University of Wales, Trinity St David

PROJECT PROPOSAL

LUX* JUMPS OUT AND BARKS,
"How to create a stray-dog friendly environment within hospitality?"

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Module : BMPF4010
Module name : Work-based project
Word counts : 971
Submission date : 8 November, 2019

Contents

Section 1 Project Proposal 2

1.1. Introduction- The Context 2

1.2. Justification 3

1.3. The Intended Impact 3

1.4. The Outlined Intention 3

1.4.1. Survey 3

1.4.2 Interview and Observation 3

1.5. The Ethics and Insider Research 4

1.6. The Group's Learning Outcomes 4

Section 1 Project Proposal

1.1. Introduction- The Context

Are stray dogs a worldwide problem?
In his article, Beeharry (2018) mentioned the challenge in controlling the growth of stray dog populations from 200 million in 2011 to approximately 480 million in 2018.
Stray dog bites caused a serious public health problem. 55,000 people died from rabies and the dogs might bring other diseases that could cause serious malaise in the infected person.

According to the statistics of Ministry of Agriculture in Mauritius, there were approximately 80,000 stray dogs in 2016 and according to Protection of Animal Welfare Society, PAWS, the number had increased at least by 250% in 2018 to 200,000 – 300,000 stray dogs.
There had been already some measures put by different associations and government to reduce strays, including extreme ones, which proportionally had only a limited result. It is ultimately a national responsibility to make a significant impact.

Pizam and Mansfeld (2006, p. 1-22) had put together theories and practical considerations, which relate to tourism security and safety. It was theorised that any security and safety issue in a tourist destination, when repeatedly occurring, would eventually give a significant negative impact on tourists, host communities, tourism industry, stakeholders' reactions, and the media. When this happened, the prevention and recovery methods needed to be tackled by both public and private sectors at the destination, in order to work effectively.

Since 2016 LUX* Grand Gaube hotel has been facing safety issues with stray dogs entering the resort compound. In 2019 the issue has been amplified due to dog feeding by guests. Several places have become stray zones and it has become more difficult to remove them from the resort. An average of 30 incidents per-month have been reported by guests and team members, reporting stray dogs in front of dining areas and guest rooms, and on the beach. Unpredictable behavior of stray dogs means that guests are at risk of being bitten, especially when they and their children try to play with them.
The hotel management has taken some actions by hiring external dog specialists to capture the stray dogs and the security team has been using natural dog 'repellants' in some areas. Both practices help for short term however the core problem remains.

1.2. Justification

In order to prevent serious incidents such as dog bites, guests' disturbances, a negative impact on the hotel's reputation, and media prejudice, the researchers believe that more significant actions and zero strays in guest areas should be implemented.
The appearance of stray dogs has also resulted in labour inefficiency since the team often has to leave their working area to control the strays.
The researchers are aware that the subject is not a simple matter to solve since it is rooted culturally in the nation. Animal welfare-propaganda, education and actions need to be put into context.

1.3. The Intended Impact

The researchers believe that if LUX* Grand Gaube hotel initiates the project of creating a dog friendly environment to control stray dogs, this action could ripple and lead to better means of involving various stakeholders, such as hotel groups and private sectors, as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations to collaborate in achieving the same goal.

The researchers are exploring the idea of setting up a park area for stray dogs at the backyard of the resort, where a proper shelter, care, and feeding using 'no food waste' hotel sustainability initiative can take place.

1.4. The Outlined Intention

The research will be based on obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data through both surveys and interviews i.e. focus group, one to one, and observations.

1.4.1. Survey

This survey will be used with internal and external participants i.e. designated hotel team members and in-house guests. Team members include security, front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and engineering departments. Participation is voluntary and no personal details are recorded.
Each participant is given a questionnaire to obtain participant's opinions on stray dog appearances within the hotel areas and possible solutions.

1.4.2 Interview and Observation

- A focus group consisting of vets, animal care related organisations, and other hotels representatives will be conducted to obtain professional views and more detailed information with regards to stray dogs in general and the impact on tourism in particular.
- One-to-one interviews will be organised with representatives of Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security (animal welfare), Ministry of Tourism Mauritius, and airlines representatives (public relation or senior management) to also acquire information whether or not a strategy is already put in place.

- Observations will be done at existing dog shelters and kennels in Mauritius in order to acquire knowledge on how to handle stray dogs and provide proper sheltering in the case of realisation of the dog park.

The timeline to start and conclude the above actions will be from 10th June 2019 – 31st August 2019.

1.5. The Ethics and Insider Research

The questionnaire will include a cover letter where it is explained that participation is voluntary and data will be dealt in strict confidentiality. Survey and other methods' feedback will be kept safely and secured in a locker at the front office. All pictures and videos are for internal use only and kept in a company's mobile or computers secured with a password.
Data will be analysed and represented through analysis tables.
The researchers will consider all feedback, critics, and all aspects of the survey to remain objective.

1.6. The Group's Learning Outcomes

- Optimise effective team-working in completing the research project
- Acquire general knowledge of safety and security impacts on tourism
- Develop abilities to deal with different organizational types such as non-profit and commercial
- Acquire a general knowledge of dog behaviour, domestic and stray dogs, appropriate dog alimentation and sheltering, and the health impact such as possible diseases and spaying
- How to draft a strategy to monitor and control stray dogs within the hotel compound