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The Issue on eTravel Business

Determination of Road user Charges

Highlights

The Impact of Behaviors and Skills

Tour Guide in Guiding Tourist Groups

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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Determination of Road user Charges in South East Nigeria: An Empirical Survey

By Dike, D. N., Ogwude, I. C, Ibe, C. C., Ejem, E. A. & Olikagu, C. A
Federal University of Technology

Abstract- The study was set out to determine road user charges (per/km). It carried out survey on different vehicle classifications (category) according to their average weights and converted them to an equivalent standard axle load (ESAL). This was utilized to determine the charges payable, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) and the cost component of a federal highway in the South-Eastern Nigeria on a yearly basis. The various needed data is collected especially the AADT. The charge per ESAL was obtained by dividing the annual roadway costs by aggregating the total number of the ESAL-Km it incurs on the 80.5km Onitsha-Owerri highway in a year. Furthermore, charge per vehicle was obtained by multiplying the individual ESALs by the charge per ESAL-Km. The study results show that road user charges (RUC) are directly proportional to the equivalent standard axle load (ESAL). This means that higher charges are paid by road users that cause more unit wear to the road. Hence the results: Tricycles and light passenger vehicle charges are negligible, Minibuses to pay ₦0.98/km, Trucks and Buses to pay ₦11.6/km, vehicles with multi-axles to pay ₦17/km, and Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth Moving Equipment to pay ₦41.59/km to recover the ₦517 million computed as the annual roadway cost.

Keywords: road, user, charge, costing, highway and axle load.

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Determination of Road user Charges in South East Nigeria: An Empirical Survey

Dike, D. N. [α], Ogwude, I. C [σ], Ibe, C. C. [ρ], Ejem, E. A. [Ѡ] & Olikagu, C. A. [¥]

Abstract- The study was set out to determine road user charges (per/km). It carried out survey on different vehicle classifications (category) according to their average weights and converted them to an equivalent standard axle load (ESAL). This was utilized to determine the charges payable, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) and the cost component of a federal highway in the South-Eastern Nigeria on a yearly basis. The various needed data is collected especially the AADT. The charge per ESAL was obtained by dividing the annual roadway costs by aggregating the total number of the ESAL-Km it incurs on the 80.5km Onitsha-Owerri highway in a year. Furthermore, charge per vehicle was obtained by multiplying the individual ESALs by the charge per ESAL-Km. The study results show that road user charges (RUC) are directly proportional to the equivalent standard axle load (ESAL). This means that higher charges are paid by road users that cause more unit wear to the road. Hence the results: Tricycles and light passenger vehicle charges are negligible, Minibuses to pay ₦0.98/km, Trucks and Buses to pay ₦11.6/km, vehicles with multi-axles to pay ₦17/km, and Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth Moving Equipment to pay ₦41.59/km to recover the ₦517 million computed as the annual roadway cost. Road user charges must serve the essential function of rationing the available supply among many possible demands.

Keywords: road, user, charge, costing, highway and axle load.

I. Background to the Study

Transportation is one of the tools the civilized societies need to bring order out of chaos. In Nigeria, Ogwude (2011) asserted that only in the cities of Lagos and Abuja are conventional buses in use similar to what obtains in most cities worldwide. However in both cities the use of para-transit modes of transport is clearly dominant. For this reason, he said Nigeria remains the only country in the world where densely populated cities with over 6 million people do not have an organized urban transport system based on a combination of conventional buses and rail. Ugboaja and Ukpere (2011) established that transport systems provide mobility, access and other benefits as facilitating the productivity of other sectors of the economy. According to them, this contributes to several environmental pressures, namely atmospheric pollution, traffic accidents, congestion, resources depletion, waste accumulation and disruption of nature and cities.

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Urban transport pricing is currently one of the topical issues in different nations of the world. Pricing road use by time, place and distance of travel offers planners and politicians a powerful tool for reducing urban road traffic. An important goal when setting user fees is to achieve economic efficiency. The basic rule is for a price to be set equal to marginal cost. Consumers are only willing to purchase service that is at least as much as the price, so the rule says that consumers will get the service only when their benefits exceed the marginal cost of producing the service. The result is that marginal cost pricing maximizes social welfare. When the user charge is equal to marginal cost, the benefit of consuming the last unit of service equals its production cost (William and Edminton, 2000).

In 1985, about 23 percent of roads in Nigeria was in a bad state. This figure rose to 30 percent in 1991, and 50 percent in 2001 (Draft National Transport Policy, 2010). Unless roads and bridges are in good conditions, they cannot support the desired socio-economic development of Nigeria and particularly in the South-East. This is why road pricing is important to prevent the rate of damage and to generate funds for maintenance and the provision of more facilities. User charges also have great potential for funding additional investment in public service infrastructure. Anderson (1987) demonstrated that if user charges increased the financial rate of return to public services infrastructure by 5 percent, enough revenues would be generated in sub-Saharan Africa to finance a 60 percent increase in annual investment.

Some federal highways in the South-East of Nigeria include the Owerri-Umuahia, Enugu-Onitsha, Onitsha-Owerri, Abakaliki-Enugu, Enugu-Port Harcourt, Afikpo-Okigwe, etc. but more emphasis was on the Onitsha-Owerri federal road. South-East comprises the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo with Owerri and Enugu as its geographical and regional capitals respectively. The South-East houses two major commercial cities; Aba and Onitsha which are of great contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The presence of these markets has inflated the generated traffic on all the federal highways inter-linking all these ever-busy markets. Onolememen (2012) stated that the 80.84 km dual carriage Onitsha-Owerri highway as at 2012 has gulp the sum of ₦19 billion in its construction cost representing 97% project completion. The loss of production hours before this time was enormous due to

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the high rise of externality factors arising from congestion, parking, and other environmental problems. The loss due to bad roads in Nigeria is valued at ₦80 billion yearly, while additional vehicle operating cost resulting from bad roads is estimated at ₦53.8 billion, bringing the total loss per annum to ₦133.8 billion (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2003). This excludes the man-hour losses in traffic due to bad roads and other emotional and physical trauma people go through on the road and the consequent loss of productivity.

Applying the 'cost causation principle,'a direct relation between traffic activity and resulting costs has to be made. Maintenance and some share of investment costs of surface layers are allocated accordingly by the 4th power of axle weights as recommended by the American Association of State Highway and Transport Officials (AASHTO) Road Test (Franziska, 2005). Therefore, determination of road user charges in South-East Nigeria will attempt to provide the unit charge payable by any road user in other to recover reasonably all the costs borne by the government in roadway costs. The questions we must ask are; which road user is responsible for the wear on the road? What cost was incurred to that effect? And on what basis is this allocated?

This paper would help the federal government make a good evaluation on how best to recover the cost of providing roadways, while increasing the budgetary allocation of the industrial sector vis-à-vis reducing the unemployment rate in the country at large. Therefore, is this method indeed a pathway to efficiency in road pricing in Nigeria? The aim of this paper is to determine road user charges as an empirical result by using the fourth power principle method of cost allocation to recover the capital and the maintenance cost per annum.

II. Methodology

The survey design was adopted for this study; this was due to the variability in capital and maintenance costs, and the traffic loads in different locations of the region. Traffic load depends on the rate of flow of road users measured in traffic volumes and the axle load measured in the Equivalent Standard Axle Load (ESAL).

A survey shows that the federal highways that go through the South-East includes; the Owerri-Umuahia, Enugu-Onitsha, Onitsha-Owerri, Abakaliki-Enugu, Enugu-Port Harcourt, Afikpo-Okigwe, etc. but more emphasis will be laid on the Onitsha-Owerri federal road and hence the study's sample size. The research population included all road users (vehicle classifications/types) in the South-East based on the following classification: Tricycles, Passenger car; Jeep, Van, Wagon, etc.; Minibuses; Buses or Trucks; Multiple Axles Trucks and Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth-Moving Equipment.

The paper presents the analysis of the survey on road user classification in South-Eastern Nigeria based on weight relevance. Various weights are converted to equivalent standard axle load (ESAL). It analyzed the results of the Annual Average Daily Traffic using the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for seven-day volume counts. The Annual Vehicle Equivalent Standard Axle was computed, and the study estimated the road cost structure. The charge per different road user classification/category as calculated; hence, road user charges will then be determined.

III. Result and Discussion

a) *Road user Classification in South-East Nigeria*

Road user classification by vehicle weights in the South-Eastern Nigeria roads was shown according to the general classification of vehicles. This was done to avert the problem of lack of weigh-in-motion Bridge on our roads. Ordinarily, the 'Tricycles' is good component of the road users on this road but was neglected due to its insignificant weight to the ESAL and its short-distant journey purpose. Light private vehicles (LPV) which included passenger cars, jeep and vans and its weight category is from 1000 lbs to 6000 lbs, and this is the most frequent of the vehicle classification. Mini-buses are a very clear classification of road users in south-Eastern Nigeria; this forms the inter-city transport means in the region. It weighs between 6001 lbs to 14,000 lbs and the second traffic frequency.

Buses or trucks included all vehicles manufactured as traditional passenger-carrying buses and freight-carrying trucks with two axles to three axles and six tires. This includes; school buses, tippers. It weighs between 14,001 to 22,000 lbs. Trucks of multi-axles were used to categorize all trucks within the range of 22,001 lbs to 38,000 lbs. This group included the tippers that have 12,000 front axles and 17,500 rear axles, city bus which normally weighs from 25,000 lbs to 40,000 (25 to 60 passengers).The last group is the Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth-Moving Equipment with an average weight of about 50,000 lbs. This included tankers, 1999 Mack (56,000lbs), 1999 Volvo trailer (52,000 lbs) etc. This classification is a typical developing nation's type adopted from India's practice, for many developed nations has over 600 different classifications.

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Table 1: Road user Classification in South Eastern Nigeria

Road user Classification	Weight Range (lbs)	Average Weight (lbs)
Light Private Vehicles	0-6,000	3,000
Mini-Buses	6,001-14,000	10,000
Trucks or Buses	14,001-22,000	18,000
Vehicles of Multi-axles	22,001-38,000	30,000
Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth Moving Equipment	38,001-above	50,000

b) Conversion to ESAL using the Fourth Power Principle

Based on AASHO road test results, the most common approach is to convert wheel loads of various magnitudes to an equivalent number of "standard" or "equivalent" loads. The most commonly used load in Nigeria is the 18,000lbs (80kN or 8.16kips). This figure is obtainable in many parts of the world.

Using the fourth power rule of thumb: $ESALS_j = \sum_i x_i^{exp}$,

A 30,000lbs road user will have an ESAL of $\left(\frac{30,000}{18,000}\right)^4 = 7.7$.

Table 3 shows the load equivalency factor computed by the American Association of State Highways and Transport Officials (ASSHTO) to standardize it.

Table 2: ESAL of Different Road user Classification in South Eastern Nigeria

Road user Classification	Average Weight (lbs)	Description	ESAL
Light Private Vehicles	3,000	Single axle	0.0003
Mini-buses	10,000	Single axle	0.118
Trucks or buses	20,000	Single axle	1.4
Vehicles of Multi-axles	40,000	Tandem axle	2.06
Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth Moving Equipment	50,000	Tandem axle	5.03

Table 3: AASHO Typical Load Equivalency Factors

Axle Type (lbs)	Axle Load		Load Equivalency Factor (LEF)	
	(KN)	(lbs.)	Flexible	Rigid
Single Axle	8.9	2,000	0.0003	0.0002
	44.5	10,000	0.118	0.082
	62.3	14,000	0.399	0.341
	80.0	18,000	1.000	1.000
	89.0	20,000	1.4	1.57
	133.4	30,000	7.9	8.28
Tandem Axle	8.9	2,000	0.0001	0.0001
	44.5	10,000	0.011	0.013
	62.3	14,000	0.042	0.048
	80.0	18,000	0.109	0.133
	89.0	20,000	0.162	0.206
	133.4	30,000	0.703	1.14
	151.2	34,000	1.11	1.92
	177.9	40,000	2.06	3.74
	222.4	50,000	5.03	9.07

Source: Aashto 1993

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c) Computation of the Disaggregated ADT

Table 4: Disaggregated AADT in South Eastern Nigeria

Road user Classification	AADT (units)
Light Private Vehicles	900,000
Mini-buses	300,000
Trucks or buses	200,000
Vehicles of Multi-axles	100,000
Heavy Construction Machinery and Earth Moving Equipment	50,000

The data-collection periods consisted of 7 consecutive days; its average was taken and was converted into the annual ADT by multiplying each data by 365 representing the number of days in a year as shown Table 4. Figure 1 shows the traffic of different road user category based on the hours of the day, while Table 4 shows the representation of total road users' traffic.

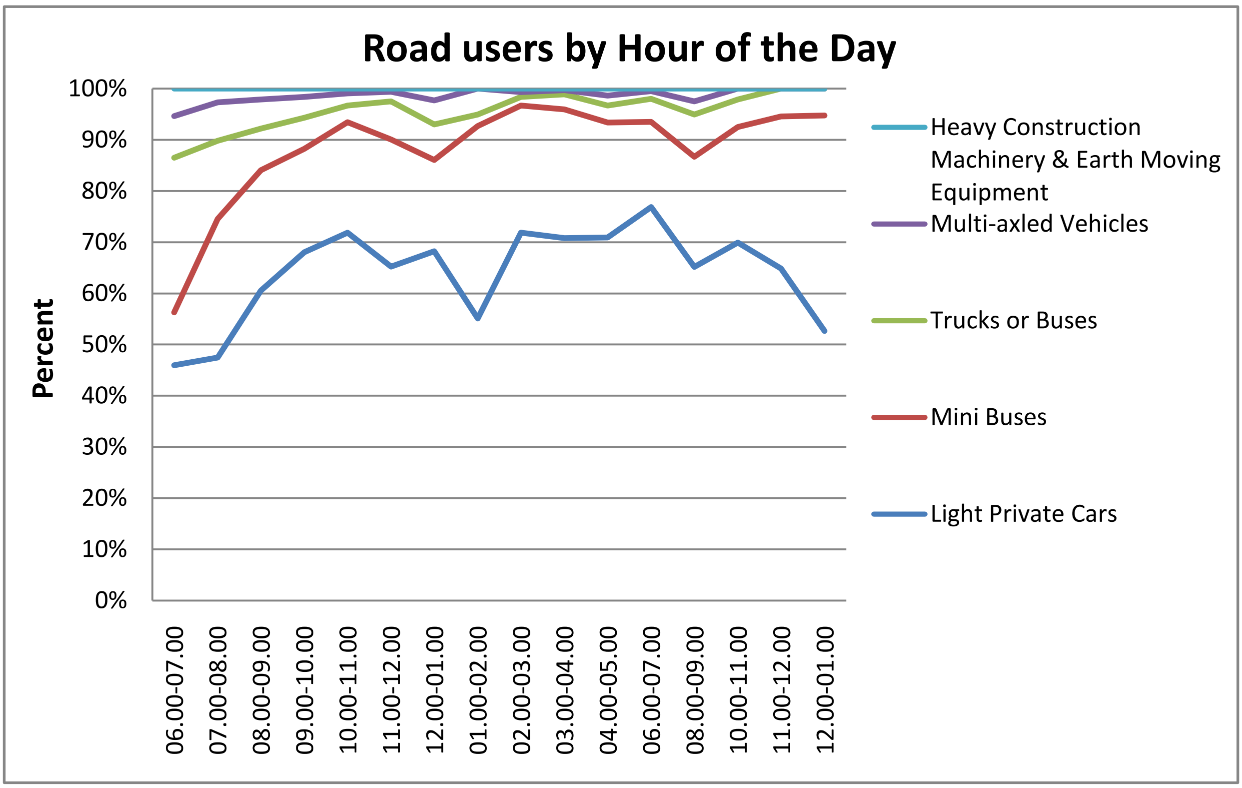

Figure 1: Road users by Hour of the Day

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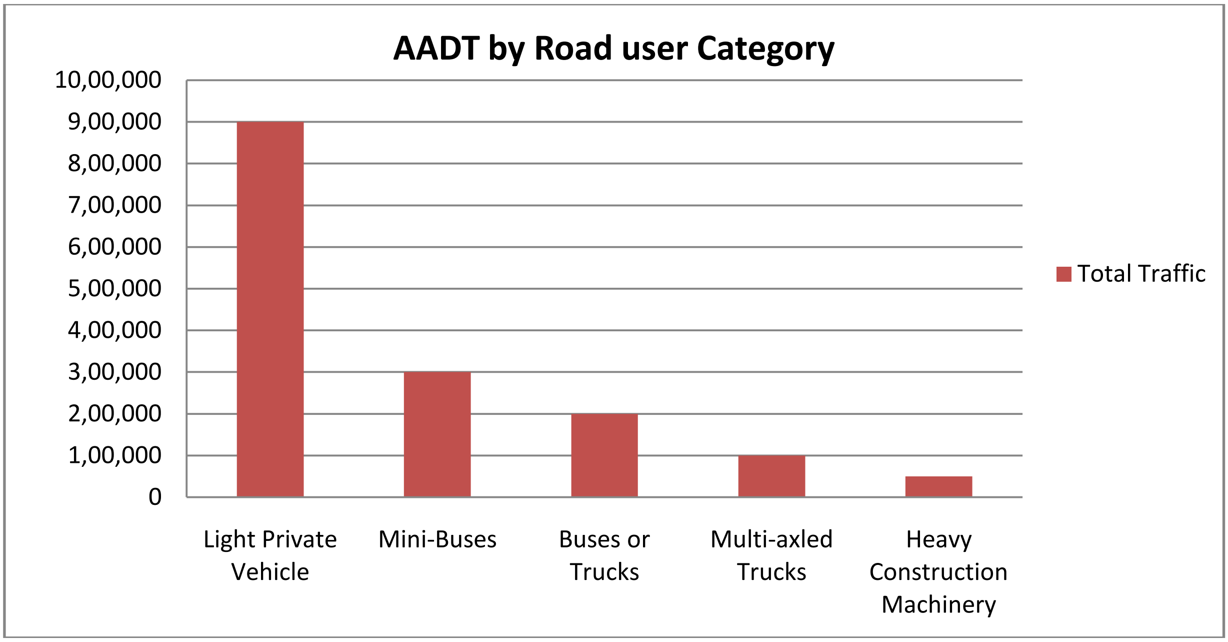

Figure 2: AADT by Road user Category

d) Estimation of Annual Vehicle ESAL

By adding the product of the ESALs and kilometers performed for each road user category too;

$$ESALKM = \sum_j \left(ESALS_j * z_j\right)$$

We estimated the ESAL per road user category; therefore we multiply the ESAL per road user by the AADT.

$$\text{Thus: } \sum_j aESAL - KM = \sum_j (AADT * ESAL)$$

Where; j represents various road user categories.

e) Component of Annual Road Cost

Annual roadway cost was classified under the following cost headings; depreciation of Capital cost, Annual maintenance, Highway Administration, Highway patrol and safety, Interest on capital, Expenditure on road pricing and other externalities.

Table 5: Annual Roadway Cost for Onitsha-Owerri Federal Highway

Road Way Expenditure	Amount (₦)
Depreciation of Capital Investment	285,000,000
Maintenance or Operation Cost	19,100,000
Highway Administration	5,000,000
Highway Patrol and Safety	12,000,000
Interest on Capital	16,625,000
Expenditure on Road Pricing	165,000,000
Other Externalities	15,081,750
Total	517,806,750

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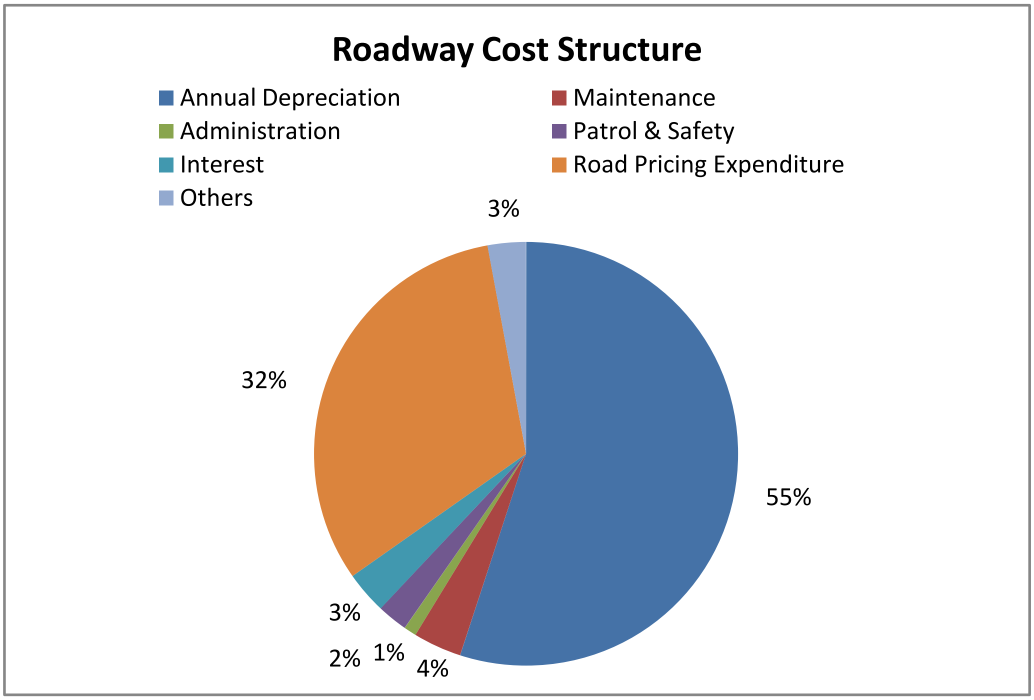

Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Roadway Cost Structure

f) Computation of Charge per ESAL-KM

The annual roadway costs are divided by the ESAL-km (see table 5), the charge per ESAL-km is obtained. Therefore the road user charges were finally gotten by multiplying the charge per ESAL-km by the ESAL of individual road users as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Road User Charges in South Eastern Nigeria per Vehicle

Road User Classification	Road user Charges per Vehicle (₦)
Light Private Vehicles	0
Mini-buses	79
Trucks or buses	938
Vehicles of Multi-axles	1,380
Heavy Const. Machinery Earth Moving Equipment	3,369

Table 7: Road User Charges in South Eastern Nigeria per Km

Road User Classification	Road user Charges (₦) per Km
Light Private Vehicles	Negligible
Mini-buses	0.98
Trucks or buses	11.6
Vehicles of Multi-axles	17.0
Heavy Const. Machinery Earth Moving Equipment	41.59

The results above are the empirical results for which this research was designed and expected to produce.

IV. Conclusion

This paper aimed at ascertaining the average weight of the road user classification converted into its equivalent standard axle of 80kN (18,000lbs) as provided by the fourth power principle. An AADT was obtained using the ADT data of a seven-day counting. The annual equivalent standard axle load on the sample road of individual road users' category was calculated and further divided the estimated roadway cost to ascertain the charge per ESAL-KM. The empirical results were determined by multiplying these charges per ESAL-KM and the individual ESALS. In spite of what is often seen as disadvantages of road pricing, charging for road use through the fourth power principle has shown clearly the damaging power of the axle loads regarding the charges, and road users with higher ESAL pay higher charges than those of lesser ESAL. In fact, the current situation of most of the South-Eastern Nigeria roads has led to more vehicle operating cost than the liabilities of these user charges and therefore has guaranteed minimal externality costs.

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The Influence of Inbound Tour Operators (ITOS) in Positioning Kenya as an Attractive Destination for American Leisure and Travel Market

By Ondabu E Kiage
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Abstract- Kenya is a popular tourism destination in Africa with abundant tourism resources and activities. However, to the Americans who are among the world's top spenders in outbound travel, Kenya is not a popular destination. The study explored ways that Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) can use to position Kenya as an attractive destination for American leisure and travel market. The study targeted 40 respondents from selected ITOs based in Nairobi using questionnaire survey mainly on 5-point likert scale. Abundant wildlife, safari experience and unique accommodation were the most popular tourism products, and technology was the main source of information and trip planning (score 5). More than 50% of the tourists were accompanied by family members and would recommend Kenya to others. Insecurity, and travel time between the two countries were main constraints to American travelers to Kenya (score 5). ITOs have a vital role to make destination Kenya attractive to American travelers, and in enhancing visitor experiences at various destinations.

Keywords: inbound tour operators, american tourists, tourism resources and activities, positioning, attractiveness.

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Ondabu E Kiage

Abstract- Kenya is a popular tourism destination in Africa with abundant tourism resources and activities.

However, to the Americans who are among the world's top spenders in outbound travel, Kenya is not a popular destination. The study explored ways that Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) can use to position Kenya as an attractive destination for American leisure and travel market. The study targeted 40 respondents from selected ITOs based in Nairobi using questionnaire survey mainly on 5-point likert scale. Abundant wildlife, safari experience and unique accommodation were the most popular tourism products, and technology was the main source of information and trip planning (score 5). More than 50% of the tourists were accompanied by family members and would recommend Kenya to others. Insecurity, and travel time between the two countries were main constraints to American travelers to Kenya (score 5). ITOs have a vital role to make destination Kenya attractive to American travelers, and in enhancing visitor experiences at various destinations. It is suggested that ITOs work closely with the government to address security and safety issues, reduce travel time, create incentives for Kenyan Diaspora to consume and market destination Kenya, and invest in ICT and skills training, in order to increase American travelers' consumption of destination Kenya.

Keywords: inbound tour operators, american tourists, tourism resources and activities, positioning, attractiveness.

I. Introduction

Tourism is big business globally which destinations cannot afford to ignore. Destinations worldwide received 369 million International tourists in the first quarter of 2017, representing 6% growth over the same period 2016 (UNWTO, 2017). Various UNWTO reports indicate that tourism is an important global service industry and that international arrivals are expected to be more than double by 2020, reaching 1.6 billion arrivals while tourism expenditure is expected to reach US$ 2 trillion. From the perspective of this global industry, tourism to and in developing countries is of major significance. For example, 42% of international travel takes place to today's developing countries. The direct contribution of Tourism to Kenya's GDP was Kes 220.6b (4.1% of total GDP) in 2014, and was forecast to rise by 5.1% p.a. in the period 2015-2025 generating Kes 376.5b (4.0% of total GDP) in 2025. In 2014 Tourism directly supported 206,500 jobs (3.5% of total employment) and is expected to rise by 2.9% pa to 277,000 jobs (3.4% of total employment) in 2025. Tourism investment in 2014 was Kes 69.3b, which was 6.4% of total investment and is expected to rise by 5.2% pa up to 2025 and earn the country Kes 121.0b (WTTC, 2015).

Tourism has the capacity to promote regional development, create new commercial and industrial enterprises, create/stimulate SMEs, stimulate demand for locally produced goods and services, and provide a market for agricultural products. KNBS (2001-2011), indicate that tourism development in Kenya led to economic growth and poverty eradication in a number of ways: Generation of foreign exchange earnings, taxation, license fees, park entry fees; employment both in the formal sector (200,000 jobs) and in-formal sector (600,000 jobs), and stimulated growth in other economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, transport and handicrafts. Thus, tourism is one of the 5 key pillars in the realization of vision 2030 which is meant to make Kenya a middle income economy by 2030 (GoK, 2011). With these apparent benefits of tourism, it is essential that inbound tour operators (ITOs) play its part positioning Kenya as a destination of choice for specific targeted tourism markets.

The aim of this paper was to identify ways that ITOs can use to position Kenya as an attractive destination for American leisure and travel market. ITOs are a central link between demand and supply and hence have power to influence both according to their needs. Maru and Kieti (2013) state that ITOs are 'middlemen' who are normally located in key urban centers and entry areas to the main attractions. They range from multinationals to briefcase firms and are usually contracted by tour wholesalers in tourists generating countries to provide services to clients and thus, they are an important component in ensuring tourist satisfaction (Honey and Krantz, 2007).

In 2007, the total number of American outbound travelers was 31,288,000 and about 938,640 (3%) of them choose Africa as a destination. Of those who chose Africa, Kenya attracted 100,516 (10.7%) while SA attracted 219,000 (22.3%) travelers double that to Kenya (UNWTO, 2008). This is rather disturbing knowing well that Kenya offers the best attractions in Africa, has a

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large Kenyan Diaspora in America led by the most famous "Kenyan son", President Obama, etc. Statistics from the first 10 months of 2015 and (2016) show the following of number of tourists into Kenya from selected counties: UK 84,423 (80,821); US 70,734 (82,363); India 41,257 (54,983); Uganda 24,420 (45,116); China 25,299 (41,459); Germany 30,806 (36,066); SA 25,819 (28,720); Italy 24,830 (27,933). This data indicate that tourists from all markets increased except from UK. In the first 10 months of 2016, the USA was ranked no. 1(82,363). However, comparing 2007 (100,516) and 2016 (102,640), this was really a very small increase which must be a concern of Kenyan tourism stakeholders. Western countries are still leading in tourist numbers because tour wholesalers understand their consumer behavior; some of them have investments in Kenya and a section of ITOs have some partnerships with tour wholesalers in those countries. Further, there is a fairly large Kenyan Diaspora in the west. However, the 'emerging' markets India, China and Africa, are showing great potential and growth, and are forecast to grow (UNWTO, 2016). This "emerging market" growth is changing tourism and therefore, the ITOs need to gain knowledge about these emerging markets for marketing strategy planning, targeted consumer recognition and positioning.

Kenya is regarded as the "jewel of East Africa" (GoK, 2009). Kenya offers both natural and cultural experiences to visitors hardly found elsewhere ranging from world famous wildlife parks/reserves, natural landscapes, beautiful Indian Ocean beaches to diverse cultures and historical sites. In fact, one of the wonders of the world is here in Kenya; the great migration of over a million wildlife animals across the border of Kenya and Tanzania yearly. Generally, Kenya is endured with both natural and cultural heritage attractions, fairly good accessibility and connectivity to both local and international markets which gives the country and service providers immerse opportunities to position Kenya as an attractive destination. Tourism activities associate with tourists while in Kenya include; seeing diversity of wildlife, undertaking a safari, game drive, adventure, festivals, visiting historical sites, philanthropy, etc, and there is potential for further innovation in products development, for example, golf courses, scuba - diving, jungle - trekking, river cruises, etc (IATA, 2005). However, insecurity and terrorism, erratic politic environment, environmental degradation, etc are some of the challenges impacting negatively on Kenyan tourism.

To provide quality services, service providers must be well trained and motivated, and equipped with right skills and tools. Service employees play a key role in both creating customer satisfaction and working toward service recovery when services offered to not conform to the expectations of customers. The managers must therefore have the right people and design jobs and responsibilities very well in order to enhance service delivery and minimize cases of unproductive behavior and stress (Buhalis, 2000; Ries & Trout, 1986). In the region, Kenya has a competitive advantage inherent in well trained professionals with very good skills, dedication to service provision, highly motivated and innovative who contribute directly and indirectly to customer satisfaction. High customer satisfaction leads to continuity in relations with customers and therefore customer loyalty and retention, and destination attractiveness. The innovative abilities of the Kenya people for example, can be experienced in technology money transfer (m-pesa, and m-shwari).

The UNWTO statistics show that American tourists to Kenya is not steady, calling for concerted efforts to steady and grow this market for the prosperity of the Kenyan people. Understanding the concept of positioning is key to developing an effective competitive posture (Lovelock, 2000; Trout, 1997). It is important for ITOs in Kenya to know which product features are of specific interest to customers in order to develop a competitive strategy for destination Kenya, and evaluate the products' subsequent performance in the tourism market place. Therefore, this study sought to: understand the needs of the USA travel market; determine the tourism products and activities that appeal to them; find out how they access information about destination Kenya; establish the challenges the American tourists encounter; and determine opportunities that ITOs can further use to influence American travelers to visit destination Kenya.

II. Positioning

It is well established that every product generates images among the target customers. This image is known as position of a particular product. The position enjoyed by the same product may be different for different customer groups. In the competitive marketplace, a position reflects how consumers perceive the product/organization's performance on specific attributes relative to that of one or more competitors. Customers' brand choices reflect which brands they know and remember as well as how each of these brands are positioned within each customer's mind. These positions are, of course, simply perceptual, but people make decisions based on their individual perceptions of reality rather than on an expert's definition of reality (Lovelock, 2000; Ries & Trout, 1986).

Positioning is the process of establishing and maintaining a distinctive place in the market for an organization and/or its individual product offering (Lovelock, 2000). It is the way a company, tourism offering, destination or country is viewed in relation to other companies, destinations, and by customer segments. Positioning is in the eyes of the customer, it is how the market perceives the company, country, destination, etc. It has also been defined in terms of the

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way a company positions itself in the marketplace thru its service offering and communication of this to various market segments (Lumsdon, 1997). Trout (1997), distils the essence of positioning into four principles, namely:

1. A company must establish a position in the minds of its targeted customers,
2. The position should be singular, providing one simple and consistent message,
3. The position must set the company apart from its competitors,
4. A company cannot be all things to all people; it must focus its efforts.

These principles apply to any type of organization that competes for customers. Understanding the concept of positioning is key to developing an effective posture for it offers valuable insights by forcing managers to analyze their firm's existing offerings and to provide specific answers to various questions:

1. What does our firm currently stand for in the minds of current and potential customers?
2. What customers to we currently serve and which ones may we target in future?
3. What are the characteristics of our current service offerings and who is its target?
4. How do our service offering differ from those of competitors?
5. How are the offerings perceived by chosen targets as meeting their needs?
6. What changes are needed in our offerings to strengthen our competitive position?

Thus, positioning plays a pivotal role in marketing strategy because it links market analysis and competitive analysis to internal corporate analysis. It is positioning analysis that provides inputs to decisions relating to product development, service delivery, pricing, and communication strategy (Dibb & Simkin, 1993; Lovelock, 2000). For a destination, good positioning may reduce the risk element of prospects that are visiting destination for the first time (Karma, 1997). Morgan (1996) in his study cited three prolonged strategy for positioning. First, the key benefits sought by the tourists were derived; second, the product was designed as per customer preferences; and third, the product features were communicated to the target market thru promotional campaigns.

III. Destination Attractiveness

The popularity of tourism destinations can be enhanced by combining factors of competitiveness and attractiveness. Supply side drives competitiveness, and demand side drives attractiveness elements. The input of both tourists and operators of tourism facilities are necessary for any destination to manage and enhance its competitive advantage. Tourist friendly destinations are created from a combination aspect of space, activities, and products within the tourism system approach. Space which is equipped with infrastructure, facilities, accommodation, attraction and others, is essential to ensure a tourist friendly destination that fulfills the supply and demand of tourist (Anuar et al., 2012). For tourism to be a profitable industry now and in the long term, its development and management should be according to a new competitiveness paradigm (Ritchie and Crouch, 1993). Competitiveness is now widely accepted as the most important factor determining the long term success of organizations, and countries (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999). Ritchie and Crouch (2003), state what makes a tourism destination truly competitive is its ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, and memorable experiences.

A destination is said to be competitive if its market share measured by visitor numbers and financial returns are increasing (Hassan, 2000). This approach supports the widely held view that competitiveness should be linked to high numbers and increasing destination income. The attractiveness of a destination reflects the feelings and opinions of its visitors about the destination's perceived ability to satisfy their needs. The more a destination is able to meet the needs of its tourists, the more it is perceived to be attractive and the more the destination is likely to be chosen. Mayo and Jarvis (1980), define attractiveness as "the perceived ability of the destination to deliver individual benefits". This ability is enhanced by attributes of a destination, i.e. those components that makeup a destination which forms the demand side perspective of the destination. The importance of these attributes help people to evaluate the attractiveness of a destination and make relevant choices. The attractiveness of a tourist destination encourages people to visit and spend time at the destination. Therefore, the major value of destination attractiveness is the pulling effect it has on the tourists. Without attractiveness, tourism does not exist and there could be little or no need for tourist facilities and services. It is when people are attracted to a destination that facilities and services follow (Ferrario, 1979b).

IV. Tour Operators (TOS)

Tour operator brings together the essential elements of a holiday such as transport, ground handling, accommodation, information provision, and visits to attractions. A tour operator will organize, put together different elements of the tourism experience and offer them for sale to the public by means of advertising (Page, 2006). Tour operation or tour wholesaling is the linchpin of distribution of tourism development. Tour wholesaler acts as a catalyst of demand; he/she interprets the market needs of his clients and packages these needs into destinations. His influence on the direction of demand is particularly

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significant to long haul, and relatively expensive destinations (Jenkins, 1991). A tour operator/tour wholesaler is often described as an intermediary and they are in contact with travelers before, during and after their vacation and hence they can influence behavior (Cooper & Jackson, 1989). TOs have control over tourists' itinerary, choice of destination, accommodation, excursions, air and ground transportation, etc. They therefore, play an important role in the service marketing mix: product, promotion, price, place, people, physical evidence, packaging and process. Positioning is associated with the communication elements of this marketing mix especially promotion. Their effort can significantly influence the tourism industry, especially in a country like Kenya with significantly less familiarity and accessibility to USA visitors (Kozak, & Baloglu, 2010; Bennett, 1993). As an intermediary, they bring buyers and sellers together, either to create markets where they previously did not exist, or to make existing markets work more efficiently and thereby expand the market size.

There are two types of TOs namely; Outbound Tour Operators (OTOs) and Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs). OTOs promote tours, and design multi-national tours especially long haul travelers seeking a specific experience in a foreign destination. They work in partnership with local operators in the destination, or alternatively they can choose tours already designed by inbound operators and re-sell them to clients. They have in-depth knowledge of their customers' needs; design travel products that meet those needs i.e. travel documents, transportation, accommodation, sightseeing, activities, etc. On the other hand ITOs also known as 'ground operators', are the local experts in a destination's tourism products. They pick out 'export ready' products that they promote overseas thru distributors. They formulate tour packages individually or in collaboration with foreign tour operators who understand their clients' needs i.e. transportation, sightseeing, entertainment, meals, currency exchange, insurance services, etc. Tourists at home in their country generally do not have in depth knowledge of a destination or the service providers in that destination hence they end up seeking the services of ITOs. Therefore, ITOs must have an established product, be in demand in the target market, offer good value for money, have a product that is consistently delivered with high level of quality and service, have a product that provide a unique experience and availability, and must respond to customers' inquiry and complaints in real-time (Buhalis, 1994; Barras, 1986).

The dynamic changes in tourism continue to evolve and are characterized by more experienced travelers who know what they want, are sensitive to the ecosystem, and are sensitive to the plight and role of the local community in tourism development. They want to create, feel, and participate, and thereby exist with memorable experience rather than a repetition of the usual. Thus, ITOs face a number of challenges such as; product quality and diversity, knowledgeable consumers, relations between countries, exchange rates, language constraint/barriers, regulatory laws, competition, lack of financial resources, insecurity, ever evolving technology, and lack of coherent tourism policy. These challenges are really and affect operations of ITOs and at the same time, they also provide opportunities to position Kenya as a destination of choice.

V. Research Methodology

The study targeted ITOs who were members of Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) and had participated in USA trade shows as per Kenya Tourist Board (KTB) data for the last ten years. Using census sampling, data was sort from 40 ITOs and targeted product development managers, operations managers, marketing executives and tour consultants, who had served the American travelers into Kenya in 2016. The questionnaire was distributed either thru email or in person to 40 targeted tour operators but 29 ITOs answered and returned the questionnaire, representing 72.5% rate of the sample. The information sort included; demographic and travel characteristics; travelers' needs/preferences; appeal and challenges; and ITOs' operations and opportunities. Descriptive statistics formed the main tool of analysis and result presentations.

VI. Finding and Discussion

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Information (N=29)

Age

Age Bracket	Frequency
Up to 25	4 (13.8%)
26 - 35	6 (20.7%)
36 - 45	12 (41.4%)
46 - 55	5 (17.2%)
Above 55	2 (6.9%)
Total	29

Marital Status

Single	Frequency
Single	7 (24.1%)
Married	15 (51.7%)
Widowed	2 (6.9%)
Divorced	5 (17.2%)
Total	29

Gender

Male	15 (51.7%)
Female	12 (41.4%)
Other	2 (6.9%)
Total	29

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Education

Elementary	2 (6.9%)
Secondary	4 (13.8%)
College/University	22 (75.9%)
Other	1 (3.4%)
Total	29

Level of Income (US$)/Month

Below 4,000	3 (10.3%)
4,000 - 8,000	23 (79.3%)
Above 8,000	3 (10.3%)
Total	29 (100%)

Table 2: Travel Behavior Characteristics (N=29)

Table 2.1: Who accompanied them?

	Frequency	Percent
i) Alone	4	13.8
ii) Family	15	51.7
iii) Friends	7	24.1
iv) Business Group	3	10.3
Total	29	100

Table 2.2: How do American travelers source for information on destination Kenya?

(Respond using the following options in a scale of 1 to 5; 1 = not at all important, 3= neutral, 5 = very important)

						Average Score
i) Advertisement on mass media	1	2	3	4	5	0
ii) Brochures and travel magazines	1	2	3	4	5	2.5
iii) Company website	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
iv) Word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5	3.6
v) Social media	1	2	3	4	5	4.6
vi) Trade shows	1	2	3	4	5	1.2

Table 2.3: How do they book their trip?

(Respond using the following options in a scale of 1 to 5; 1 = not at all important, 3= neutral, 5 = very important)

						Average Score
i) On-line	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
ii) Travel consultants	1	2	3	4	5	3.8
iii) On-site	1	2	3	4	5	3.2
iv) Other channels	1	2	3	4	5	2.1

Table 2.4: How many times had they visited Kenya before?

i) First time: 10 (34.4%) ii) Once: 8 (27.6%)
iii) Twice: 7 (24.2%) iv) More than Twice: 4 (13.7%)

Table 2.5: Had they visited other destinations similar to Kenya before?

i) Yes = 22 (75.9%) ii) No = 7 (24.1%)

Table 2.6: Will they recommend destination Kenya to other people?

i) Yes 23 (79.3%) ii) No 6 (20.7%)

From the frequency analysis more than half of the respondents were male, married, aged between 26 and 45, travelled with family, had college education, earned middle income wages (table 1), had visited Kenya at least once (table 2). These characteristics fit well with typical tourists who visit Kenya i.e. professionals, middle aged, and tend to be male dominated. The results suggest that the target market for ITOs is likely to be families, aged between 26 and 45 years of age with college education and middle class income. This supports other findings elsewhere (KTB, 2011). ITOs must therefore, have conversation with OTOs to target and generate this type of tourists, and make them stay longer, spend more, and provide them with memorable experiences for word-of-mouth marketing.

American travelers sourced for information about destination Kenya and its tourism products online (score 5), social media (score 4.6), and word-of-mouth (score 3.6). American tourists made travel arrangements and consumption on-line thru company website (score 5), travel consultants (score 3.8) and on-site (3.2). On-site booking was preferred by return visitors who knew what they wanted. The brochures and travel magazines (score 2.5) which formed the main source of destination information and its products in the past is fast giving way to modern technology calling for major investments and training in technology. More than three quarters had visited other destinations with similar tourism products, and indicated that they will recommend Kenya to other potential travelers. There was large pool of return travelers and these calls for the ITOs to be dynamic, creative and innovative in terms of product quality and diversity; provide employee with update skills and training; online and social media promotion/advertising; and high quality service provision in order to create memorable experiences (Wall, 2010).

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Table 3: Tourists Preferences

The following questions required responses on 5-point likert scale options 1 to 5; 1-not at all important, 3-neutral, 5-very important

Table 3.1: What attracts (Appeals) American tourists to destination Kenya?

						Average Score
i)	Abundant tourism resources	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
ii)	National parks/reserves	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
iii)	Safari experience/game drive	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
iv)	Natural wonders (Mts, lakes, rift valley, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	2.2
v)	Various cultures	1	2	3	4	5	3.6
vi)	Engage in philanthropy (orphanage, slums, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	3.4
vii)	Diversity and unique accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
viii)	Coast beaches	1	2	3	4	5	1.2

Table 3.2: What are your potential strengths that help you serve American leisure and travel market better?

							Average Score
i)	Well trained human capital	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
ii)	Quality service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	3.4
iii)	Distribution ability/capability	1	2	3	4	5	4.2
iv)	Language and cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5	3.1
v)	Tourism products knowledge and diversity	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
vi)	Knowledge of tourists preferences	1	2	3	4	5	3.1
vii)	Partnership with tour wholesalers (OTOs)	1	2	3	4	5	3.1
viii)	Adaptation/availability of technology	1	2	3	4	5	3.7
ix)	Large slums/orphanages	1	2	3	4	5	3.7
x)	Diversity and uniqueness of accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
xi)	Kenyan Diaspora	1	2	3	4	5	3.1

Table 3.3: What issues do American leisure and travel market consider as main obstacles to visiting Kenya?

							Average Score
i)	Insecurity	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
ii)	Travel time between US and Kenya	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
iii)	Tourism infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5	1.4
iv)	Environmental degradation	1	2	3	4	5	3.3
v)	Political instability	1	2	3	4	5	3.2
vi)	Expensive destination	1	2	3	4	5	1.4
vii)	Corruption	1	2	3	4	5	3.5

Table 3.4: What operational marketing strategies have you put in place to reach the American leisure and travel market much better?

							Average Score
i)	Partnerships with tourists supplies (OTOs)	1	2	3	4	5	3.4
ii)	Company website	1	2	3	4	5	5.0
iii)	Trade shows and fairs	1	2	3	4	5	1.5
iv)	Mass media advertisement	1	2	3	4	5	0.0
v)	Source-country travel consultants	1	2	3	4	5	2.6
vi)	Social media/blogs	1	2	3	4	5	4.6
vii)	partnerships with Kenyan diaspora	1	2	3	4	5	3.2

Americans are attracted to Kenya by abundant tourism resource activities, experience safari, and availability of diversity and unique accommodation (score 5) while consuming various cultures and engaging in philanthropy activities scored 3.6 and 3.4 respectively, an indication that philanthropy activities are gaining momentum as tourists are increasingly interested to know how their resources are used and the place of local communities in tourism. Participation in tourism by local communities is an important

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component of sustainability. The Maasai culture (food, language, manyattas, initiation into manhood) was the most popular cultural product to the American consumers (score 5). Natural wonders (Mt. Kenya, Lake Victoria, lakes in the rift valley, etc) appealed to only small group of tourists (score 2.2). The Kenyan coast beaches were insignificant probably because of other better beaches like the Caribbean which is closer to mainland America and much better. Thus, investment and conservation of both natural and cultural heritage, will give destination Kenya a competitive advantage.

Destination Kenya's major strengths were well trained and knowledgeable human capital; diversity of tourism resources and activities, and accommodation (score 5). The ability to distribute tourists from airports and hotels to various attractions; knowledge of tourism products; and interpretation of tourism products scored an average of 4.2. Availability and application of technology; partnership with American tour wholesalers (OTOs), and availability of large and well distributed slums/orphanages scored 3.7. Finally, knowledge of tourists' preferences, engaging with Kenyan Diaspora, and knowledge of English language scored 3.1 each. The ITOs have significant internal and external strengths and if utilized well would position Kenya as an attractive destination to American leisure and travel market.

American tourists highlighted various obstacles that hinder them from visiting Kenya; the distance between the USA and Kenya, and insecurity (score 5), corruption (score 3.5), environmental degradation (score 3.3) and erratic political environment (score 3.2). Tourism infrastructure, and expensive destination, were not considered as significant obstacles (score 1.4). These challenges have major policy implications in terms of planning, tourism development, and marketing, and therefore, must be addressed by tourism stakeholders to position Kenya as an attractive destination.

American travelers accessed information about destination Kenya and its tourism products on ITOs websites (score 5), closely followed by social media (score 4.6), partnership with tourists suppliers (3.4), and engaging with the large/growing Kenyan Diaspora (3.2). Participation in trade shows/fairs organized by KTB was considered expensive (1.5) and advertisement on mass media was too expensive and was not used at all. It is the attractiveness of a destination that encourages people to visit and spend time at the destination (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Chung & Buhalis, 2008). More resources must be availed to understand the needs of the USA travel market in order to prepare and serve this market much better although the country's image sometimes is affected by international terrorism (UNWTO, 2007). The ITOs must strive to invest more in technology and training in order to deliver individual or group benefits by providing those attributes that make destination Kenya truly attractive.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendation

American tourists can access and consume a variety of tourism resources and activities in Kenya that can hardly be found anywhere in the world. The American tourists who include Kenya in their holiday plans are driven by variety of wildlife, safari experience, and the unique accommodation options which give tourists space and time to interact with wildlife (KTB, 2011). ITOs abilities to distribute tourists, social media and blogs, Kenyan Diaspora, and slums/orphanages are some of the opportunities which can position, promote and sell Kenya to the American leisure and travel market. Technology is now a key source of travel information before, during and after tourism consumption, and helps companies generate more sales, and manage customer relationships. For example, social media increase brand engagement because people value perceived authenticity and reliability and thus, it must be harnessed to be part of positioning Kenya as an attractive destination and destination of choice (Chung & Buhalis, 2008).

There was significant number of repeat visitations which meant that, those who had visited Kenya before may have had memorable experiences in the country and therefore, there is need for dynamism in products creativity and innovation to expand product diversification, and further enhance positive use of word-of-mouth as a marketing tool. It is important for ITOs to use current and repeat customers as ambassadors of destination Kenya by encouraging them to share their experiences, photos, and videos thru social media for wide reach and real-time. The study also highlighted a number of opportunities that ITOs can use to position Kenya as an attractive destination for American tourists: well trained and knowledgeable human resources who can deliver seamless services, knows and interprets tourism products, and ability to engage the Kenyan diaspora. Further, knowledge of English language, friendly local people and famous sportsmen if harnessed are opportunities that can position Kenya as an attractive destination. However, insecurity, long distance between the USA and Kenya, and lack of strong and well planned tourism product education in the American travel and leisure market remain major hindrances to realization of this goal. The attractiveness of a destination reflects the feelings and opinions of its visitors about the destination's perceived ability to satisfy their needs. The more a destination is able to meet the needs of its tourists, the more it is perceived to be attractive and the more the destination is likely to be chosen. A number of suggestions were made to further enhance service provision and minimize challenges, and to position Kenya as an attractive destination and choice for American leisure and travel market. That ITOs should:

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i) Actively engage the Kenyan diaspora, be active on social media, and ensure that the content on their websites is relevant and up-to-date based on research findings on products and consumer behavior in order to maintain a competitive edge;
ii) Actively engage the government to continuously improve the tourism infrastructure to respond to the needs and wants of contemporary tourists;
iii) Continuously improve on products/services offerings, tourism activities, and invest in human capital in terms of training, development and skills provision to enable them offer the best services;
iv) Continuously provide accurate information to American tourists on diversity and availability of Kenyan tourism products, and philanthropy programs, to enable them make wide choices for consumption, spend and length of stay and as well as improved livelihoods;
v) Integrate sustainability practices into their products, and websites, and indicate their concerns for sustainability in their marketing activities; and
vi) Engage the government to address issues national security and safety, corruption, erratic political environment, and environmental degradation to assure and reassure American tourists before, during and after the trip.
vii) Engage the government to ensure that transportation infrastructures (airports) correspond to international standards to ensure and lead to direct flights between Kenya and United state of American.

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The Issue on eTravel Business: The Impact of Poor Digital Media Design - A Case of Thailand

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Abstract- This research investigates the cause of revenue deceleration in eTravel in Thailand, about the design of digital media. eTravel involves the purchasing activities of customers, for example in online travel service booking and online ticketing. These services are provided by businesses with an online presence, known as eTravel service providers. The quantitative research approach determines the relationship between satisfaction factors in digital media design and conversion. The reasons for failure in eTravel conversion are presented as association rules. The research results are used as inputs for developing digital media design guidelines-for example, in recommendations for website design to engage more customers and result in conversions. By applying the guidelines on digital media design, the local eTravel service provider can successfully increase eTravel revenue. In this study, eTravel increased in revenue by 42.50% on average, compared to the same month in the previous year. This confirms the applicability of the proposed guidelines.

Keywords: digital media design, etravel, conversion, customer satisfaction, association rules.

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Abstract- This research investigates the cause of revenue deceleration in eTravel in Thailand, about the design of digital media. eTravel involves the purchasing activities of customers, for example in online travel service booking and online ticketing. These services are provided by businesses with an online presence, known as eTravel service providers. The quantitative research approach determines the relationship between satisfaction factors in digital media design and conversion. The reasons for failure in eTravel conversion are presented as association rules. The research results are used as inputs for developing digital media design guidelines-for example, in recommendations for website design to engage more customers and result in conversions. By applying the guidelines on digital media design, the local eTravel service provider can successfully increase eTravel revenue. In this study, eTravel increased in revenue by 42.50% on average, compared to the same month in the previous year. This confirms the applicability of the proposed guidelines.

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I. Introduction

Tourism is a major economic contributor in Thailand. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) addresses the spending on leisure and business travel for the Thai people, as well as the government, directly influencing the tourism business. From the research report (Turner, 2017), travel and tourism contributed USD 36.7 billion to the economy, which constitutes 9.2% of the total GDP in 2016 and is forecast to increase continuously. The government of Thailand highlights tourism and hospitality in the Sustainable Development Goals in the National Tourism Development Plan. As a part of the development goals, not only tourism is mentioned, but Information and Communication Technology (ICT), as a tool, is also considered. Innovation and technology are mainly considered as enablers of sustainable development activities and will support the growth of tourism. Therefore, the internet and digital media become accelerators of revenue by default. The sales channel and tourism service for purchasing on the internet is called eTravel and involves online travel service booking and online ticketing.

The purchase of services can be completed on either a computer or mobile device (Statista, 2017b). So far, the success of eTravel arises from a well-performing digital marketing campaign, together with a proper digital media design (Statista, 2017a) mostly focusing on social media, websites, mobile applications, and e-commerce. Therefore, the poor design of digital assets can naturally have a negative impact on revenue growth in tourism services.

To accelerate the eTravel revenue, this research primarily focused on how the design of digital media can increase the conversion rate in digital marketing. This research aims to understand how a low conversion rate is related to the poor design of digital assets, and to discover the minimum requirements for digital media design to engage an eTravel customer in making a service purchase.

This research paper is separated into five chapters. Chapter 1, Introduction, guides the readers in understanding the bigger picture of the research, including its value and purpose. Chapter 2, the literature review, presents the previous research in this area which is relevant to eTravel. The research works mentioned in this chapter allows the reader to gain a greater understanding of how the poor design of digital media negatively impacts revenue in tourism services. In Chapter 3, the methodology, the research framework together with the data processing is presented. This includes 2583 survey feedback responses from an online survey platform from eTravel customers. The quantitative research provides statistical information on the survey responders. The correlation statistical method that was utilized presents the relationship between the revenue factors. Moreover, the qualitative research method is introduced to gain insight into the design of digital media. The results and discussion are presented in Chapter 4. The suggestions provided by eTravel customers are also summarized in this chapter. Digital media designers and digital marketing experts can leverage this research to increase the conversion rate. Guidelines regarding the preferred digital design are provided, together with an opportunity for improvement. The conclusion and directions for future work are addressed in Chapter 5.

II. Literature Review

The background knowledge and previous research related to eTravel are categorized into two groups: conversion rate and digital media design. The research review implicitly concludes the problem

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statement, focusing on the deceleration of service revenue.

a) Conversion Rate

The conversion rate is the ratio between the number of customers who purchase the services available in an online sales channel and the unique customers entering the online sale channel, which can be calculated in percentage form. Greater profitability could occur when the conversion rate is increased. In other words, the conversion rate directly impacts the profitability of online sales (Heathman, 2012). Moreover, as shown in previous research, the conversion rate is significantly influenced by digital media content and design. The interactive design of digital media is considered as a reducer of the bounce rate (Farag, 2003). The removal of unnecessary graphics and colorful tones from the media can encourage the customer to stay longer on an eTravel sales channel. The short checkout flow in e-commerce can help the customer to easily navigate to and submit an eTravel purchase, also increasing the conversion rate (McDowell, Wilson, & Kile, 2016). A personal assistant, either human and robot, can shorten the decision time of purchases (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2004). This increases the conversion rate growth. For customer insight, click behaviors in e-commerce media are profiled, and the statistics are used for service suggestions. Offers are selected based on customer interest and profile (Yanbin & Ping, 2011). The conversion rate increases if the offer matches with personal preferences. Moreover, the consumer's trust in the brand is also a supporting factor which can increase the conversion rate. Trust in a brand on an online channel can be supported by a good media design, which in turn promotes trust in the purchase. Higher levels of trust in the customer can increase online purchase intentions (Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). Regarding information system security, a good media design can lead the customer to feel safe when purchasing a service online (Bomil & Ingoo, 2003). Specifically, e-commerce and digital media equipped with good technical information security controls, transaction encryption by a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), personal data protection, and a secured payment gateway can effectively prevent the loss of conversion (Martin & Murphy, 2017; Zhou, Lau, & Yang, 2004). In short, the design of digital media explicitly impacts the conversion rate, the bounce rate, and the length of time the customer stays on an e-commerce platform. Furthermore, it implicitly influences the trust of the customer in the online purchase service and provides decision support to the customer.

b) Digital Media Design

The impact of digital media design on increasing the conversion rate is mentioned in Chapter 2.a. The design creates customer willingness to buy the service (Smith & Sivakumar, 2004). Multimedia components and features such as video clips, interactive maps, and games are usually used to boost the positive attitude of the customer when viewing the media (Hsi-Peng & Philip Yu-Jen, 2009). The interactive digital media components, such as a frequently asked questions section, chatbot, and live chat, can help the customer to understand the details of a product in a short period (Sohrabi, Mahmoudian, & Raeesi, 2012). Positive attitudes toward a good media design lead to further content exploration and conversion (Menon & Kahn, 2002). Focusing especially on design, the top three design elements that can draw customers—which are also highlighted in many studies—are navigation, graphical representation, and the organization of the website (Garett, Chiu, Zhang, & Young, 2016). Personalized navigation can improve the customer experience concerning both content and product exploitation. The suggested next content/page of the system is based on the current page and the navigational purposes of the customer. A usage similarity among websites creates self-learning in the customer (Flesca, Greco, Tagarelli, & Zumpano, 2005), wherein the customer can explore the website easily, without prior learning of the website structure. This can reduce the number of clicks required during content searching. On the smartphone, (Jung & Jang, 2015) addressed a navigation improvement for the small hyperlinks on the device screen. The automatic error correction function helps the customer to access the right content/page if the initial press on the hyperlink fails. This makes exploring the media content faster for the customer, without the concern of incorrect link access. For graphical representation, a system with a well-designed user interface, which is user-friendly, minimizes the required keyboard operations and maximizes effective interaction with the system, and thereby can engage more customers who shop online (Namratha & Adiraju Prasanth, 2018). Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is an option to make the design style more flexible. CSS improves the user experience when visiting the web application. The color and tone of the digital media are controlled by CSS. It introduces a standard look and feels to the whole website space (Wolf & Henley, 2017). With regards to content organization, responsive design makes the content self-adjustable, fitting to the pre-defined screen size. The position of the menu and contents include graphics and multimedia components that can dynamically change to make customers' experiences better and improve navigation (Natda, 2013). A good digital media design influences the revenue from eTravel directly. It makes the brand or image of the service appear more impressive, leading to a higher degree of trust in the service that the customer purchases. To accelerate revenue from eTravel, the design of digital media should align with the customer behavior and the signature of the products on the shelf.

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From the reviews of previous research, the objective of digital media design is to increase purchase intentions of customers, whether the purchase behavior of the customer is clear or not (Chanaka, 2004). Misleading graphics that are presented to consumers potentially decelerate the revenue due to a higher bounce rate and low conversion rate (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2004). Therefore, to increase the revenue of eTravel, the best practice in digital media design is to maximize the opportunity for purchases to occur, which is the value and purpose of our research.

III. Methodology

The methodology chapter presents a statistical method, research framework, and the mathematical model for the examination of the relationship of factors in this research. The quantitative research provides information on tourists who gave feedback on the survey regarding digital media design and customer confidence when purchasing eTravel. A correlation and association rule method shows the relationship among the revenue deceleration factors, while the qualitative research method provides customer insight into the preferred digital media design, which translates into an improved conversion rate.

a) *Research Questions*

In 2017, tourists who traveled to Thailand lacked confidence in eTravel due to the poor design of digital media, which caused revenue deceleration in eTravel. A low conversion and high bounce rate significantly impact the revenue of the tourism industry and therefore Thailand's GDP. This research was therefore conducted to understand the cause for this deceleration, and to provide advice for improving guidelines about digital media design such that it can deliver a higher conversion rate. The satisfaction factors of digital media design are the inputs of this research.

b) *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework illustrates a process about the research information. The framework consists of three parts: input parameters constitute an independent variable, collected from an online survey. The survey data are processed by mathematical methods for quantitative research, and the qualitative research method is used for analyzing the open-end questions answered by the customer. The outcomes of this research focus on customers' experiences and the practical digital media design that informs the conversion rate. A conceptual framework is shown in Fig 1.

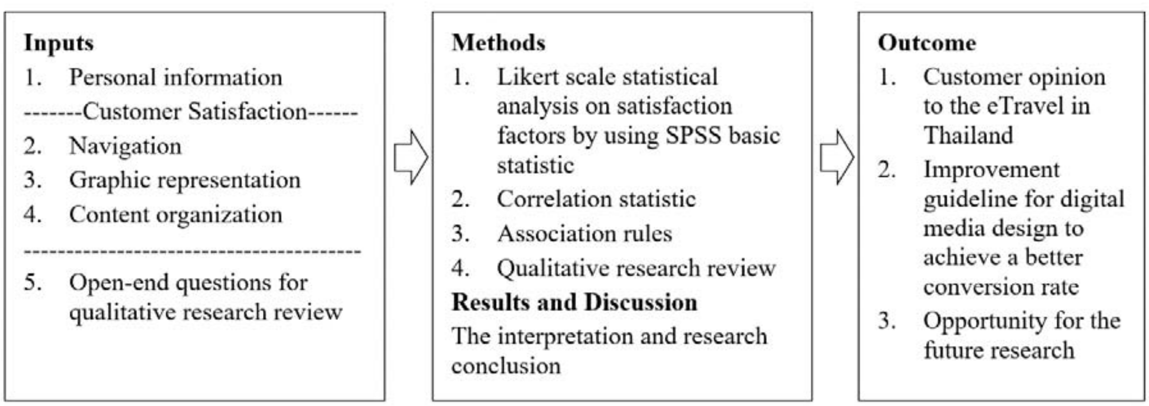

Fig. 1: The conceptual framework shows the research process, information analysis methods, and expected research outcome

The online survey, considered a research tool for gathering tourist feedback and information, is shown in Figure 1. The survey consists of three parts: personal information, a Likert-scale survey (Likert, 1932) which examines satisfaction about digital media design, and the level of customer confidence in purchasing the eTravel. The last part of the survey aims to listen to the feedback and suggestions of the customer. In the Linkert-scale survey, the top three design elements-consisting of navigation, graphical representation, and content organization (Garett et al., 2016)-were selected as the influencing factors on the revenue. A set of five questions were assigned to an individual factor, meaning there were 15 questions in total. Principle Component Analysis, or PCA (L Gewers et al., 2018), played a role in checking the factor loading. It is +0.82 or higher for the factor loading value in all groups. This means that each factor has the proper question loading. Moreover, the internal consistency of a particular factor was also checked by Cronbach's Alpha (CA). The set of questions in the same factor has a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.84 or higher. We validated the question set by launching 100 pilot surveys. The CA shows an excellent internal consistency of the responses. Furthermore, the PCA and CA values confirm the survey quality. The question set is therefore suitable for data collection.

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c) Data

In this research, we launched the online survey two times: the first time starting from February 2017 and running until May 2017, and the second time starting from September 2017 and running until January 2018. It intended to capture the level of customer satisfaction in the high season. The website and mobile applications regarding eTravel in Thailand were automatically randomly selected from the pre-defined list. The survey, embedded within a target website or mobile application, was available in a to-be-completed survey pool. We used a paid-for-feedback survey campaign, applying both a social media channel and leaflet, which was redirected to the online survey. The minimum number of survey responses, which are used as the inputs for this research, was calculated from Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973), where a 95% confidence level and margin of error of $\pm 2\%$ is set, as per standard statistical practice. Regarding the calculation, the number of tourist arrivals to Thailand in 2016 was 32 million (BOT, 2017). Therefore, 2500 surveys were considered to represent all of the visitors arriving in Thailand. We received 2583 survey responses by systematic sampling, but only 2529 responses (those without an outlier) were loaded as the inputs of this research.

In particular sections of the survey, different analysis methods played a role in extracting information to help the researcher to understand customer opinion regarding digital media design and the confidence level in eTravel. In a personal information section, the descriptive statistics allowed us to summarize the thousands of responses in a percentage form. This provides an overview of the population of people who travel to Thailand using eTravel. In the customer satisfaction part of the survey, there were three groups of questions that covered customer satisfaction in relation to digital media design in term of navigation, graphic representation, and content organization. The computer software SPSS was used for statistical analysis of the Likert-scale satisfaction factors. The correlation statistic shows the simple linear relationship between personal information and the influencing factors of tourism revenue and conversion, while the association rule mining method was used to find the conditional relationship between factors relating to conversion. In the last section, the qualitative research method of open-ended questions was used for a feedback review. The information was synthesized into groups of ideas and suggestions. The research results provide improvement guidelines for digital media design, aiming to achieve a better conversion rate.

IV. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the research results, separated according to the survey sections. The analysis of the results and customer feedback show the current situation of eTravel in Thailand. Quantitative and qualitative research methods provide insight regarding the customer, which may lead to the practical improvement of digital media design. A digital media designer and digital marketing expert could leverage this research work to increase the conversion rate.

Survey Section 1 (personal information): The 2529 survey respondents were tourists who use the services from eTravel. Of the respondents, 62.87% were female, while 12.65% were male. The online feedback came from females in various countries, while the majority of male respondents were from China and India. This information aligns with internet user statistics (Internet Live Stats, 2017). The most respondents were from countries where a high number of internet users are located. As for the age of tourists, the tourists aged between 21 and 30 years old constituted 34.56% of the total sample, which is the majority of tourists who use eTravel. The age range between 51 and 60 years old was 25.34% of the sample, and 20.68% of the sampled tourists were between 31 and 40 years old. For marital status, 64.14% of the respondents were single or divorced, while 35.86% were married. Regarding the educational level, 34.31% of the tourists held an associate degree or lower, 34.23% had completed a bachelor's degree, and 17.84% held a master's or doctorate. Regarding family income, most of the tourists (31.32%) had an annual income between USD 8000 to USD 12,000. A total of 23.21% of the sampled tourists had an income in the range of USD 20,000 and USD 24,000, while 14.82% had an annual income of between USD 36,000 and USD 40,000. Tourists with work experience of 3-5 years constituted the biggest group of eTravel customers (41.27%), while 31.66% of the tourists had work experience of 5-10 years, and 12.07% had less than three years of work experience.

Survey Section 2: Likert-scale of customer satisfaction regarding the digital media design. There were three factors (topics), with 15 questions (components) in total. The results and recommendations were discussed as follows:

1) Navigation factor: The top three influencing components that made the customer satisfied with the digital media design were, first, the digital content is easy to find, with a small number of clicks ($\bar{x} = 3.53$, SD = 0.25); second, the navigation menu is easy to use, and the wording on the menu is clear ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, SD = 0.41); and last, the content appears to be in line with customer interests ($\bar{x} = 3.13$, SD = 0.48).

In this factor, the component that most influenced satisfaction was a small number of clicks and concise content, allowing the customer to easily find the product they are interested in. The number of clicks in navigation directly impacts the satisfaction. According to the satisfaction result, a small number of clicks in the

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content helped the customer to efficiently understand the product online since the search time was reduced. The preferred number of clicks suggested by the customer is a maximum of three. If the number of clicks is higher than three, this generates a greater possibility of failure to convert. Displaying all product details is not preferred at the beginning. The customer is satisfied if the detail is displayed once they click on the product. From the customer suggestions regarding this component, the design of the product title should not exceed 3–5 words and the short description should be less than 15 words. The menu design also impacts satisfaction. A clear and clean design of the navigation menu can promote conversion in eTravel. The wording on the menu should be clear and relate to the content that the customer is searching for. The submenu should remind the customer of its parent menu; that is, where they navigated from. In an image only menu, where the menu displays an image without text, customers preferred to have a short keyword when the mouse is over the image menu. The helpful text pop-up should be visible, with a light or transparent background depending on the design. The helpful text supports the customer to explore the product in the desktop version easily. In a mobile application, the menu size should not exceed the size of the screen. One line per menu item is the suggestion from the survey feedback. Once customers click on the menu, they expect to see the right content. Therefore, page ordering and content management should consider the content quality. Missing content caused by deadlinks and outdated menus also impacts customer satisfaction and trust in eTravel. A Content Management System (CMS) is an option for reducing outdated menu updating because a CMS automatically update links in modified content. More than one wrong navigation prompts a conversion failure. The guidelines and suggestions on this factor align with the research of (Namratha & Adiraju Prasanth, 2018), which states that the human parameters provided by customers can be considered as the input for design. The survey feedback and suggestions are the human parameters by nature and should be treated properly to increase the level of satisfaction.

2) Graphic representation: The three most impactful components of this factor are: first, the media content and textbox design is good enough to make the customer focus on the product ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08, SD = 0.32); secondly, the background color of the digital media makes the customer feel comfortable, so they stay longer on the page ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54, SD = 0.36); and thirdly, the digital media uses a color and font weight that make the content easy to find ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41, SD = 0.47).

Regarding the graphic representation factor, the media content and textbox design are the components that help the customer to concentrate on the product. Customers tend to be satisfied with digital media that has fewer borders. A box-shadow is used to replace the line border. A different background color between two sections helps customers to feel comfortable. However, the different color of the background should not be a contrast. To separate the content, adding a space instead of a border makes the customer stay on the page for longer. However, with a bland design, an accent border can be used to highlight content by adding color to a design. The accent border helps the content to be more interesting. Concerning the media content design, the size of the icon affects customers' focus. Highlighting or blowing up the icon can increase the level of attention to the content. The size of the intended icon is around 20 pixels. Customers confirmed the intended icon size through the post design improvement questionnaire. As for the background color of the digital media, most customers were dissatisfied with content that has gray text on a colored background. However, white text can be used on a colored background, on the condition that the opacity is reduced. The background for an essay or long content should have a light tone, with a contrasting color. However, this depends on the theme of the digital media design. A dark-tone color is an exception in the case that the theme of the digital media is dark. Many font sizes on the same digital media can decrease customer attention. Therefore, color and font weight can be used to create a hierarchy of content. To standardize the design style across the whole cyber site space, Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is an option for theme control of the digital representation. Colored text is recommended to create a content hierarchy, although colorful text can also impact on satisfaction and website trust (Cyr, Head, & Larios, 2010).

3) Content organization: The top three interesting components that majorly impact satisfaction are: first, the balance between graphics and text ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76, SD = 0.17); secondly, the position of the menu and content to help the customer easily find the product details ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61, SD = 0.42); and lastly, whether the digital media makes it easy for the customer to search for the content on their mobile ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55, SD = 0.51).

This factor shows the satisfaction of the customer regarding the content organization of digital media. A balance of graphics and text is the most influential component in conversion and satisfaction. The customers provided good feedback on graphic content with a short description, while text-only content generates a high bounce rate. As for the advertisement of accommodation on eTravel, content with a warm tone and two-column content organization increases customer satisfaction compared to that with a cool tone, while colorful graphics are better for movies and destination promotions. From the survey, the position of the menu and content is the component that impacts satisfaction directly. A design with the menu on the left

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and the chat box on the bottom-right is the default design, and customers preferred it. The use of a sliding menu and pop-up chat box on the desktop version design was significantly correlated with a low conversion rate. As for the design in the mobile version, having a two-line chat box at the bottom of the screen once the customer expands the chat box is recommended. Thumbnail style content is proper for tour packages and accommodation comparisons. The thumbnail content should fit in a single row. Otherwise, it overwhelms the customer.

Survey Section 3: Open-ended questions for customer opinions and suggestions regarding the digital media design and improvement opportunities for higher satisfaction and conversion.

A group of customers mentioned trust and security about the design of the digital media. The design should consider building trust when customers are entering the payment gateway. Redirecting the customer to payment gateways without notifications may confuse the customer and result in no conversion. The customer must know the upcoming activities and time requirement for transaction processing. Moreover, a frequently asked questions section should include how to check transaction completion. A helpdesk or contact point should be displayed and easily found. In transaction processing, red is a sensitive color that may lead to customer misunderstandings. Therefore, red should be reserved for a wrong event or failure notification only. Broken graphics and unloaded pictures significantly reduce trust in eTravel. Therefore, small file size for graphics can help the website to load faster and can reduce the failure of the picture display on a slow internet bandwidth on the customer side. However, there is a design improvement opportunity for all digital media for customers from China. The customer can purchase a service unintentionally if the content is highlighted by a red ribbon and dragon graphic. This is because of cultural and customer beliefs. Therefore, the theme selection is a component that the designer should consider in this context. The content organization should be aligned within the whole cyber site space. This makes customer navigation easier and faster.

The family income and navigation factors influence conversion, as shown in Table 1. A higher family income implies a higher purchasing power. A female who has high family income contributes to conversion. Therefore, the content and graphic design should consider the sexual preference of the target customer. The senior customer cares about the design and graphics more than the junior customer. This is an opportunity to increase the conversion of the senior customer by improving the design. The customers of eTravel are almost exclusively couples and families. The design of the digital media should be appealing and safe for families, and keywords should be used in the content reflecting the interests of couples and families. As for the design factor, good design in navigation is the most influential factor about conversion. This is about how easily the navigation redirects the customer to the checkout page and product information. Redesigning the navigation is the priority since it increases eTravel conversion. The graphic representation is the second greatest contributor to conversion, while the content organization has the smallest impact. However, all factors of digital media redesign depend on the budget and target customers that the eTravel service provider is targeting.

Not only success in conversion, but also failure to convert, is within the research scope. The association rules show how failure to conversion happens. The items on the left-hand side represent feedback ratings of 1 or 2 on the Likert-scale, while an item on the right-hand side indicates a failure to convert.

The calculation of the rules, as shown in Table 2, is described as follows. Consider rule (α:: Confusing the wording on the menu, α: Large number of clicks) ➔ (failure to convert). The support count of (α: Confusing the wording on the menu, α: Large number of clicks, failure to convert) is 301. In other words, there are 301 survey responses in which the customer says that they are confused by the wording on the menu and experienced a large number of clicks, leading to their decision to not purchase the product. The total number of survey responses is 2529. Therefore, the support value of this rule is 301/2529 = 0.12. The confidence value is calculated by dividing the support count for (α: Confusing the wording on the menu, α: Large number of clicks, failure to convert) by the support count for (α: Confusing the wording on the menu, α: Large number of clicks). Since 789 survey responses contain (α: Confusing the wording on the menu) and (α: Large number of clicks), the confidence for this rule is 301/789 = 0.38. The rule's lift is obtained by dividing the rule's confidence by the support value of (failure to convert). Of the responses, 893 show a failure to convert. The support value of (failure to convert) is 893/2529 = 0.35. The lift for this rule is 0.38/0.35 = 1.08. Typically, a lift value is an indicator that measures the reliability of the association rule. If the lift value is greater than 1, this indicates that the association is reliable. A higher lift value means stronger association rules. If the factors are independent, the lift value will equal to 1. A lift value of less than 1 indicates negative association rules.

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Table 1: Matrix for correlation coefficients (r), showing the simple linear relationships among personal information, three influencing factors regarding revenue, and conversion

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	-									
2. Age	0.231	-								
3. Marital status	0.154	0.324*	-							
4. Educational level	0.675*	0.690*	0.200	-						
5. Family income	0.681**	0.743*	0.891*	0.654*	-					
6. Work experience	−0.021	0.754*	0.452	0.438	0.645*	-				
7. Navigation	0.882*	−0.708*	0.321	0.889*	−0.013	0.439	-			
8. Graphic representation	0.798**	0.861*	0.432*	0.672*	0.766*	0.131	0.690*	-		
9. Content organization	0.521*	−0.212	0.032	0.231	0.432	−0.212	0.812*	0.561	-	
10. Conversion	0.768*	0.692*	−0.231	0.443	0.834**	0.543*	0.821*	0.766*	0.699*	-

Source: Calculation by using SPSS

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Listwise N = 2529*

Table 2: The association rules showing the relationship between the factors in digital media design and failure to convert

Rules	Support	Confidene	Lift
(α:: Confusing the wording on the menu, α: Large number of clicks) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.12	0.38	1.08
(β:: losing focus due to a lot of media components) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.11	0.36	1.01
(β:: color and font weight not proper, (β:: background color not proper) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.14	0.44	1.25
(γ:: hard to find menu, (β:: color and font weight not proper) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.12	0.36	1.02
(α:: incorrect information offered, β: losing focus due to a lot of media components) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.11	0.47	1.33
(γ: content not fit to mobile, β: losing focus due to a lot of media components) ➔ (failure to convert)	0.17	0.69	1.95

Source: Calculation by using SPSS

The minimum support threshold is 0.10, and the minimum confidence for the association rule is 0.30. These parameters were set up following the research of (Liu, Hsu, & Ma, 1999), where α denotes the digital media design group of Navigation, β represent graphic presentation group, and γ is the organization group.

From the results regarding the association rules, we found that six rules contributed to the failure to convert. Improvement opportunities occur according to the rules. The customer is losing focus due to a lot of media components when they search the eTravel service on a mobile, leading to a failure to convert. Therefore, the digital media designer should limit the number of media components. This can help the customer to focus on the page and make a conversion. Another association rule confirmed a cause of the failure to convert, which is the improper text and background color used in the digital media design. This aligns with the discussion in the graphic representation section. Therefore, following the practice mentioned in that section to change the design can help to improve the conversion. The practical improvement of the digital media design regarding other association rules is already addressed in the survey discussion. Designer and marketing experts can use the proposed practice as a reference.

V. Conclusions and Future Works

The poor design of digital media in the Thai market has caused a revenue deceleration in eTravel, and the low conversion and high bounce rate significantly impact revenue. Therefore, the improvement

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of digital media design was the research objective. The research results were used as a key factor to develop media design improvement guidelines. Three design factors were considered. The design improvement guidelines are provided to align with customer needs and aim to increase the conversion rate of eTravel. To prove the effectiveness of practices as per the guidelines, we advised local eTravel service providers in digital media redesign, following the guidelines. Once the practice was applied, the conversion rate was observed for 30 days. eTravel selling increased significantly, up to 42.50% on average, compared to the same month in the previous year. A higher conversion rate is the best evidence of the usefulness of our guidelines. For future work, the study of blockchain technology will further contribute to increasing eTravel revenue.

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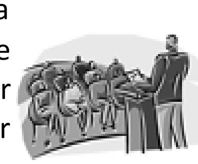

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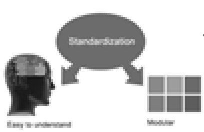

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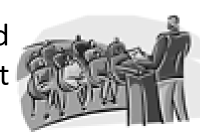

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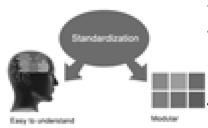

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The full postal address of any related author(s) must be specified.

Abstract

The abstract is the foundation of the research paper. It should be clear and concise and must contain the objective of the paper and inferences drawn. It is advised to not include big mathematical equations or complicated jargon.

Many researchers searching for information online will use search engines such as Google, Yahoo or others. By optimizing your paper for search engines, you will amplify the chance of someone finding it. In turn, this will make it more likely to be viewed and cited in further works. Global Journals has compiled these guidelines to facilitate you to maximize the web-friendliness of the most public part of your paper.

Keywords

A major lynchpin of research work for the writing of research papers is the keyword search, which one will employ to find both library and internet resources. Up to eleven keywords or very brief phrases have to be given to help data retrieval, mining, and indexing.

One must be persistent and creative in using keywords. An effective keyword search requires a strategy: planning of a list of possible keywords and phrases to try.

Choice of the main keywords is the first tool of writing a research paper. Research paper writing is an art. Keyword search should be as strategic as possible.

One should start brainstorming lists of potential keywords before even beginning searching. Think about the most important concepts related to research work. Ask, "What words would a source have to include to be truly valuable in a research paper?" Then consider synonyms for the important words.

It may take the discovery of only one important paper to steer in the right keyword direction because, in most databases, the keywords under which a research paper is abstracted are listed with the paper.

Numerical Methods

Numerical methods used should be transparent and, where appropriate, supported by references.

Abbreviations

Authors must list all the abbreviations used in the paper at the end of the paper or in a separate table before using them.

Formulas and equations

Authors are advised to submit any mathematical equation using either MathJax, KaTeX, or LaTeX, or in a very high-quality image.

Tables, Figures, and Figure Legends

Tables: Tables should be cautiously designed, uncrowned, and include only essential data. Each must have an Arabic number, e.g., Table 4, a self-explanatory caption, and be on a separate sheet. Authors must submit tables in an editable format and not as images. References to these tables (if any) must be mentioned accurately.

Figures

Figures are supposed to be submitted as separate files. Always include a citation in the text for each figure using Arabic numbers, e.g., Fig. 4. Artwork must be submitted online in vector electronic form or by emailing it.

Preparation of Eletronic Figures for Publication

Although low-quality images are sufficient for review purposes, print publication requires high-quality images to prevent the final product being blurred or fuzzy. Submit (possibly by e-mail) EPS (line art) or TIFF (halftone/ photographs) files only. MS PowerPoint and Word Graphics are unsuitable for printed pictures. Avoid using pixel-oriented software. Scans (TIFF only) should have a resolution of at least 350 dpi (halftone) or 700 to 1100 dpi (line drawings). Please give the data for figures in black and white or submit a Color Work Agreement form. EPS files must be saved with fonts embedded (and with a TIFF preview, if possible).

For scanned images, the scanning resolution at final image size ought to be as follows to ensure good reproduction: line art: >650 dpi; halftones (including gel photographs): >350 dpi; figures containing both halftone and line images: >650 dpi.

Color charges: Authors are advised to pay the full cost for the reproduction of their color artwork. Hence, please note that if there is color artwork in your manuscript when it is accepted for publication, we would require you to complete and return a Color Work Agreement form before your paper can be published. Also, you can email your editor to remove the color fee after acceptance of the paper.

Tips for writing a good quality Management Research Paper

Techniques for writing a good quality management and business research paper:

1. Choosing the topic: In most cases, the topic is selected by the interests of the author, but it can also be suggested by the guides. You can have several topics, and then judge which you are most comfortable with. This may be done by asking several questions of yourself, like "Will I be able to carry out a search in this area? Will I find all necessary resources to accomplish the search? Will I be able to find all information in this field area?" If the answer to this type of question is "yes," then you ought to choose that topic. In most cases, you may have to conduct surveys and visit several places. Also, you might have to do a lot of work to find all the rises and falls of the various data on that subject. Sometimes, detailed information plays a vital role, instead of short information. Evaluators are human: The first thing to remember is that evaluators are also human beings. They are not only meant for rejecting a paper. They are here to evaluate your paper. So present your best aspect.

2. Think like evaluators: If you are in confusion or getting demotivated because your paper may not be accepted by the evaluators, then think, and try to evaluate your paper like an evaluator. Try to understand what an evaluator wants in your research paper, and you will automatically have your answer. Make blueprints of paper: The outline is the plan or framework that will help you to arrange your thoughts. It will make your paper logical. But remember that all points of your outline must be related to the topic you have chosen.

3. Ask your guides: If you are having any difficulty with your research, then do not hesitate to share your difficulty with your guide (if you have one). They will surely help you out and resolve your doubts. If you can't clarify what exactly you require for your work, then ask your supervisor to help you with an alternative. He or she might also provide you with a list of essential readings.

4. Use of computer is recommended: As you are doing research in the field of management and business then this point is quite obvious. Use right software: Always use good quality software packages. If you are not capable of judging good software, then you can lose the quality of your paper unknowingly. There are various programs available to help you which you can get through the internet.

5. Use the internet for help: An excellent start for your paper is using Google. It is a wondrous search engine, where you can have your doubts resolved. You may also read some answers for the frequent question of how to write your research paper or find a model research paper. You can download books from the internet. If you have all the required books, place importance on reading, selecting, and analyzing the specified information. Then sketch out your research paper. Use big pictures: You may use encyclopedias like Wikipedia to get pictures with the best resolution. At Global Journals, you should strictly follow here.

6. Bookmarks are useful: When you read any book or magazine, you generally use bookmarks, right? It is a good habit which helps to not lose your continuity. You should always use bookmarks while searching on the internet also, which will make your search easier.

7. Revise what you wrote: When you write anything, always read it, summarize it, and then finalize it.

8. Make every effort: Make every effort to mention what you are going to write in your paper. That means always have a good start. Try to mention everything in the introduction—what is the need for a particular research paper. Polish your work with good writing skills and always give an evaluator what he wants. Make backups: When you are going to do any important thing like making a research paper, you should always have backup copies of it either on your computer or on paper. This protects you from losing any portion of your important data.

9. Produce good diagrams of your own: Always try to include good charts or diagrams in your paper to improve quality. Using several unnecessary diagrams will degrade the quality of your paper by creating a hodgepodge. So always try to include diagrams which were made by you to improve the readability of your paper. Use of direct quotes: When you do research relevant to literature, history, or current affairs, then use of quotes becomes essential, but if the study is relevant to science, use of quotes is not preferable.

10. Use proper verb tense: Use proper verb tenses in your paper. Use past tense to present those events that have happened. Use present tense to indicate events that are going on. Use future tense to indicate events that will happen in the future. Use of wrong tenses will confuse the evaluator. Avoid sentences that are incomplete.

11. Pick a good study spot: Always try to pick a spot for your research which is quiet. Not every spot is good for studying.

12. Know what you know: Always try to know what you know by making objectives, otherwise you will be confused and unable to achieve your target.

13. Use good grammar: Always use good grammar and words that will have a positive impact on the evaluator; use of good vocabulary does not mean using tough words which the evaluator has to find in a dictionary. Do not fragment sentences. Eliminate one-word sentences. Do not ever use a big word when a smaller one would suffice.
Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

14. Arrangement of information: Each section of the main body should start with an opening sentence, and there should be a changeover at the end of the section. Give only valid and powerful arguments for your topic. You may also maintain your arguments with records.

15. Never start at the last minute: Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

16. Multitasking in research is not good: Doing several things at the same time is a bad habit in the case of research activity. Research is an area where everything has a particular time slot. Divide your research work into parts, and do a particular part in a particular time slot.

17. Never copy others' work: Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

18. Go to seminars: Attend seminars if the topic is relevant to your research area. Utilize all your resources.

19. Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

20. Think technically: Always think technically. If anything happens, search for its reasons, benefits, and demerits. Think and then print: When you go to print your paper, check that tables are not split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.

21. Adding unnecessary information: Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

22. Report concluded results: Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

23. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium though which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

Informal Guidelines of Research Paper Writing

Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

The introduction: This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

The discussion section:

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear: Adhere to recommended page limits.

Mistakes to avoid:

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.

- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

Title page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

Abstract: This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- o Single section and succinct.
- o An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- o Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- o Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

Introduction:

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.

The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- o Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- o Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- o Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- o Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

Approach:

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (methods and materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

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Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."

Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

The Administration Rules

Administration Rules to Be Strictly Followed before Submitting Your Research Paper to Global Journals Inc.

Please read the following rules and regulations carefully before submitting your research paper to Global Journals Inc. to avoid rejection.

Segment draft and final research paper: You have to strictly follow the template of a research paper, failing which your paper may get rejected. You are expected to write each part of the paper wholly on your own. The peer reviewers need to identify your own perspective of the concepts in your own terms. Please do not extract straight from any other source, and do not rephrase someone else's analysis. Do not allow anyone else to proofread your manuscript.

Written material: You may discuss this with your guides and key sources. Do not copy anyone else's paper, even if this is only imitation, otherwise it will be rejected on the grounds of plagiarism, which is illegal. Various methods to avoid plagiarism are strictly applied by us to every paper, and, if found guilty, you may be blacklisted, which could affect your career adversely. To guard yourself and others from possible illegal use, please do not permit anyone to use or even read your paper and file.

Criterion for Grading a Research Paper (Compilation)
by Global Journals

Please note that following table is only a Grading of "Paper Compilation" and not on "Performed/Stated Research" whose grading solely depends on Individual Assigned Peer Reviewer and Editorial Board Member. These can be available only on request and after decision of Paper. This report will be the property of Global Journals.

Topics	Grades		
	A-B	**C-D**	**E-F**
Abstract	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
Introduction	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
Result	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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