourism product

influence tourists' decision for future visitation. Findings reveal that majority of tourists (87%) has intention to visit Mauritius mainly for beach entertainment. The following statements are from European and South African tourists: "*We are here just for the beach and water sports. There is no sea like in Mauritius elsewhere*"

"*Deep sea fishing, snorkelling and scuba is all I want to do in Mauritius. If I have time, I see the other things*".

Previous studies (see for example Kotler *et al*, 2006; Gummesson 2000; Pearce, 2011) have shown that tourists relied on experiences in any destination they visit in order to have a lasting impression, which also determines their recommendation and visit to the destination again. Likewise, this study indicates that 68% of tourists have the intention to revisit for entertainment and they are willing to recommend Mauritius to friends and relatives as they are happy with the variety of entertainments available on the island. The quality of entertainment is therefore significant for tourists in formation of their experience (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Dwyer *et al,* 2004; Smith, 1994). Qualitative data from interviews show that entertainment will become an important source for attracting the tourists for visiting on short term and will be more useful in retaining them for longer period. This observation confirms the findings of Nallathiga (2006) and Swarbrooke (2003) who also indicate that entertainments are value-added element to tourism offering. In the context of Mauritius, high amounts of financial resources are invested in fairs, exhibitions, marketing and promotional programmes. But, not much attention is given on enhancement of existing tourism products. For instance, some attractions (e.g. Chamarel village and Balaclava ruins) *inter alia* have tourism potential but they are not attractive enough as they lack entertainment and are not adequately managed.

Evolution of Tourism Entertainment in Mauritius

RQs 4 and 5 were formulated to appreciate how entertainment evolved in

the Mauritian tourism industry. It was found that since the start-up of the tourism industry (late 1960s), Mauritius has specifically capitalised on its sea, sun and sand to market its offering. While this model has been persisting, the analysis shows that the island has gone through five stages of tourism entertainment, as illustrated in table 4, namely introduction, development, commercialisation, consolidation and revamping phase.

During the early years, along with the 3S, the only entertainment available was the traditional "Sega dance" with typical instruments like "ravanne", "maravanne", particular drum, this was performed around the fire on beaches. The "Bal zaricot", an evening dancing party was also popular and entertainments like "Sugar time" a singing contest was organized by the Sugar State in every region of the island. The horserace on Sundays was also popular while coastal entertainment like regatta (sailing boat racing) was utilised in tourism. In-door games such as bingo, domino, rummy cards were popular in hotels.

Activities like badminton, tennis, petanque, and football were organised mainly in hotels along with traditional 'sega' shows and some sport such as beach volley and some other water sports. Fancy fair was another big event where many activities were proposed as well as a musical shows presented by the local. Natural entertainments were mainly Pamplemousses Garden, the Naval Museum at Mahebourg. Entertainment also took a religious turn as pilgrimage to Père Laval at Sainte Croix and Grand Bassin became popular attractions. In the early 1980s, more hotels were built and the hotels introduced modern cultural shows. Locals were hired to perform different cultural shows. With the growing demand of entertainment, many hotels incorporated an animation department. Moreover, cultural festivals like Diwali (Indian light festival) and Chinese were also increasingly being utilised to attract tourists. Today, the entertainment landscape has completely changed; the tourism industry has to face a new form of

savvy tourists having different expectations. Content analysis of brochures, websites as well as interviews from tourism officers and entertainment providers helped to compile a database on the evolution of entertainment in the Mauritian tourism industry. Table 4 summarizes the study's findings and proposes the evolution (the various phases of entertainment) in the Mauritian tourism industry.

Source:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/Stamp_Mauritius_1954_5c.jpg

Table 4: Evolution of Tourism Entertainment in Mauritius

Phases of entertainment in Mauritian tourism offering / Types of tourism entertainment	Introduction phase (Years 1968-1978)	Development phase (Years 1979- 1989)	Commercialisation phase (Years 1990-2000)	Consolidation phase (Years 2001-2010)	Revamping phase (Years 2011-onwards)
Local cultural shows	Typical and authentic Sega singing and dancing by locals. Small shows and story-telling in different areas	Artists performing in hotels and private business. Shows was extended to more regions	More commercialized performances. Ethnic festivals (Indian, Creole) included in package to attract tourists	Modern musical instruments and lose of authenticity.	Cultural shows commoditised. New shows especially staged for tourists
Regatta	Sail competition practised by locals and proposed to tourists	Included and offered in tourism packages	The activity lost its appeal and practised only yearly	Renewal to bring authenticity and diversify tourism offer	Reconsidered for authenticity
Pilgrimage	Religious walk to Father Laval Tomb at St Croix	Pilgrims from Reunion Island come for Père Laval	More tourists from other countries	More and more tourists...	Grand Bassin and Father Laval pilgrimage
Horse Race	Entertainment for the pleasure of watching horse running	Became popular for family gathering and tourists joining	More of a betting game.	Tourists more interested in betting	Tourist attraction and betting
Fishing	Fishing with fishing rod	Proposed to tourists by tourism businesses	Tourists interested in big game fishing	More appealing big game fishing. Deep sea fishing with update equipment.	Big game fishing and many competitions. Over exploitation
Nature	SSR Botanical Garden	Gardens and natural areas are included in tourism package	More tourist visitation More natural areas included in tourism package and guavas plucking entertain tourists	Less attractive due to mismanagement of parks; overexploitation in previous decade.	A variety of parks developed for tourists; but tourist more demanding and look for outdoors activities
Casinos and social games	Small casinos; social games such as bingo, domino, cards	The number of casinos increases and social games replaced by games like Karrom, Petangue,	More casinos created to meet the tourists needs; social games replaced by computer games	Big casinos constructed to serve tourism industry and gaming legalised	Big casinos constructed in tourism areas and cities
Water-based activities (sailing, surfing, snorkelling, kayaking, parasailing, scuba diving	Mainly for rich people, up-market exclusive sport activity	More diversified and popular in tourism packages	More professional equipment; popular and heavily marketed in tourism package.	Capitalised to attract tourists including hosting events and live musical shows	With technology, more sophisticated equipment is proposed by entertainment providers
Night life	Very few clubs	Limited night clubs and routine entertainment (music & dancing)	More popular / nightclubs with shows and adult entertainment	Night clubs with more facilities and technology	Real nightlife with sex connotation
Emerging / new entertainment forms for tourists			Mechanised sea sports (speed boat, Jet ski) Parks (adventure, green park, water), Visitable sugar factories, Dolphin watching Golf few courses.	Speed boat rides, catamaran cruises Dolphin watching, more golf courses. Sports events Shopping (live entertainment but limited facilities) Sight-seeing (marine, adventure parks)	Exhibitions, Fairs and Conferences, Helicopter tours, Events, Shopping (malls for tourism offer but with occasional entertainment), Heritage Sites, Monuments, Themed and Technology-based entertainment

The study identified that, throughout the decades, the tourism market and demand from tourists have changed and technology-savvy tourists prefer new forms of entertainment. Traditional games and sega are still being revived but they are not successful. For instance, the traditional instruments utilized for the sega are not compatible with hotels' setting. The sound arrangements are not able to accommodate sega dance due to lack of traditional back-drop and sega cannot be performed round the fire due to ecological concern. Traditional fishing can no longer take place due to sustainability issues; Chamarel 7-coloured earth has restrictions due to over-collection of its colored earth for souvenirs and commercialization. The 'new' post millennium tourists have different expectations; they have limited time and want to enjoy quality holiday with possibilities of choosing over a variety of entertainment forms, amongst others virtual tours and technological tools. Thus, the quality of entertainment promoted and offered by Mauritius has significant impact on their experience.

Potential of Entertainment for the Mauritian Tourism Offering

RQ6 was formulated to identify the most promising forms of tourism entertainment in Mauritius, on which the island could capitalise to improve its competitiveness. Findings reveal that tourists were particularly attracted by beach activities (87%), as compared to the other forms of entertainment (cultural shows, heritage sites, sightseeing, night life, thrill activities, nature). This confirms the findings of earlier studies that tourists come to Mauritius for the sea (Gowreesunkar and Rycha, 2014; Prayag et al 2010; Ramchurn, 2011). The following statements represent some of the views of European tourists:

"*We come to Mauritius for its sea and we want to spend all our time with what sea offers to us in terms of activities; nature and culture we have the best in Europe*"

"*I am not the active type; I cannot jump, walk or dance; I come to Mauritius just for beach and all the activities that boathouse gives at the hotel*".

The island of Mauritius is predominantly a beach destination. Besides the sea, sun sand, Mauritius is endowed with a vast coastline and a good number of natural lakes. Nordic countries have set examples of how water-based activities with integrated facilities and entertainment can be effectively utilised to enhance tourism. For instance, development of coastal fronts with parks and recreational grounds in front of the sea; in European and Asia Pacific lake areas are converted into picnic sites for tourists. In so doing, the environment and natural beauty are conserved. Mauritius can also learn from these experiences. The development of some of entertainment, such as boat riding, motor boat racing, power boat racing, and construction of promenades might further enhance resorts and sites. The usage of islets (small islands around Mauritius) can also be considered for future tourism potential. A study conducted by Gowreesunkar *et al* (2013) suggests that islets, like Ile aux Bernaches and Ile aux Margenies, have potential for tourism entertainment and these can be tapped for tourism. Additional water-based activities (like banana ride, boat ride, snorkelling, diving, fishing) might be included in the islet offering. Furthermore, water trip is cost-effective, eco-friendly and entertaining. Entertainment providers in consultation with the authorities and experts might capitalise on sea promenades; Mauritius might be visited from water ride rather than from land ride.

Interviews from tourism officers show that new forms of entertainment like shopping, events and exhibitions are emerging markets. Interview from MOTL Officers indicates: "*Tourists are smart. They do not want to spend on transport. Instead of hiring a taxi and pay big money to see that the island has to offer, they prefer spend a whole day at La Croisette which has everything*"

With the development of shopping centres like Grand Bay La Croisette, Bagatelle, Cascavelle, Ruisseau Creole, the tourists are more interested in shopping as these are combined with other activities like sales and promotion, fashion shows,

cultural shows, painting competitions, art exhibitions etc. Therefore, tourists use the shopping mall as a one-stop-shop and opine that it is more cost effective, if along with shopping, they benefit from free shows and other local entertainment. The concept of '24/7' shopping as introduced in 2009 might be organised more regularly to give shopping mall and local entrepreneurs more opportunities to exhibit and sell their products. Findings reveal that post millennium tourists have different expectations. Island destinations (e.g. Seychelles and Maldives) that are well established are diversifying their tourism development with a variety of entertainment adapted for the savvy tourists. The demands are more specific; tourists look for themed wedding, quality all-in-one entertainment. According to Adeboye (2012), hotel animation is an increasingly important element of tourism offering today. Hotels and entertainment providers may regroup themselves in partnership and earmark specific events to be sold as package to the tourists, for instance, Creole night at Hotel X, Indian night at Hotel Y, Chinese night at Hotel Z. This type of partnership is a win-win situation for both hotel and tourists as costs, resources and revenue are shared.

The post millennium shows a paradigm shift in the tourism landscape. Demands for exhibition and live entertainment are also popular among busy tourists who indulge in tourism for escapism from routine work and stress and who have limited time. Exhibitions like Salon du Livre, Salon de la Sante, Indo-Mauritian trade fairs at Mer Rouge, or Swami Vivekananda centre continue to attract an international audience. Live entertainment is found to be highly demanded by young tourists. For instance, authentic cultural shows like the 'Reggae Don Sa", could be integrated in mega event instead of giving opportunities to foreign celebrities only. The findings have revealed that many tourists also choose Mauritius to participate in concert and talks. For instance, the Swami Vivekananda has attracted various tourists for management leaders' talks like Shiv Khera, Robin Sharma and Philip Kotler. Moreover,

tourists also enjoy the award ceremonies and celebrity shows organised in Mauritius. Organising sport events like the World Cup, football games, inter-island sports competition are also potential platform for tourism. South African is a recent example. Athletes are always interested to indulge in some forms of tourism during their sport trip. Mixed findings indicate that the new tourists are now health conscious and they are ready to invest in their health. Tourists are interested in thalassotherapy, wellness, body and mind rejuvenation. The hospitality industry can tap on this market segment by diversifying their existing products (for example aqua-yoga) and this aligns with the government vision of making Mauritius a medical tourism hub. Moreover interviews from officers also confirmed that aging tourists demanded lots of spiritual product like yoga, meditation, spiritual talk participation. As Europe has always been the major markets, hotel operators should work in conjunction with entertainment providers and the tourism regulators to provide appropriate entertainment opportunities.

Mixed findings show that Mauritius is too small to accommodate theme parks. Moreover, the only existing water-park has set bad example due to lack of safety and security. However, Mauritius could capitalise on its two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, namely La Citadelle, Fort Adelaide, Donjon St Louis, Martello Tower, as operand resources could be enhanced by operant resources like music, shows and documentary films. Heritage and culture are important ingredients of the society that can be used as an important aspect of tourism development as well as promoting entertainment production and services. Similar to European cities, the Government could introduce the concept of hip-hop bus in the main cities of Mauritius. This would have encouraged tourists to explore cities and visit less popular attractions, and give a breathing space to coastline. The need for having such vision for the development of Modern Mauritius is vital if the island wants to be a leading sustainable island destination in

the region. The Tripartite Model for Tourists' Destination Experience (TMTDE) as suggested by Loi (2009) shows that tourists continuously evaluate the existing entertainment facilities and provide feedback on how they could be improved. This model, if applied locally, would help to better identify improvement potential and opportunities.

Conclusion and Implications

The study of entertainment in tourism is important for Mauritius as it explores a concept that has not received enough attention. Mauritius, as a small island, is limited in terms of its natural and cultural resources. By over-exploiting the same tourism resources to market the destination, the Mauritian tourism product becomes less attractive and routine in the perception of savvy tourists and undermines its sustainability. To address this issue, the present study has helped in identifying the preferred and most promising forms of entertainment of leisure tourists to Mauritius. It has been confirmed that (i) the types and forms of entertainment offered are influencing motives and factors to select the destination and (ii) the beach and water-based activities are the most preferred forms of entertainment for leisure tourists. Despite the global trend for going green and eco-friendly activities, the study revealed that Mauritius is not chosen for its green entertainment and thus, the green model might not be workable. While the private and public sector in Mauritius have invested amounts of efforts in green products, it seems that this is not really the Unique Selling Point (USP) of Mauritius, as other destinations like Europe and America provide with better eco-friendly options.

It is believed that the present study reached its main aim of analysing and providing insights for better understanding of entertainment activities in island tourism destinations, using Mauritius as an example. Likewise to previous studies, it was found that entertainment can be utilised as a pull factor to enhance the attractiveness of island tourism offering.

Further, the study shows that the field of entertainment has undergone a paradigm shift and has evolved in form and context. In this regard, a database has been compiled and proposed to better apprehend the evolving nature of entertainment in the tourism industry.

In conclusion, it could be argued that entertainment has gradually become an important driving force in the Mauritian tourism and the synchronization of entertainment with the tourism industry would be mutually beneficial. The study is particularly relevant as it gives information on existing entertainment that needs improvement and reveals the preference of visitors and hence, shed light on the potential forms of entertainments that can be utilised to market tourism from a renewed and contemporary perspective. Additionally, the study has practical, managerial and marketing implications on the preferred forms of entertainment of leisure tourists. The study's findings should benefit to tourism marketers by providing valuable insights on the forms of entertainment to be integrated while designing tourism packages. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge by building up an entertainment database / portfolio, providing insights on the evolution of different types of entertainment having been developed within the island tourism context.

Limitations and future research

The study provided some interesting insights on the field of tourism entertainment; although, it encompasses some limitations. Its main limitation is related to the limited access of secondary data, which could have helped to develop a more comprehensive evolution of entertainment. Second limitation is the sample size. Analysis would have been more reliable if data could be collected from all Mauritian tourism regions. Future research might consider a larger sample and could adopt a comparative analysis of entertainment element in island destinations. Another limitation was the access to hotel entertainers and government officers. Public bodies /

authorities were not too willing to disclose information. Also, there was a dearth of research available on the evolution of entertainment in Mauritius. Another interesting research pathway is to empirically investigate and test the applicability of the suggested entertainment database to other tourism destinations having similar resources and facing same challenges.

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