
Perceived barriers to the procurement of ICT equipment in tourism businesses in Rwanda

JP Spencer

E Safari

Centre for Tourism Research in Africa

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town

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Abstract

The ICT sector is perceived worldwide as a transformative and enabling tool for other economic activities to better citizens' lives. In Rwanda, ICT integration in economic sector-activities, such as tourism with an adoption of the value chain approach, is sought to be an answer to a number of socio-economic challenges including unemployment, customer care services, and poor information knowledge. ICT is further sought as a business in itself and enabling tool to better inter-economic and cross cutting activities for a growing economy. Despite mixed results from recent studies, such as that of Foster and Graham (2014), ICT for tourism could be an enabling tool for national and regional development if priority focuses on ICT and tourism quality infrastructures are adhered to. It is important to indicate that there is a shortage of research literature on the evolving nature of ICT in and on the tourism sector in Rwanda, where it is believed to yield many off-farm jobs, besides solely agrarian activities. This study was conducted on a large scale, in order to facilitate the generalisation of the results, in the Northern and Western Provinces of Rwanda, being the principal tourism areas of the country. 720 tourism stakeholder surveys, 10 interviews with officials, and ten focus-group discussions were used to garner both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed method was used to minimise possible research bias and maximise the accuracy of the findings. This article presents the findings in five areas of Rwanda as an empirical survey, but it is reasonable to assume that the research results could be transferable to similar eastern African countries within a similar context to Rwanda. The results shows that tourism stakeholders use, in one way or another, ICT tools throughout the country, but the barriers to the online procurement are obvious.
