

TIME MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON REVENUE GENERATION IN THE TOURISM SECTOR: THE MOZAMBICAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how time management influenced revenue generation in the tourism sector in Mozambique. The major objectives were to examine theoretical models of time management on one hand, compare and contrast time management in the Western culture and African culture using Mozambique's culture as a benchmark and then identify issues for which time management behaviours can possibly be a solution to the perceived negative time management culture in Mozambique. The study used a case study as its major research design. Data were collected through interviews, observations and a study of the tourism sector's documents. The overall results reveal that time management varies from person to person, culture to culture and even for the same person, situation to situation. The Western perception of time proves that the Westerners are very strict in their time to an extent that they end up not really managing time but being managed by time. And yet the African perception of time shows that Africans create time thus managing time. The researches recommend a balance of the African and Western cultural perceptions and practices to guarantee effective generation of revenue in the tourism sector. Employees and employers should be trained in the two cultural perceptions and practices.

INTRODUCTION

Time management is the development of processes and tools that increase a business time-efficiency. It is the ability to manage and control time (Webb and Blandin, 2006). Time management teaches a number of techniques that aim to increase the effectiveness of a person in getting things done which need to be done. Good time management brings benefits: increased daily output, meeting career and financial goals, and better opportunities for success are all possible. Time management at work is critical for the success of any organization and this directly affects employees' performance and the

organisation's bottom line. The efficient use of time can make all the difference between effectiveness and ineffectiveness. In business like the tourism sector, effectiveness in time management is measured in the revenue generated. All over the world, there is an increase in interaction between people of different countries, races, communities, regions and religions in tourism centres. Considering that these tourists are from different places and different cultures, each tourist, therefore, perceives time management in their own way. One of the most important things that need attention to improve performance and meet customer expectations is the

management, control and guidance of time to the best investment through good organization. Therefore it is important to know how Mozambique's tourism sector develop a culture of time management that will not affect revenue generation negatively.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are many researches that have been carried out on time management, so many theories teaching people time management. There are many books, articles, seminars, workshops, and general time management tips available and the large numbers of people have participated in time management training programs. However remarks below are quite common among employees.

“What did I do today, where did my time go?”

“There's never enough time!”

“I never seem to have enough time to complete my work”

The question to be answered therefore is; what is the impact of time management in Mozambique's tourism sector in revenue generation?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to investigate the impact of time management as it influences employees' performance in the tourism organization and how in the long run it affects revenue generation of the organization.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does the African culture, oblivious to clock time, affect employees' performance in the Mozambican tourism industry?
2. How does time management in the African Mozambican culture compare to Western culture?
3. How does Mozambique's African culture of time management impact the tourism industry?

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN

In this study, the research design was a qualitative case study, of the interpretive character. This method was adopted “because of its unique qualities in probing cultural behavior, values and traditions” (Chisaka 2007: 28). In this study, a case study was ideal because it explained why and how time management affects revenue generation in tourism sectors. For ethical reasons, the two centres below were given pseudonyms in order to conceal their identities (Nyawaranda, 1998). At both Queen Beach (pseudonym) and Dororo National Park ((pseudonym), ten employees, two people from management and 18 tourists were chosen. In total, there were 60 people who were involved as participants and informants.

DATA GENERATION METHODS

As is customary to qualitative research, the primary researcher was the main instrument in data generation and for a research of this magnitude, she needed the help of research assistants. Apart from the primary researcher, the following data generation instruments were used; observation, interactive interviews, focus group discussions, completion of daily diary study and analysis of documents of the tourism organisations' activities.

A purposive sample of rich informants comprising tourist organizations from Beira city and a few from the surrounding districts, were chosen. Patton (1990) noted that purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth. The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information which is rich and in-depth. Information rich cases were regarded as those participants from where one could learn a great deal about issues of time management in tourism. These were the people who had been in this sector for a very long time having been in the industry for a minimum of five years.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are very critical in qualitative research. They are more personalized and have the capacity to let the interviewee appreciate the objective of the research. Private and personal information can more easily be discussed and it is easy to discover who said what. For ethical reasons, the primary researcher got permission from the participants to audio-tape the interviews.

In this study, structured and unstructured interviews were carried out. Employers were interviewed in their offices, whilst the tourists were interviewed in the reception area, in their rooms and in the restaurants and, for the employees, in their work places.

In unstructured interviews, employees were asked to give their perceptions, concerns and suggestions about time management and performance of the organization. At least two people in management were interviewed and asked to complete open-ended questionnaires about time management in the tourism sector. In qualitative research, unstructured interviews help the researcher ask fewer questions, and leave much of the talking to the participants.

Structured interviews provided information on four issues: (1) planning and prioritizing behaviours, (2) workday start-up behaviours, (3) work behaviours while executing their work tasks, and (4) an indication of participants' overall work style. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they were satisfied with their work style and whether they would recommend their work style to others working in similar jobs. Questions included: "What do you do when you start working?"; "Do you plan tasks for yourself?"; "Do you set priorities?"; "What kind of tasks do you work on first?"; "How would you describe your personal work style?" Interviews were taped and transcribed.

OBSERVATION

The classic form of generating data in

naturalistic research is observation of participants in the context of a natural scene. Observations when effectively done, they can lead to a deeper understanding of a phenomenon than other instruments. According to Wolcott (1987), qualitative researchers can use either participant or non participant or even both methods. In this study the researcher mainly used participant observation. This is because the researcher had to be close to the tourists to be able to interview them.

The primary researcher actually had to go to the tourist centre and stay there for weeks, even booking a hotel and be close to the tourists. At one time, for example, the researcher had to actually swim at Queen Beach so as to be close to the tourists. The researcher, therefore, observed several situations involving tourists, employees and employers in tourism centres. In her observation, the researcher focused on the following;

1. How long does it take for tourists to be attended to in different situations?
2. How do different tourists react when there is a delay to get some services or products?
3. When do employees do what activity?
4. What happens when there is a delay in the execution of an activity?

During observations, the researcher took note of pertinent issues that needed a follow-up in subsequent interviews and group discussions.

DOCUMENT STUDY

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Analyzing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analyzed. Studying documents provided insights into history, rationale, and perception of time management. In this study, documents were

analysed to get the number of employees at each tourist centre and cross check, how long each one of them had been in that centre. The document analysis also helped the researcher to see how the frequency of tourists in the tourist centres per month. Trustworthiness or reliability and validity of data were partly achieved in this study through the strategy of triangulation of methods and sources of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Once data had been generated, they needed to be organized. The procedures for organizing and reducing data to a form that could be summarized and utilized followed the qualitative dictates'. In qualitative research, analysis and interpretation of data are considered as one process. (Chisaka, 2001).

Analysis of Data

Analysing data is a process in which raw data are ordered and organized so that useful information can be extracted from them. Analysing qualitative data is not as "prescriptive" as that for quantitative data due to the nature of the data themselves. Qualitative analysis involves sifting through large amounts of information, identifying important patterns, and reporting or giving rich descriptions of what was found.

For qualitative information, explicit procedures are used to organize summaries around common themes or categories and then to identify patterns (content analysis). In this research, qualitative data from observations, group discussions and interviews, were analysed question by question. Similarities or differences between different answers were noted and

emerging themes or ideas were identified and noted. Findings were also compared with those from any previous similar research and from review of related literature.

There are many tools that can be used in a qualitative study. One of the useful analytical tools that was used to enable the primary researcher to undertake an interpretive methodology was content coding and analysis.

a. Coding

Coding allows the researcher to organise responses into themes, thereby making the task of analysis and reporting easier. In this study, the primary researcher organized the responses in themes of different perspectives of time management.

b. Paraphrasing and summarising responses

This can be in the form of rephrasing statements in a clear condensed form. It may also be by picking out key words. This is what the researcher did in this study, picking up the important information only.

INTERPRETATION

Data interpretation involves the process of explaining and giving meaning to data that have been already analysed. According to Chisaka (2001), interpretation of data is a way of trying to make sense of data, uncovering what analysis could not do. It also implies an in-depth analysis and trying to read between the lines as a face value interpretation may be superficial. Trying to find out what exactly is in the data, why it is important and what can be learned from it, is what the researcher did with the data obtained. In this study, the researcher connected findings to personal experiences.

FINDINGS

One of the themes that emerged are time

management and its impact on job performance. The African culture, oblivious to clock time, affects employees' performance in the Mozambican tourism. In the review of related literature, the study shows that time management behaviour, and control over time has a significant effect on employees' job performance. Good time management can improve job performance, personal life and mental health. Heller and Hindle (1998) added that a person who performs efficiently and effectively in the job has more time for personal life. Schriber and Gutek (1987) found a significant relationship between overall job performance and time management. They asserted that management of time is the key element to managerial performance.

In this study, some participants were not happy with their job performance being assessed according to their time management.

“Eu não gostaria de ser avaliado o trabalho através da minha maneira de gerir o tempo. Cada qual sabe, o que fazer na hora certa.” (Mr. Antonio- employee at Queen beach)

Mr. Antonio meant that, he thought it was unfair to evaluate someone's job performance by looking at how these individuals manage their time. He said that each person knows what to do at a given time. This is the African perception of the conception of time management.

“As vezes recebo insultos de ser ineficiente enquanto a culpa do atraso não é meu.”

This was a complaint from Vicente Matos, a guard at Queen Beach. He says that 'sometimes, I get insulted when it is not my fault.' Apart from guarding, especially tourists' vehicles on the other side of the river, Vicente Matos is responsible for arranging the boat to ferry tourists when it is parked on the other side. Each time, clients arrive; Vicente has to raise the red flag on the tall pole below to alert the transporters.

Sometimes the transporters may delay for various reasons like:

- Waiting for clients who want to go to the other side.
- The transporters are not in the boat because they have been called to the office for one reason or another,
- The transporters didn't just notice the flag for one reason or another.

When such an incidence happens, some tourists who are not very patient start shouting at Vicente. In this case, it's not Vicente's fault though he suffers the consequences. This delay can have impact on revenue generation in that, the tourists may really get frustrated and not come back to the beach. Some may even prefer to go back at that instant.

Another sub-theme that emerged from this study is that time is defined differently by different people from different backgrounds at different times. This also explains the comparison between African Mozambican culture and the Western culture. From the data generated, the definition of time management differs from one person to another and even for the same person the definition differs from one place of application to another. Substantiating the foregoing concepts, the following are views of different stakeholders from tourist centres as interviewed by the researcher.

To the management participants in the study, time management refers to the ability to deliver products or services in time to the tourists. One should never be late for one's customers or else one will find them gone, so goes the motto for Dororo National Park. A focus group at Dororo, comprising of employees, supports this motto. They expressed the view that their life or earnings come from the tourists. Therefore, they needed to do exactly what their clients wanted them to do at whatever cost. Just like their employers, being on time is to be able to be there for the tourists at the exact time they are needed with what is needed.

The definition of time itself is different to different individuals or cultures. The informants brought out the relationship between time management and stress. In actual fact, they said when people misuse time or don't manage their time, they get stressed.

“É a maneira que cada um usa ou dirige o seu tempo sem ficar stressado.” (Mr. And Mrs. Joao-Brazilians tourists at Queen Beach)

Translated to English, this means that:

‘This is the way each person uses or manages their time without giving them stress.’

Because they feel like, whatever one does, as long as it doesn't stress them, they can do it for as long as they want.

When asked about the definition of time, a Mozambican tourist, Salomao, said:

“a forma racional de utilização do tempo disponível que um individuo tem”. (Mr. Salomão- Mozambican tourist at Dororo National Park)

The wife went further to explain that: “maximização de tempo disponível”

This means that, it is “a way of maximizing the use of time one has or rational use of time that one has”.

Time management, therefore, depends on what one gets out of managing time. It looks at the end result.

A couple from Zimbabwe when asked about their definition of time management said it was,

“To divide time according to activities that one has to do” (Mrs. Mafarira-Zimbabwean tourists-Queen beach)

This means that time is divided in the activities one has to do. What one has to do is an interesting point here. Whether one has to serve tourists, or employ people who serve tourists or even if one is a tourist visiting a tourist centre, all have activities that need to be done. They all need time to do these activities and, therefore, need to carefully divide this time into the planned or unplanned activities.

To better understand how Mozambique's African culture of time management impacts the tourism industry, the models and theories of practice of time management are discussed. Normally, the practice of time management follows some prescribed theories and models. The theories and models are exactly in accordance to Western perception of time management. Data from the following sources were analysed towards examining these models:

“It is important for one to have a plan and stick to the plan” (Eric Stevenson-Director at Dororo National Park)

The above Director justifies his statement by saying that even his animals have plans. If tourists want to see them, then they should go at a time when the animals are at a certain place. Normally the animals are there at a specific time and any delay will mean one might not get the animals at that place.

Mr. Antonio Golo (a local tourist when asked about his plan for the day, he responded;

“Quando estou aqui, é para descansar. Fugi a pressão da vida para relaxar. Faço o que quero na hora que eu quero, o que a minha cabeça entende de fazer naquele preciso momento”.

This means that he is at Queen Beach to rest. He ran away from home to relax from the pressures of life. When he is at the Beach, he does what he wants at a time that he wants it. He does what comes to his head at that exact moment. In doing that he doesn't want anyone to control his time. He would instead want to be given what he wants at a time that he wants. Tourists like this one do not want to be controlled and be told what to do and at what time. They want to control. If they are not, then they may get frustrated and not visit the centre again.

From the focus group of tourists, it was also noted that they think the workers are not adequate to cater for their needs. This focus group which comprised of three families visiting Queen Beach said that most of the times they are forced to eat cold food

at the restaurant. When the participants ask for different dishes, it is either they eat separately or some are forced to eat cold food. This is because there are few cooks to make all the dishes at the same time. The primary researcher actually observed and noted the said delays at one of the restaurants. Keeping one's time and time of others is another theme which came out of this research. This theme was especially found among the employees. Manuel Rego, an employee at Queen Beach does maintenance of rooms where tourists sleep. He said that he has no time to manage. His time is managed by others. These others are his supervisor and sometimes the clients. He has been given a timetable to follow. Based on this timetable, he makes his plans for the day but which sometimes he fails to adhere to for many reasons. On his plan, he is supposed to clean up the rooms from 8 until 10 am. But sometimes his plans are interrupted when, the tourists are still sleeping by 10 am (he can't wake them up of-course); there is a flux of clients needing breakfast in the restaurant and the personnel there are not enough to save them.

Because of all this, Mr. Rego sometimes doesn't complete his planned tasks. When asked what would be more important to him, delivering good quality service or delivering service in time, his response was;

"entregar o trabalho a tempo, para satisfazer o cliente;"

meaning delivering service in time to satisfy clients. In the interview with the researcher, the same employee also admitted that when he doesn't keep the time of the tourists, he suffers some consequences such as;

- Having tourists actually shouting at him.
- Losing a tip he would have got if otherwise.
- Tourists reporting him to his supervisor who shouts at him and threatens to fire him if it happens again.

This shows how different time management

perceptions are and the repercussions it has. In as much as Mr. Rego tries to satisfy the tourists, when things go the other way, he suffers the consequences. He doesn't just suffer from the tourists themselves but from his employer assumable. The researcher thinks he also gets another share of punishment from his colleagues. All this was because of keeping the time of a tourist. This is what makes the concept of time management a difficult concept. Everyone interprets it in their own way.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that human time is the most precious natural resource one has. It is well managed when things that ought to run smoothly are doing so and desired ends are being achieved by its economical use. Review of related literature revealed that time management behaviours were generally found to have a positive effect on perceived control of time, job satisfaction, stress reduction, job or academic performance, and health, although results were sometimes contradictory.

Managing time can be compared to controlling time. But surely one cannot control time in the sense of stopping it, slowing it down or speeding it up. But one can apply it economically to the tasks one has to accomplish. By looking at the tasks one has to accomplish, the end result is the most important factor. The end result in the tourism sector is revenue generation.

From the data gathered, time management was a poorly defined concept by many authors; hence a new definition is proposed. In this study, the definition of time management is behaviour that aims at achieving an effective use of time to get value out of the time to achieve positive results. The most important thing to note is that, in the tourism sector, all time management perspectives should be taken into consideration because there are different people from different cultures involved.

Most of these people are tourists and these bring revenue to the sector.

It is unlikely that a single time management tool will ever be capable of supporting all aspects of a person's time. People act differently in different situations,

when at work, at home or at a tourist centres. Knowing how best to treat them at tourist centres makes a difference in income generation. When not treated well, they may not come back and that hinders revenue generation.

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