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Stakeholder Collaboration Strategies in the Hawaii Tourism Industry

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Problem

General Business Problem
- Inconsistency of stakeholder participation associated with the development of sustainable tourism

Specific Business Problem
- Some tourism industry leaders in Hawaii fail to implement strategies for increasing stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development

Purpose

The purpose in this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that tourism industry leaders in Hawaii use for increasing stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development.

Significance

Performing this study provided a unique opportunity to **respond** to a call for further research, **gain stakeholder perspectives** and **provide attainable recommendations.**

Stakeholder categories in Hawaii tourism encompass visitors, residents, government or public servants, representatives of academic institutions, tourism business owners, and special interest groups.

Success of sustainable tourism depends on **balancing stakeholder relationships** while maintaining cognizance toward the natural environment and sociocultural perspectives.

Social Change Implications

Promote positive aspects of sociocultural exchanges inspired by:
- Enhanced technology
- Access to education
- Ease of travel

Enhance visibility of tourism stakeholder concerns:
- Culturally
- Environmentally

Recognize global reality of climatic changes:
- Endorse sustainable tourism development

Framework

Strategic stakeholder management framework: **Freeman** (1984) introduced the concept of **stakeholders as a valuable resource** to addressing challenges facing business leaders in strategically managing relationships with groups having **internal and external influences on organizational success** (Freeman, 1984, 2010; Harrison & Freeman, 1999; Jones, 1995).

Further evidence throughout literature revealed the necessity to continue research on:

- Intricacies of stakeholder involvement
- Benefits of proactive relationship management
- Benefits gained in collaborative efforts

Freeman (1984, 2010), Clarkson (1995), Horisch et al., (2014) and Waligo et al. (2013, 2014, 2015)

Relevant Scholarship

Goal - respond to literature addressing stakeholder participation as valuable to tourism organizations

Literature review of - (a) stakeholder theory, (b) corporate social responsibility (CSR), (c) sustainable tourism development, (d) competitive advantage, and (e) organizational dynamics - concluded with overview of Hawaii, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), & practical business application

Research Question

What strategies are employed within the Hawaii tourism industry for increasing stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development?

Participants

Participants chosen to gain an array of insight and diverse experiences while maintaining specificity to tourism industry in Hawaii.

Criteria:
- Member of one or more stakeholder groups

Strategy:
- Search of tourism businesses in Hawaii
- Search of organizations aligned with stakeholders
- Residents and visitors identified through random published telephone numbers or snowballing

Procedures

Research Method:
- Qualitative single case study confined to the tourism industry in Hawaii

Research Design:
- Semi-structured interviews across stakeholder groups

Population and Sampling:
- Participants identified through internet queries and snowball sampling
- Six categories (visitors, residents, government or public servants, representatives of academic institutions, tourism business owners, and special interest groups)

Data Collection/Technique:
- Telephonic interviews conducted following interview protocol and transcribed
- Synopsis provided to each participant for member checking
- Data collection extended for triangulation to include extensive review of archival documents including HTA annual reports, statistical economic and survey data.

Analysis

Identified a priori codes, emerging codes, categories and themes

Conducted manual review (archival data, notes & other documents)

Findings

Three strategies with associated subcategories emerged exposing the complexities of increasing stakeholder participation and collaboration.

1) Establishing Relationship Management
- Acknowledge Stakeholders
- Stakeholder Interests
- Stakeholder Involvement
- **Conflict Resolution**

2) Consistent & Effective Communication
- **Advertising Campaigns**
- Special Activities/Events
- Assessment/Feedback

3) Partnership Programs with a Variety of Stakeholders
- **Local Partnerships**
- International Partnerships

Interpretation

These findings emphasize the importance of balancing stakeholder interests with economic interests, sociocultural interests, and management of natural resources. Specifically:

- Economic priorities (numbers of tourists) becomes a catalyst for capacity issues
- Conflicting laws & ordinances fuels conflict hindering collaboration

Limitations

Similarities may exist in other destinations – but, this study is **not transferrable in strict comparison**

Limited to interviews and extensive data collection **applicable to the subject**

Limited by the **ability** of each participant **to accurately portray observations** of stakeholder collaboration strategies

Recommendations

Hawaii Tourism Authority continue:
- Continue efforts in addressing resident sentiment
- Work directly with communities to address infrastructure problems

State of Hawaii consider:
- Importance of carrying capacities studies
- Implementing a task force to address conflicting legalities & enforcement
- Working with HTA to revitalize Waikiki

Stakeholders continue:
- Proactively seek opportunities to contribute and participate within the community, county and state

Further Research proposed:
- Addressing the extent conflicting policies, laws, regulations, and ordinances may have as barriers to stakeholder collaboration

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